

Bruce Sherman

A native Chicagoan, Bruce Sherman traveled the world developing his culinary knowledge before returning to his hometown to delight Chicago's dining community. As Chef and Partner at Lincoln Park's North Pond, Sherman utilizes influences he picked up in Paris, Southeast Asia and London to produce his contemporary French-American, innovative, seasonal cuisine.

Sherman was born and raised in Chicago, and attended the University of Pennsylvania majoring in Economics. Growing up the son of a banker, Sherman thought he would have an "office career" – he would become a banker, lawyer or doctor, perhaps. While studying abroad at the London School of Economics and experiencing all that is European, Sherman had a life changing realization, one that opened up the world to him and allowed him to recognize that he could do anything he pleased.

Growing up, he had always enjoyed watching his Mom cook, as she comfortably experimented with new flavors and cuisines, and he decided to pursue a career in the restaurant field. Upon his return to the States from abroad, Sherman graduated – with honors – and moved to Boston, where he began a career in restaurant management. Unable to satisfy his creative urge as a manager, Sherman moved to the back of the house, and worked as a cook absorbing all facets of kitchen life. He then moved to Washington, D.C., where he broadened his foodservice knowledge by starting a catering company, which he continued to run until selling the business in 1993. When Sherman's wife had an opportunity to work in India, they jumped at the chance.

In New Delhi, India, Sherman immersed himself for three-and-one-half years in the local culture, particularly the cuisine of India. Making daily trips to the corner vegetable "wallah" (vendor) forced him to cook only with what was available each day, what was fresh and seasonal. His experience in India profoundly influenced his cooking style, but not in the obvious manner – the notion of seasonality he developed while living in India was as great an influence as the understanding of the flavors and usage of the diverse regional spices. While in India, Sherman acted as consultant for some Palace Hotels, teaching the local Rajasthani cooks how to prepare Western food for the visiting tourists. He also completed personal studies to develop a greater understanding and appreciation of the indigenous spices of the Malabar Coast.

In 1996, Sherman moved to Paris for the purpose of furthering his culinary knowledge and enrolled at the Ecole Superieure de Cuisine Francaise. He completed the yearlong comprehensive program and supplemented his studies with jobs at a number of highly regarded restaurants. While in France, Sherman refined his already advanced culinary skills, developing his personal style, one that is clearly grounded in French technique. The following year, he returned to Chicago, and worked under some of the top toques in town.

In 1999, Sherman accepted the position at North Pond, and has been dazzling diners with his broadly influenced, subtle, seasonal cuisine ever since. Sherman was honored by Food & Wine as one of America's "Best New Chefs" of 2003 in the July issue of the same year and in 2007, was nominated by the esteemed James Beard Foundation in the "Best Chef: Great Lakes Region" category.

Sherman and his wife Joan live in Evanston with their daughters Emma and Kate. According to him, it's the "instant satisfaction and spontaneous feedback" of cooking – whether in the kitchen, seasoning a recipe to alter the flavor, or in the dining room watching a guest's response after tasting a dish - that Sherman enjoys most.