

FOODSERVICE EAST PRESENTS

SECRETS OF **SUCCESS**

February 2012

An ongoing series of interviews with chefs, restaurateurs and foodservice operators, Secrets of Success looks at the paths taken to professional recognition and acclaim.



Keenan Langlois

Chef, Union Bar and Grille, Boston, MA
By Foodservice East

Parents and grandparents who love food and cooking pass that passion along. Such was the case with Keenan Langlois who always learned from watching them in the kitchen. He even learned to sew, he says, “because I was always getting my hands into something. It was just ingrained and felt natural to me to go in the direction of cooking.”

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SECRETS OF SUCCESS

FSE: What's been the biggest influence on your personal culinary style?

LANGLOIS: I'd have to say the rustic cooking of France - whole cooked fish and meat, torn bread, unfiltered olive oil, large plates of home cooked stews meant for sharing. I love that pure form.

FSE: What kinds of food do you most enjoy cooking?

LANGLOIS: I love the satisfaction of slow braising pork shoulder or beef ribs. The flavors develop deeply over the time and it takes patience.

FSE: What is your favorite "can't live without it" kitchen utensil?

LANGLOIS: I love my braising fork. I don't use tongs so I need a tool by my side at all times for handling hot items.

FSE: What is the "secret" of your success?

LANGLOIS: I cook from my heart and the people that get that fall in love. I don't consider cooking work, so to me going into the kitchen everyday is a pleasure. I try to bestow a positive feeling to my staff. Happy cooks make happy food. Sorry if that sounds corny.

FSE: What do you like most about being a chef and what do you really dislike, and why?

LANGLOIS: I like to provide for people. I really like to make the guest happy and see it on their faces. I also like the lifestyle and the antics of this industry. Restaurant people are a different breed. I feel I fit right in.

I don't see any drawbacks from my career, the long hours the work/pay ratio, it doesn't matter in my big picture. I have met plenty of people, with high salary jobs and the whole American Dream, who tell me they wish they could cook.

FSE: What would you like to be doing 10 years from now?

LANGLOIS: I'd like to be teaching my children how to make delicious food.

FSE: What do you like to eat when you go out to dine?

LANGLOIS: I will try most everything. I have different expectations depending on where I go. At the very least I just want the food to be hot and have flavor.

FSE: What advice would you give to aspiring chefs?

LANGLOIS: Know what you are getting into, this job is not for everyone. Learn to respect food and people. Last but most important, the answer is ALWAYS yes!

FSE: What new menu directions are you going in and what do you expect to be doing in that area this year?

LANGLOIS: I want to keep going in the 'simple' direction, just well cared for ingredients treated minimally to show their best flavor. I will always go that route.

FSE: Do you cook at home, and if so, what's in your refrigerator?

LANGLOIS: I rarely cook at home. I love to cook for and with other people and share it. Usually if I make something for myself it's almost always awful. For the most part there is beer in my refrigerator, and condiments.