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# Landen Ganstrom gives Crave its unique flavor

BY ANGEL POWELL  
Special to The Post and Courier

**G**ravitating toward the culinary arts at a young age, chef Landen Ganstrom entered culinary school at 18.

He earned a degree in culinary arts and applied sciences and completed the three-year chef's apprentice program sponsored by the American Culinary Federation.

Now the executive chef at Crave Kitchen and Cocktails, Ganstrom has developed brunch, lunch, dinner, low-calorie, gluten-free and late-night menus for Crave.

His gluten-free menus for Crave have gained considerable attention, as they are some of the only ones at a full-service restaurant in the Lowcountry.

**Q: What's your first food memory?**

**A:** My first memory of making food is from childhood. My younger sister and I would make Snickerdoodles in my mom's kitchen.

We made quite a mess, but our Mom encouraged us throughout. Not only did we love baking the cookies, but the time spent together was wonderful.

**Q: What do you cook at home?**

**A:** Understandably, I love to eat out when I am not at work. It is relaxing to let someone else do the cooking, while I sit back and enjoy. When I do cook at home, I enjoy cooking Asian stir-fry and steamed vegetables. I also love to grill lamb chops and summer squash.

**Q: What mistakes do you see home cooks make?**

**A:** Sometimes when people cook at home, they try



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and recreate a fancy restaurant dish. In the process, they often use too many ingredients.

When you cook at home, it's best to stick to simple ingredients you know and the food is equally as delicious. Fancy and complicated doesn't always mean better, especially at home.

**Q: What's your favorite cookbook?**

A German book titled "Koch Kunst in Bildern." It is written in German, but the book is in color with beautiful photographs that really represent the art that is created with each dish. The whole book, even its cover, is presented as though it is a piece of art.

**Q: What made you decide to become a chef?**

**A:** I think the career chose me. Having two professional artists as parents helped me see the art in cooking as they encouraged me to develop my creative side. It became apparent very early that I had talent as a chef and was able to make money doing something I

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Going to culinary school seemed to be the natural next step. It was while I was in school when I really developed my passion because I had an amazing mentor.

**Q: Favorite kitchen gadget?**

**A:** The Japanese Turning Slicer. I am completely fascinated by the way it cuts vegetables.

**Q: What do you feel is your greatest accomplishment as a chef?**

**A:** My greatest accomplishment was creating the culinary experience at Crave. Fortunately, I was able to be with the team at Crave from day one, its inception. I was able to help

design my kitchen, select my staff and create our initial menus, which present interesting foods with options for all tastes and dietary constraints. I feel as if I helped “birth” Crave.

**Q: Who is your favorite Charleston Chef?**

**A:** If I had to single out my favorite, it would be Sean Brock, McCrady's executive chef.

He has taken steps forward to grow his own organic produce and raise some of his own livestock in an effort to ensure that McCrady's has the freshest dishes possible.

By controlling the ingredients and focusing on innovative techniques, Sean is an award-winning chef.