

Damon Wise, a Baltimore native, traces his earliest culinary influences to childhood summers spent on the shores of the Chesapeake Bay. He learned to fish with his grandfather, a lifelong waterman, and looked on as his grandmother prepared home-cooked meals with their catch-of-the-day and fresh garden produce. It was a ritual that began Wise's passion for good food and was his first exposure to the idea of cooking with seasonal ingredients.

In the early years of his career, Wise honed his culinary skills working at some of the nation's top restaurants, including five-star luxury resort **The Greenbrier** in West Virginia, and Georges Perrier's **Le Bec Fin** in Philadelphia. Afterwards, Wise landed in New York for a position at Tom Colicchio's Gramercy Tavern before moving on to cook under Laurent Tourondel at **Cello** and Christian Delouvier at **Lespinasse**. To build on his solid foundation of French cooking technique, Wise then traveled to France to refine his skills as a stagiaire at celebrated Paris restaurants **Taillevent** and **Apicius**.

Upon returning to New York, he accepted the position of chef de cuisine at Colicchio's newly opened **Craft**. Wise worked alongside Colicchio to capture the flavors of the seasons with locally sourced ingredients as the basis for the bold, clean dishes that characterized the cooking at **Craft**. After three years as chef de cuisine, Wise was promoted to executive chef of **Craft Restaurants** in 2007, a position he held for nearly five years. During that time, Wise was at the forefront of an emerging scene of pop-up restaurants with **Damon: Frugal Friday**, a temporary restaurant in the private dining room adjacent to **Craft** serving small plates, snacks and beverages at recession-friendly prices. The project earned three stars from *New York Magazine* in 2009.

During his tenure at **Craft**, Wise oversaw the openings of **Craftbar** in New York and **Craft** restaurants in Los Angeles, Dallas and Atlanta. In 2010, Wise oversaw the transition of **Craftsteak** in New York to **Colicchio & Sons**, helping to earn the restaurant three stars from *The New York Times*.

In September 2011, legendary editor Graydon Carter recruited Wise to reimagine the menu at the storied **Monkey Bar**. As executive chef, Wise's focus on fresh, seasonal cooking paired with classic technique and distinctly American style lent well to his updated version of the menu at the historic New York City restaurant. *The New York Times* awarded **Monkey Bar** two stars in 2011.

In 2012, chef Andrew Carmellini enlisted Wise as chef de cuisine of his large-scale French brasserie, **Lafayette**. The hotly anticipated grand café opened to acclaim in April 2013. During his time at the 200 seat all-day eatery, Wise has been deemed a detail-oriented "ace technician" by *The New York Times* for his thoughtful, precise execution of pan-regional French fare.

When the opportunity arose in 2014 to partner in a multi-restaurant project in Charleston, SC, Wise made the move down south to develop **Scarecrow and Co.** Housed in a historic building in downtown Charleston, **Wise-Buck Smoked Meats** opened in spring 2016, offering the burgeoning restaurant town a creative look at traditional barbecue. Soon to follow, **Feathertop** opened in early summer 2016 offering elegant, yet simple and inexpensive vegetable-focused fare. Both the *Post & Courier* and *Charleston City Paper* praised Wise's impressively accomplished cooking.

Back to New York in 2017, Wise took over the kitchens at acclaimed establishments **Sauvage** and **Maison Premiere** in Brooklyn, showcasing his continued commitment to honoring ingredients with simple but elegant dishes.

Returning to the Southeast, Wise joined chef Linton Hopkins as the culinary director of **Resurgens Hospitality** in Atlanta, overseeing a large operation that included several full service restaurants, fast casual concepts and a commissary producing more than 800 meals a day for Delta Airlines. He later served as a Vice President at **Rocket Farm Restaurants**, overseeing a several properties for the prolific group in Atlanta, Nashville and Houston. He is currently a chef consultant based in New York focused on making seasonal, nourishing food accessible to all.

A graduate of both **West Virginia University** and **Baltimore International Culinary College**, in his spare time, he enjoys cycling, live music, and cooking barbecue with the **Ribdiculous Bar-B-Krewe**, a competitive barbecue team he formed in 2009 with chef Shane McBride and a cadre of professional chefs. The team has posted top honors in multiple categories over the years, including first place awards in poultry, seafood, mustard sauce, exotic, vinegar-based sauce categories. Ribdiculous also regularly places in the top ten for ribs, one of the most competitive categories of the festival.