

## QA

BURNING QUESTION

BY MEGAN WAITKOFF

### Q. WHY IS OCTOBER THE BEST MONTH TO SURF LAKE MICHIGAN?

**A.** As you unpack your favorite fall sweater, grab your board, too! Surf's up.

To produce waves on any body of water, including Lake Michigan, you need wind, says Ryan Gerard, owner of the Third Coast Surf Shop in New Buffalo, Mich. "Here in the Great Lakes, we tend to see the most wind in fall, winter and spring because bigger winds are usually associated with bigger weather systems – cold fronts, warm fronts and other weather patterns," he says.

The switch from summer's mild weather to the cold fronts of fall brings plenty of turbulent weather – and killer waves.

"There's a buoy out in the middle of Lake Michigan that registers wind speed and wave data. I've seen it register 24-foot waves – that's two buildings tall," Gerard says. Near shore, waves can range from 10 to 12 feet.

Jack Nordgren, an avid surfer from Bridgman, Mich., who's been riding Great Lakes waves

since 1965, explains that in the fall, when a cold front comes through, the wind comes down the whole fetch of the lake, and that generates great waves. The water is also warmer in the fall, and the air is cold; the cold air scoops up the water a little bit better, Nordgren says.

So what time of day makes for the best waves? Out on the ocean, tides dictate the height of its waves, but Lake Michigan doesn't have tides. In other words, when the wind is blowing, surf's up!

Send your Burning Question to: [burningquestion@lakemagazine.com](mailto:burningquestion@lakemagazine.com)



PHOTO BY BRUCE BEVER



## Kitchen Aid

Laurent Robic teaches the tricks to cosmopolitan cuisine.

BY DEREK SMITH

**Laurent Robic could** give Emeril Lagasse a run for his money. The cooking instructor from Mishawaka, Ind., may not have his own TV show or line of spaghetti sauces, but he does have a sense of humor: In one class, he turned a bowl of meringue upside down over a student's head. Meringue sticks to the bowl, so the only thing spilling was laughter from his class.

"I'm not too serious," the chef says, smiling. "That's too boring."

Originally from Brittany, France, Robic has cooked all over the world – from a bistro in the 10th arrondissement of Paris to a seaside resort in Brighton, England, not to mention restaurants in Germany and Montreal.

He was living in Paris when he met his wife, Kathy, at a TGI Friday's. ("I had a craving for American food," the chef explains.) Sparks flew: He eventually moved to Chicago, where Kathy was living at the time, and became executive sous chef at the Sheridan Hotel. In 2001, the couple moved to Mishawaka to be closer to Kathy's parents (who live in nearby Goshen) and to raise their son, Roman.

Robic didn't make the move from chef to teacher until last May when he launched Chef Laurent, Inc. While he works out of a demonstration space in the lower level of the new, luxe Villa Macri Ristorante in Granger, Ind., he wouldn't have it any other way – the charming nook is the perfect size for his intimate classes, and he doesn't want to open his own restaurant just yet.

His work space can cozily fit up to 25 students for the chef's classes, but also serves as home base for Robic's other ventures. He offers private cooking services and will travel to your home to cook for parties of up to 20 guests.

While his classes may span the gourmet globe, Robic's private menu is a testament to his roots. He grew up less than six miles from the ocean in tiny Queven, Brittany, and his menu reflects the Breton tradition of seafood and heavy creams; try the coquilles St. Jacques, a medley of seafood and creamy curry sauce served warm in a scallop shell.

Can't make the next class? Try one of Chef Laurent's dishes at home – flip to the next page for a delicious fall recipe.

CHEF LAURENT, INC. 225 TOSCANA BLVD., SUITE 1 (LOWER LEVEL OF VILLA MACRI RISTORANTE), GRANGER, IND. 574-993-2772

PHOTO BY AMANDA TEMPLE

#### Class Schedule

Here's a taste of the chef's October classes:

#### Oct. 1, 6-8 p.m.

Warmth in the Kitchen  
*Creative & Delicious Recipes Using Squash and Pumpkins*

#### Oct. 4, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

Vegetarian Delight  
*Delicious Ways of Fixing Your Favorites*

#### Oct. 13, 6-8 p.m.

Fromage  
*Create Recipes with Hard & Soft International Cheeses*

#### Oct. 14, 21 and 28, 6-8 p.m.

Travel Around Europe in 3 Weeks

#### Oct. 16, 6-8 p.m.

Trip for Two: A Joyous Accent Onto Your Plate  
*From Charentes to the Basque Country of France*

#### Oct. 17, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Sweet as Honey: Busy Bees in the Kitchen  
*Fun Recipes using Honey*

#### Oct. 24, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Belgian Cooking  
*More Than Just Chocolate*



## BUTTERNUT SQUASH WITH GOAT CHEESE

Welcome autumn with this easy recipe, straight from Chef Laurent's arsenal of seasonal dishes, and best served with crusty bread and a leafy side salad. Bon appétit!

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 (2 lb.) butternut squash, halved and seeded
- ¼ cup chopped parsley
- 2 green onions, finely chopped
- 1 4-ounce round of mild goat cheese, sliced horizontally in half
- Salt and pepper
- Extra virgin olive oil

### RECIPE:

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Cut two pieces of foil, each large enough to enclose half of the butternut squash.
2. Place the squash halves on the pieces of foil and brush their cut tops generously with oil. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and wrap the foil tightly around the squash to enclose the halves completely.
3. Place on a baking sheet or in an oven-proof dish and bake for one hour, until the squash is completely tender.
4. Remove the squash from the oven and increase the temperature to 425°F. Open the foil and fold it back neatly around the outside of the squash halves.
5. Divide the green onions and parsley between the hollows of the squash halves, and place a slice of goat cheese on top of each.
6. Bake the squash for 5 to 7 minutes, or until the cheese melts and begins to brown slightly around the edges. Serve at once.

Makes two servings



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