

Chef Jacob Jasinski: Bringing It All Back Home

The chef at the Ocean House resort in Rhode Island brings his global culinary knowledge to an intimate New England venue

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Ocean House

Chef Jacob Jasinski of Rhode Island's Ocean House.

Some of Jacob Jasinski's earliest memories of food center on learning from his father. "He was a big influence as far as cooking and eating goes. He took me on trips to the market starting when I was eight years old," he recalled to us on one recent Saturday afternoon at the Chef's Counter in the Ocean House on Watch Hill, Rhode Island.

Fast forward just a few years and Jasinski began working in restaurants while still in high school. A native of the area, he spent time in several restaurants in Providence and the surrounding region before moving west to the Rocky Mountains to experience a much different style of cuisine. This gastronomic change had a great impact on the burgeoning chef, as he told us it "sparked my interest in hunting and game meat."

Later, he ventured to Arizona to work as a personal chef, but after just a year felt the itch to explore and learn more about cooking and restaurants. So, Jasinski bought a Michelin Guide for France and emailed every Michelin star restaurant, asking if he could come and work in their kitchens. The chef's bold approach paid off, as a chef in the Rhone Valley invited him to work and

stay for several months at his hotel. Jasinski took the money he had saved and traveled abroad, working diligently as a stagiaire at Domaine de Clairefontaine, and then briefly at Osteria da Fiore in Venice, Italy. While there, the chef took every opportunity to visit markets and other restaurants, as he was hungry to absorb as much of the culture and European standard for food as he possibly could.

After returning to the States, Jasinski cooked at The Dining Room at Atlanta's Ritz-Carlton Buckhead, which, at the time was one of only twelve five-star restaurants in the U.S. From there, he accepted a position at Kennebunkport's White Barn Inn and, a year later, took his first head chef position at a restaurant that had not yet opened in Portland, Maine. There, at the Salt Exchange Restaurant, he was exposed to an entirely different side of the industry — he not only ran his own kitchen, but also experienced the many challenges of running a business.

With a desire to return to a more refined cooking style, the chef moved on to Joël Robuchon at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. Here he quickly learned the standards necessary to manage and succeed in a three-Michelin-starred restaurant.

Back on the east coast, Jasinski spent two years at Newport's Castle Hill Inn, another Relais Châteaux property on Rhode Island's coast. In Early 2014, Jacob left Castle Hill to join the Ocean House team, assuming the role of Chef de Cuisine at Seasons.

In February 2015, the Seasons restaurant team was awarded their fifth star from Forbes Travel Guide, which along with the five-star rating for the the resort's OH! Spa and the five-stars the resort as a whole has garnered, makes Ocean House one of only ten fifteen-star resorts in the world. And it's easy to see why once one has tasted the chef's food — think tobacco smoked rabbit accompanied by buckwheat ravioli, cabbage, and brown butter emulsion, and truffled risotto with uni and piave vecchio. The nearly steak-like roast loin of venison with raisin, anise, rutabaga, barley, and Rhode Island sourced mushrooms is one of Jasinski's personal favorite dishes, and local oyster supplier told the chef that his oysters on the half shell with green tomato granite, spicy radish, and candied citrus is his favorite treatment of his product of all time.

Season's menu is the perfect showcase of all of the chef's extensive and varied culinary experiences, as nearly all the ingredients he employs have been sourced locally in his home region by the property's food forager; their plenty

of different game meats to choose from (that's where his time in Colorado comes into play), and French technique is almost always the cooking style of choice, which he perfected in his gastronomic studies abroad. "Honestly, I've always had a feeling I'd return to New England," Jasinski confessed.

We are sure glad he did.