

BARTON SEAVER

He is 29, but his culinary resume reads like a seasoned 40-something. The Blue Ocean Institute, a national conservation group, honored him, along with explorer Sylvia Earle and filmmaker Alastair Fothergill, recently for their commitment to preserving the world's seas. "Barton is part of a new 'rock star' generation of hip young chefs who don't just see food as an eating experience but as a philosophy of relationships that ends, in a sense, in a kind of communion with the land, sea and seasonal life cycles that come to climax on the plate and palate," said Carl Safina, the institute's president.

Washington, D.C. native Executive Chef Barton Seaver, a StarChefs.com Rising Star of 2006 and a Rising Star Chef nominee by the Restaurant Association of Metropolitan Washington was taught at an early age about the importance of food. Dinner in the Seaver home was a seven nights a week family affair. Eating dinner with his family was a "communal celebration" and involved shopping for the freshest ingredients at local markets, instilling this value in him at a young age. "Mac and Cheese" was never just out of the box, but prepared with a homemade béchamel cheese sauce and pasta made from scratch. Summers spent at a family friends' hog farm on the Chesapeake Bay, along with crabbing and going with his father to buy fresh seafood from local fisherman, taught Seaver the importance of supporting local purveyors and using quality and fresh ingredients. According to Seaver, "Seasonality and locality made sense to me early on."

Seaver began his professional career working for popular D.C. restaurants such as Ardeo, Felix, and Greenwood. After years of invaluable kitchen experience, Seaver made his way to Hyde Park, New York, where he trained at the renowned Culinary Institute of America. During his schooling, he spent time in the kitchens of Tru restaurant and The Dining Room at the Ritz Carlton under Sarah Stegner in Chicago. Upon graduating with honors, he immediately took a fellowship position at C.I.A. as a graduate teacher in both the meat and fish classes. Working in this hands-on environment taught Seaver the importance of proper handling and techniques of exceptionally fresh products, all the while giving him direct access to sources of fish through the eastern seaboard ports. Under the guidance of Chef Corky Clark, he learned to appreciate underutilized species of fish and became a proponent of sustainable ocean products.

After completing his tenure at the C.I.A., Seaver went on to the Finch Tavern in New York to work under renowned Chef Dan Kish, where he was eventually promoted to Executive Sous Chef. Seaver's classical training later led him to Europe. Traveling extensively throughout the Iberian Peninsula and Africa, he participated in old world traditions of farming and harvesting from the sea. He spent time working in small seaside restaurants and cooking with families in their homes. This form of simple, market driven food has greatly affected his personal style of cuisine. Seaver later returned to Washington, DC, to work for star Chef Jose Andres at his flagship restaurant Jaleo, where he gained experience in cutting edge small plates cuisine.

In early 2005, Seaver accepted the position of Executive Chef at Café Saint-Ex. At Café Saint-Ex, Seaver maintained the restaurant's established bistro style, he adapted the menu

to focus on simply prepared wood-grilled items. Using local organic ingredients and focusing on sustainable fish species, Seaver blended Mediterranean simplicity with stylized sustainable modern cuisine. In July 2006, Seaver also oversaw the revamp of the menu at sister restaurant Bar Pilar into Italian inspired small plates.

Seaver left Café Saint-Ex and Bar Pilar in March 2007 to open Hook restaurant in Georgetown. Awarded two and a half stars by Washington Post food critic Tom Sietsema, Hook allows Chef Seaver's dedication to the use of sustainable seafood to flourish.

As one of the cause's biggest advocates, Chef Seaver looks to his restaurants, both past and present, to serve as the "educational arm" of his beliefs and will continue to powerfully influence his community with Hook, which is a sustainable, fish focused restaurant.

Seaver is a certified sommelier through the Sommelier Society of America and is continuing his studies with Wine and Spirits Educational Trust in London. He is a member of the Board of Directors of DC Central Kitchen as the culinary force behind the non-profit's educational programs. Additionally, he is also active with Chefs Collaborative, Blue Ocean Institute, Seafood Choices Alliance and the National Restaurant Association. As a firm believer that chefs are the keepers of food culture, he is publishing a monthly article for the online newsletter for StarChefs.com. In an effort to educate fellow industry members, Chef Seaver will address the issue of sustainability from the perspective of a chef offering solutions to common problems they face in their profession such as buying decisions and their responsibility as the definers of what is fashionable eating.