

## **Shawn McClain**

*Executive Chef and Managing Partner*

Sage, FIVE50 Pizza Bar, Libertine Social

Shawn McClain, Chef and Managing Partner of Sage, FIVE50 Pizza Bar and Libertine Social in Las Vegas, has a knack for developing original concepts with a sense of innovation and refinement. Bringing his progressive approach to the flourishing dining destination, McClain creates each of his unique venues with the diverse range of Las Vegas visitors in mind. McClain's portfolio consists of both high end and casual restaurants each offering ingredient-driven cuisine served in chic, high-energy atmospheres. An aptness for letting ingredients shine through his use of technical skill and creative couplings has forged the way for McClain's illustrious career marked with James Beard Award and *Iron Chef* wins and celebrated restaurant concepts in both Las Vegas and Chicago.

A Midwestern native, and a 1990 graduate of the School of Culinary Arts at Kendall College in Evanston, Ill., McClain's star rose quickly in the culinary world. He broke onto the national scene at Trio restaurant in Evanston, earning four stars from both the *Chicago Tribune* and *Chicago Sun-Times*. There, his style came into focus, one that juxtaposes Eastern influence with Western foundations.

After seven accolade-filled years, he moved to Chicago to open Spring – his homage to seafood. The restaurant debuted in 2001 to extraordinary critical acclaim and consumer success. That same year, Spring was nominated for the James Beard Foundation's Best New Restaurant award, and McClain was named Esquire magazine's Chef of the Year. In 2002, he appeared in "40 Under 40," Crain's Chicago Business' highly competitive list of "who's who" in the city.

McClain opened his second restaurant, Green Zebra, in 2004. An immediate success, this vanguard concept brought vegetables to the center of the plate and was lauded by The New York Times, Bon Appétit, FOOD & WINE and several other prestigious publications. Green Zebra emphasizes McClain's insistence on the quality of ingredients and his talent for creating innovative menus.

Ready for a new challenge, McClain became a part of opening roster of celebrity chefs at the awe-inspiring ARIA Resort & Casino in Las Vegas in 2009. At his restaurant Sage, McClain changed

(more)

focus once more with a New American menu built around the irresistible freshness of California's local harvests. The restaurant quickly became a local favorite receiving accolades including "Restaurant of the Year" by Desert Companion magazine and earned McClain another James Beard Award nomination for Outstanding New Restaurant 2010. In 2012, McClain put his skills to the ultimate test when he appeared on Food Network's *Iron Chef America* and competed against Chef Marc Forgione. The epic battle paired McClain with renowned mixologist Tony Abou-Ganim laying the foundation for a long-lasting friendship and resulted in a win for McClain.

Following the success of Sage, McClain opened his first casual concept, FIVE50 Pizza Bar, also at ARIA, in 2013. Here, McClain put his own spin on East Coast-style pizzas, using only the freshest seasonal ingredients. Building upon his interest in vibrant, approachable concepts, McClain will open Libertine Social, a next-generation gastropub with an interactive social environment at Mandalay Bay in summer 2016. At this soon-to-be hotspot, the acclaimed chef will serve-up New American bar food with a foodie flair and join forces with Modern Mixologist and former *Iron Chef America* partner Tony Abou-Ganim for a show stopping cocktail program.

Currently, McClain splits his time between his home in Detroit and Las Vegas. While in town, McClain makes it a point to contribute to charitable organizations dedicated to enriching the lives of local residents including Three Square Food Bank, a charity that provides nutritious meals to food insecure residents in Southern Nevada.

# # #