



Chef David Kreifels



Chef Dave Kreifels is chef and co-owner of Laurelhurst Market, Portland's combination market/restaurant/butcher shop/neighborhood bar. A native Portlander, Kreifels grew up in the city's vibrant food scene and has a deep love for fresh, seasonal Northwest ingredients. Laurelhurst Market opened in 2009 and features only all-natural and hormone-free meats. From pates and pancetta to sausage and smoked ham hocks, everything is cured, smoked and stuffed in-house. A nod to Kreifels' appreciation for "all things meat," Bon Appetit magazine named Laurelhurst Market one of the 10 Best New Restaurants of 2010. The steakhouse-style food and the neighborhood diner atmosphere combine to make Laurelhurst Market a city hotspot.

We caught up with Dave to discuss his love for Portland's food culture, barbecue, and of course, pork.

NPB: Tell us about your restaurant and butcher shop.

Chef: Laurelhurst Market opened in May of 2009. My business partners, Jason Owens, Ben Dyer, and myself wanted a steakhouse inspired restaurant that focused on often forgotten cuts of meat; or at least ones typically not seen in the

classic steakhouse. Cuts of beef such as the Teres Major, Bavette, Culotte and pork cuts like the Coppa and Shank are the headliners here. With the adjacent butcher shop the customers get to see first hand what is on the menu that night. Most of our cuts of meat on the menu are also sold in their raw form in the case. Utilizing these great cuts of meat, we're able to keep our price point well below



that of the downtown steakhouses. This definitely reflects in our clientele. On any given night, you can find a family from the neighborhood, a business outing, a couple on a date night, and a group of ladies all dining at the same time.

Another focus of ours are the side dishes drawing on goods from local farmers. We have a great relationship with about 10-12 great farms in the area who continue to surprise me at the beauty of their products. Over in the butcher case you can always find a dozen or so fresh sausages, pates and terrines, and a number of emulsified meats like mortadella and german bologna; all made in house. Our smoker is almost constantly running full of andouille, tasso, hams, bacon, and Canadian Bacon, among other things. Items like leaf lard, pork liver, blood, and house cured pancetta make us a valuable resource for any

home chef.

NPB: How did you get your start in the kitchen? What is your first food memory?

Chef: Food and cooking have always been passions of mine. Nailing down one memory that started it all is difficult. My times spent camping as a child (and there were many) with a few coleman stoves set up around the site had a lot to do with it. My dad would always be so well prepared for cooking that it was barely "roughing it." Some of our better meals were had around the campfire. Those times really had an affect on how I cook now. Foraging in the woods for huckleberries for the morning pancakes. Fishing all day for a mess of trout for dinner. It showed me that fresh, seasonal food tastes better and not to waste a thing. To this day, I am more comfortable cooking on an outdoor grill than in a professional kitchen. My entry into the restaurant world came when I was about 18 years old. While going to college in Montana, I was looking for a part time job around town in a restaurant with little luck. I decided to take a break from business school and attend culinary school back home in Portland, then return to Montana with a better opportunity to land a restaurant job. Well, that return trip never happened. After a few months in a restaurant kitchen, I knew cooking was

what I wanted to do long term.

NPB: You cure and smoke all your meat in-house- why is this important to you, and how does it set your restaurant apart?

Chef: We wouldn't have this any other way. Curing and smoking our own meats lets us adjust with time and temperature on the fly depending on variables in the meat like thickness and fat content. Not having that hands on approach and leaving it up to someone else would ruin consistency. House smoked meat also creates a flavor that no one else can match. In addition, smoking meats is a great way to take an inexpensive cut of meat like brisket or pork butt and turn it into something more delicious than any rib eye or tenderloin. Any barbeque restaurant has that down.

NPB: Laurelhurst Market offers a lot of pork, both in the butcher shop and on the restaurant menu- how is pork a profitable protein for you?



Chef: For whatever reason (and I'm not complaining here) pork is less expensive than beef and most times even chicken. It is also the one protein I couldn't live without. The versatility of pork is what makes it so popular in our shop and restaurant. That said, we are able to bring in

whole hogs once or twice a week dramatically reducing our price paid per pound. We can sell the pork chops in our restaurant, use the shoulders for sausage or a stew, cure the bellies for bacon, render the fat back for leaf lard, and make head cheese with the head. Bringing in all those cuts would cost a fortune by comparison. Having a band saw in our butcher shop doesn't hurt either.

NPB: Why do you love to cook with pork? What's your favorite pork dish?

Chef: Like I said above, the versatility of pork makes it my favorite. Also, whatever you feed a pig comes through in the end flavor of the meat and fat more so than any other animal in my opinion. Laurelhurst Market brings in a pig each week from Tails And Trotters, a local company who's pigs are fed a diet of hazelnuts, very abundant in the area, for their last 60-90 days. When you eat their pork, it is definitely a present flavor. Lately, my favorite pork dish to make has been an adobo with this coconut vinegar I picked up a few months back. It

was a hit for my family the day after Thanksgiving when we were all craving something out of the norm. Here at the restaurant we've been loving braised pork shanks that we dredge in rice flour and deep fry to order.

