

Featured Chef: Marc Lupino

Written by By Debby Wolvos

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Executive Chef Marc Lupino of Michael Dominick's Lincoln Avenue Prime Steakhouse.



AFM: What's the key to your amazing dishes at Dominick's?

ML: The best and freshest ingredients. The menu is a la carte. Everything has to be the star of the plate. If we're serving a steak, then it's a beautiful steak on a plate and it has got to be the best steak you've ever eaten. The sides are the same way. They've got to stand on their own.

AFM: Do you shop somewhere specific for organic produce?

ML: I shop where it's the best—and that can mean a farmer's market, an excellent local farm or Whole Foods. I am motivated by quality.



AFM: What's your cooking style at home?

ML: I ask my wife what she'd like to eat and then I shop. I don't shop a week in advance. Things often change after I get to the store if I see something that looks delicious. Our 3-year-old twins help me cook.

AFM: If you could spend the day in another country, what country would you visit?

ML: I'd go to Tuscany. I'd visit a country home and eat someone's family meal. I love the simple freshness of Italian cuisine. My family is from Naples.

AFM: What is your favorite ingredient?

ML: My palate is attuned to salt and vinegar. I have to taste sweets because I'm a chef but I like olives, olive oil, capers and different types of salt. I love pickled food. I'd put capers in my coffee if it tasted good.

AFM: Favorite local dining experience?

ML: Hana Japanese Eatery. Chef Lori is the owner. It's the most fantastic tasting menu I've ever had in town. It's really incredible traditional and non-traditional Japanese food.

AFM: If you could spend a day with any other chef in the world and cook up a storm, who would it be?

ML: Jacques Pepin. Jacques Pepin--to me--is the quintessential authentic chef. He never sold out and focused on being a celebrity or did his own line of saute pans. He's about the food. Charlie Trotter is the same way. I had a chance to cook with Charlie Trotter at America West Arena when I was a catering chef and the ball park was opening. We did a star-studded lunch with Julia Child and Jacques Pepin. I'll never forget that amazing day.

AFM: Who taught you the most about cooking?

ML: My father. I've learned from so many people along the way. I can learn from a chef or a dish washer. I'm strict in my standards at the restaurant; however, I'm very open to ideas. If you've got a better way to do something, I am happy to learn from it.



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AFM: Where would you like to retire?

ML: Maybe someday we'll move back to New York to live close to family. For now, it's all about doing the work that I love and preparing for my children's education. I want to make sure that my kids and my wife are taken care of. I appreciate being able to help her stay at home with our twins as long as she wants to.

AFM: It's clear that you thrive in this setting.

ML: I strive for the best every day. Restaurants are like the circus. The "show" is providing an excellent dining experience. At the end of the night, you clean the kitchen and lock the doors. Everything is still and quiet. In the morning, it's the same thing and then the craziness begins. I love the tension and the organized chaos behind the scenes while diners are getting impeccable food and service.



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