

THE WESTIN CHICAGO RIVER NORTH

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General Manager Peter Simoncelli Takes Command of the Kitchen ... Literally

“Cooking with the GM” Provides Culinary Tips, Wine Pairing Expertise, Embroidered Apron and More

CHICAGO (January 15, 2008) – As the saying goes, if you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen. Peter Simoncelli, general manager of The Westin Chicago River North, proves that he *can* stand the heat by taking over the kitchen this February with the launch of “Cooking with the GM.” Simoncelli, who admittedly hides his obsessive kitchen gadget and culinary accessory buying from his wife, is ready to dice, chop and sauté with guests. Available the weekend of February 9, travelers will learn how to prepare a gourmet meal and perfectly pair wine with each course while donning an embroidered apron. The package includes deluxe club level accommodations, late check-out, valet parking, an intimate cooking seminar complete with lunch at the hotel's Ember Grille restaurant and starts at \$199 per person, per night, based on availability.*

While Simoncelli's day-to-day responsibilities encompass the ins and outs of running one of Chicago's premier luxury hotels, his passion has always been cooking. An avid foodie, with more than 15 years of experience in the food and beverage industry prior to becoming a general manager, Simoncelli is a member of Chaîne des Rôtisseurs, the international gastronomic society for worldwide members who appreciate and share a mutual interest in cuisine, wine and fine dining.

“I find great pride and pleasure in cooking. Unfortunately, I rarely get the opportunity to get behind the stove and showcase my culinary passion and knowledge of wine pairing,” says Simoncelli. “This program allows me to personally interact with guests while dishing out some industry insight that travelers can utilize in their day-to-day lives.”

Simoncelli will tantalize taste buds with one of his infamous recipes that features fresh ingredients specially selected to celebrate the season. With the “Cooking with the GM” program, aspiring chefs will observe Simoncelli behind the stove of the hotel's signature Ember Grille restaurant, while at the same time sharpening their own cooking skills. Along the way, guests will also gain knowledge on how to perfectly pair wine with each course. Once the gourmet meal is prepared, apprentices will devour the delightful dishes while being wined and dined by “Chef” Simoncelli.

To not leave guests feeling banned from the kitchen, travelers will have the opportunity to replicate Simoncelli's signature recipe during their stay with the help of the hotel's executive chef, Stephen Milstein. The culinary maestro will guide chefs-in-training on how to properly prepare the gourmet meal to enjoy at home.

For reservations please call (312) 744-1900 or visit www.westinchicago.com and ask for COOKING rate code when booking.

Overlooking the Chicago River at 320 North Dearborn Street, The Westin Chicago River North is centrally located in the heart of Chicago's business and theatre districts and steps from Millennium Park, fabulous Michigan Avenue shopping and great restaurants. The hotel's 424 rooms and suites offer beautiful skyline views and feature Westin's legendary Heavenly Bed® and invigorating Heavenly Bath®. The recently refreshed Westin Executive Club® Level showcases guestrooms with iMAC computers, iPod docking stations, 32-inch flat-screen televisions, complimentary high-speed Internet access and ample desk space. The new Westin Executive Club® Lounge offers complimentary Wi-Fi, 42-inch flat-screen televisions and more. For distinctive dining there is Ember Grille, Hana Lounge and Kamehachi Sushi Bar. Other services and amenities include WestinWorkout® Powered by Reebok, massage therapy, concierge services and a state-of-the-art business center. For further information visit www.westinchicago.com or call (312) 744-1900.

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Rate is based on double occupancy and does not include tax or service charge. One embroidered apron per person. Advance reservation required, maximum number of 20 people per session.