NPB: You have a killer pork chop on your menu. Tell us about how you prepare it. Why is it a popular dish?

Chef: The pork chop featured on the menu from time to time is from Tails and Trotters. We keep a slightly thicker fat cap on it because that hazelnut flavor is present so well there. When we break down the whole bone-in loin we get some lowa chops and some classic rib chops; if the customer has a preference, we are happy to oblige. The chops are cut to about an inch thick, then brined for 12 hours. We then pat dry and cold smoke them for 30 minutes with apple. One of my (amazing) grill guys then takes them to the low side of medium and we pair it with a seasonal garnish. Popular sets in the past few months have been grilled peach vinaigrette during the late Summer, then into the Fall we did it with white beans cooked down with ham hocks and topped with cauliflower chow chow.



NPB: Tell us about how Laurelhurst Market uses brines in food preparation. What cuts of pork benefit from brining? Do you alter your brine mixture for different cuts?

Chef: Brining is a common tool around here. There's no better way to get flavor into a thick cut of meat. We brine cuts like our boneless hams for 2 weeks, and Canadian bacon for 1 week, injecting them every day until we smoke them. For those, we use the same brine, but for other cuts, we like to get other flavors such as chilies, herbs, or spices into the brine. It's a nice way to develop nuance in the dish.

NPB: You grew up in Portland- how has the food culture of the Pacific Northwest influenced you as a chef?

Chef: The food culture here has erupted and continues to billow. Thinking about



how many quality restaurants there were 15 years ago, it's amazing how far we've come. I would have thought you were crazy if you told me that one day Portland could support the number of stellar places we have now. What's just as amazing is that our farmers and ranchers have kept up so well. It really speaks to the fertility of the Willamette Valley soils.

NPB: You're known for using fresh, seasonal ingredients and for working closely with local farmers and producers. Why do you feel this is important? How does this impact your menu?

Chef: This area has so much to offer at every season. Eating out of season here seems odd. Farmers Markets go year 'round and in the summer there's one in every neighborhood once or twice a week. It sounds a bit cliché but I like vegetables to taste like vegetables. We don't do a lot to manipulate flavor. Working with local farms isn't a strange thing in this town. There's a sense of pride for chefs here to feature their farmers goods. More often than not, the chef and farmer/rancher are close friends. Sometimes a little friendly rivalry can



exist due to who has what product on their menu. I look at other menus at times and think, "damn... I wasn't offered that on my list this week!" The bottom line for me is that supporting local folks as often as possible is good for everyone. Keeping money in the local economy and reducing the total miles a product travels to get to you are important.

NPB: You started a Barbecue Wednesday lunchtime special, featuring pulled pork, ribs and sausages. What inspired this new menu offering? Do brining and barbecue mix?

Chef: This barbeque Wednesday deal we're starting has gotten us pretty excited. Barbeque has always been fascinating to me. Done properly, it's such a labor of love. People who do it professionally are some of the most passionate cooks there are. We are offering a barbeque plate on Wednesdays during lunch and it rotates from week to week. In our butcher shop we make some killer sandwiches at lunch but we decided to mix it up a bit. Riding on the success of our Fried Chicken Tuesdays, we thought a barbeque plate would kill it. Some weeks we'll have pulled pork sandwiches, some will be smoked hot links. St. Louis style ribs

are in the future. Brining and barbeque are friends. With the help of an injecting needle, it's a great way to get flavor deep inside the thick cuts of meat like pork shoulder. Our catering company just bought a Caja China and we're fired up to start brining whole animals to cook in it for off site events like weddings. (Speaking of camping trips... damn, that would be fun).

NPB: In addition to being a butcher shop, market and steakhouse-inspired restaurant, you also are a popular neighborhood bar with handcrafted cocktails. How important is beverage and food pairing to your menu? What's your favorite beverage to pair with pork?

Chef: Having the wrong drink with a dish can really ruin the experience. Our bar manager and sommelier do a great job with having a few great pairings for each dish on the menu. Cocktail pairing can certainly be more difficult than wine pairing but its doable.

Pork opens itself up to pairing with gin and whiskey, depending on the preparation, of course. For a simple grilled pork without many interfering flavors,



woody herbs, lemon, juniper, and gin is a great bet. For a smokier preparation like barbeque, we like to go with bourbon. Take a pulled pork sandwich for instance. We pair an "American Trilogy". Equal parts Apple Jack and Rye Whiskey, a teaspoon of good maple syrup, and a dash of cherry bitters... stirred with ice and served up.