

January 4th, 2017



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INDUSTRY NEWS



American Culinary Federation
Chefs and Culinary
Professionals of Chicagoland

ACF Chefs and Culinary Professionals of Chicagoland, founded in 2003, is one of the fastest-growing chapters of the American Culinary Federation (ACF). Click [here](#) for more information.

Time to Get Off the Bench

At the start of a new year, we reflect on what has passed and what is yet to be achieved. Every year, we go through this, but do we achieve what we set out to do? In many ways, I believe we do, but we may not openly acknowledge those milestones in our lives or check them off as done. As I closed out 2016, I began to look to 2019. Why so far away? It is a completion date I just put on a calendar. I have an outstanding resolution that I made to myself that is over 30 years old. As an innocent and bright-eyed boy, I said that one day I would take the Master Chef Exam. It was 1983 when I graduated with an associate's degree in culinary arts from J&W and the year the first CMC exam was given.

In my mind, I had made a pretty bold statement that I was going to take the exam as an outsider and not get dragged into the circles of personal politics. I wanted to do it alone. Looking back, I may have been stuck in a rebellious phase as the Clash and Run DMC was bouncing between my ears from my Walkman. Many years later, I have realized that you can't do many things on your own, whether that's being a sports person, a colleague, or even a parent. Even a marriage takes more than one.

This eight-day test, administered by the American Culinary Federation, has been called one of the toughest tests of any craft and has a well-known high failure rate. At the end of the day, it is a test of craftsmanship as well as a battle of one's own mind as it relates to the craft of cooking. There can be a tendency to overthink shit sometimes!

Cooking is as much a craft as it is a job or learned profession. The degrees and certifications I have achieved are only one small piece of what it takes to be a craftsman. Cooking is a practiced and disciplined skill. It takes work and commitment from the time you wake up in the morning until you can get some sleep. It takes a lot of energy and effort to get to a point where you think you have achieved a recognized goal. A master craftsman is a rare breed—from the outside, they are recognized as being on the pinnacle of a craft, but in their world, they haven't yet achieved that goal and are continually learning. This is a dilemma as well as a gift!

I have learned over many years that my cooking and understanding of it is continually evolving. To fine-tune your own skills, you need to realize that your own path to mastery involves other people and cannot be self-centered. Anything we have ever achieved has been a team effort. If the goal I so selfishly made 30 years ago can ever be put to rest and checked off the "to do" list, I need to seek the help of others. I now recognize that the plate of food I put in front of



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



The Cicerone Certification Program certifies and educates beer professionals in order to elevate the beer experience for consumers. cicerone.org.



The Craft Beer Networking Group is comprised of professionals from a wide variety of industries, and we meet approximately every 6 weeks at different breweries or craft beer bars in Chicago for two main reasons:

1. Networking
2. Enjoying craft beer

Email cbngchicago@gmail.com for more info and to become part of the group.



Eater is the source for people who

someone, whether a judge or on the family table, is not completely mine.

It has been said that you need to respect the food, but you also need to respect everyone else you touched, even if you can't see them from beyond your own tunnel vision. I know that the past masters from Dumas, La Careme, and Escoffier are buried deep within the jus, the pomme soufflé, and even those modernistic garnishes. Masterful food is a collection of knowledge. The next time you have a dinner, don't ask who the chef is, ask about his (or her!) staff and vendors. If you see the chef, ask about his influences. His mother is in there somewhere!

So, as I push forward to 2019, I am going to call on my inner circle. It is everyone who reads this as well as those who don't to help me put this thing to rest. I want to sleep well and know that my own success is as much mine as it is yours for just being there when I need a good kick in the butt!

I plan on sharing my journey with you and keeping a record of the efforts. I will keep you abreast of how and when I figure it out and get my butt behind the stove.

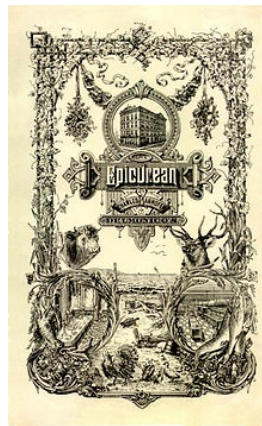
Happy New Year.

- Chef John Reed, CEC, CCA

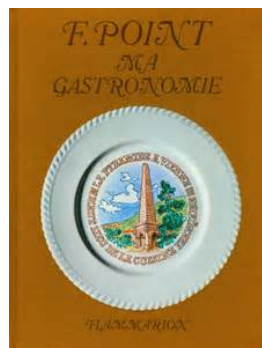


A TOUR OF MY COOK BOOKS

The Epicurean by Charles Ranhofer



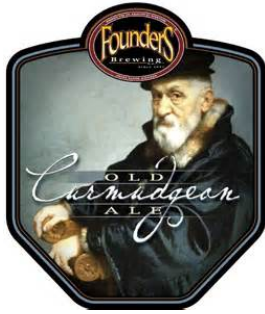
Ma Gastronomie by Fernand Point



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BEER

Curmudgeon Old Ale



Try this **Old Ale** from Founders.
Kind of my persona on some days.

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