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**THE INSTITUTE OF CULINARY EDUCATION WELCOMES AWARD-WINNING  
PASTRY CHEF MICHAEL LAISKONIS  
FROM LE BERNARDIN AS CREATIVE DIRECTOR**

The Institute of Culinary Education — New York, NY, February 2012

The Institute of Culinary Education (ICE) in New York City welcomes award-winning pastry chef Michael Laiskonis as its first-ever Creative Director. In this new and innovative role, which begins in March, Laiskonis will bring his talent, insight and experience to ICE students.

Laiskonis has long been one of the industry's most creative and talented chefs. Fresh off of an eight-year tenure as Executive Pastry Chef at Le Bernardin, Laiskonis is well known for helping the restaurant earn four stars from *The New York Times* and three Michelin stars. He was named to America's Top Ten Pastry Chefs by *Pastry Art & Design* in both 2002 and 2003 and was *Bon Appétit's* Pastry Chef of the Year in 2004. Best known for his use of modern techniques to reinvent classic desserts, he was also awarded the coveted James Beard Award for Outstanding Pastry Chef in America in 2007. Laiskonis has been an active writer, in print and on-line, including *Gourmet*, *Saveur* and *The Atlantic* and has appeared as a judge or resource on television shows such as *Top Chef Just Desserts*.

As Creative Director, Laiskonis will join the educational leadership team to direct new projects in curriculum development and research, teach classes, mentor ICE students and faculty and serve as an industry ambassador for ICE. ICE President Rick Smilow said, "Michael's been an active member of our Advisory Board for over a decade. So we know well the intelligence, drive and commitment to excellence that he will bring to our programs".

Laiskonis remarked, "After twenty years in the kitchen, this new role with ICE is the perfect opportunity for me to give back, and inspire the next generation of chefs to excel and innovate in the culinary and pastry arts."

While Laiskonis is best known as a pastry chef, he did spend most of the first half of his career on the savory side of the kitchen, mostly in his home state of Michigan. Accordingly, Smilow notes that "while pastry and baking will be Michael's first focus, we know his knowledge can transcend to other departments and curricula at the school."

For more information, contact Stephanie Bourgeois in the ICE Public Relations Department at (212) 847-0775 or [stephanie@iceculinary.com](mailto:stephanie@iceculinary.com)

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### **About ICE**

The Institute of Culinary Education (ICE) is New York City's award-winning center for culinary education. Founded in 1975, the school offers highly regarded 8- to 13-month career training programs in Culinary Arts, Pastry & Baking Arts, Culinary Management and Hospitality Management. ICE also runs one of the largest programs of recreational cooking classes in the country. In 2008, ICE was named the International Association of Culinary Professionals' Culinary School of the Year and a School of Distinction by the ACCSCT in 2006. More information can be found at [www.iceculinary.com](http://www.iceculinary.com). The school, is located at 50 W. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street in New York City.