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INDUSTRY NEWS



American Culinary Federation
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Culinarians, founded in
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LGBT

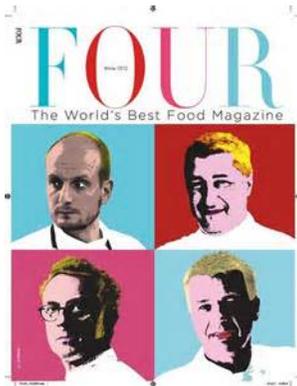
I am known to write from my airplane seat as I travel, and I've just come back from the Carolinas. I pay attention to the news and heard about issues with the LGBT community and the controversy surrounding it. I am pretty open, but I think I am also almost always confused. This one has me stumped. So after spending a few days doing some investigating, I am curious why the Lardo, Guanciale, Bacon, and Traditional Curing communities are being attacked.

The Carolinas are known for their pork and pork processing, home of the original whole hog mentality. Places like **The Pit** in Raleigh, NC, hang on to deep tradition with godly loyalty and preach of a singular way to cook pork-whole on the pit. That group needs to control everything and amass the wealth associated with it. I think it is called the "grand old party" method of doing things. Some may call it the southern strategy of BBQ. It is selling a story of independence and the secular position of BBQ. It's a rather simplistic point of view, if you ask me.

Then there are those on the other side of the line-westerners who are a little more mainstream in their pork politics. Their platform is that we can all just live high off the hog on the butt alone, shredded and easily served. You add sweetness balanced with the sometimes sarcastic, sour view that it has to have coleslaw on it to be true. They believe that easterners have enough by-products to go around to support those who don't have enough to fend for themselves. Their ideals focus on taking some of that excess, unused wealth from the golden-haired hog and passing it on. You need to make those expensive cuts cheaper and bring them down to earth through affordable sausage making programs. It's working, and it's good for everyone. It seems that there are good pork suppliers on every corner, and who doesn't want to have affordable sausages?



Recipes, reviews and resources for everything food and dining in the Chicago area. [Check out](#) what's happening this week.



Check out this great magazine, [Four](#).



Eater is the source for people who care about dining and drinking in the nation's most important food cities, like Chicago. A favorite of industry pros and amateurs alike, Eater has an uncanny knack for finding out what's opening where, who's serving what, and how it's all going down. Find out [what's new](#) in Chicago.

The independent liberals have older options, such as small country ham and bacon producers like [Benton's](#), who has been around for a while doing their thing and have now found favor with the younger generation, who wants something different. I love to feel the burn of a good Andouille!

Then there are the outsiders-those who have been around for generations but have been shunned and ridiculed. They are often misunderstood. The family of Lardo and Guanciale, which have long been sheltered in homes and small communities protected by their families' secrets, have made a great impact on today's culinary community. This group of exciting (and to some, strange) cousins of the traditional bacon lifestyle should be given every right to share the kitchen cabinet with everyone. On the surface, these cousins of bacon are basically the same thing. However, in most cases, these unique items are not portrayed as the norm by mass marketing! I don't know why people are concerned about seeing something peppered and dirty or fear it will be "infected" because it shares the same table as the uneducated bacon or boiled ham. We need to open up and support the beauty of cured fat. When pure white fat is born from a pig, I think of it as the backbone of sausage and salami production. Then things happen over time and we add a little dressing and start to think of it differently. The cheek or fat matures over time to a delicate, satisfying item that completely understands itself and where it belongs in the cabinet. It may start off strong and hearty but changes and becomes the delicate and elegant star who isn't afraid to stand up in front of the old-schools boys and be proud of what it has become.

So praise the Lardo and Guanciale, as they belong and should not be banned for being who they are!

- Chef John Reed, CEC, CCA

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