

BOYD BUZZ



Boyd's Best Bites: The best dishes around Boyd Gaming and the world

by Elisabeth Daniels

Originally from Michigan, **Thomas Wicinski** graduated from the American Culinary Institute in Hyde Park, N.Y. He spent almost 20 years in the back of the house, working first as a cook and then as an Executive Chef for 16 years.

He was an Executive Chef then Food and Beverage Director at San Pablo Lytton Casino in San Francisco for almost 13 years. He first joined the Boyd Gaming team in April 2012 when he joined **Sam's Town Hotel and Casino** in Shreveport, La., as the Director of Food and Beverage Operations before joining the Evangeline Downs team in 2013. He holds several prestigious certifications, including ACF (American Culinary Federation), CEC (Certified Executive Chef), and a wine certification from the Culinary Institute of America.

We spoke with Wicinski about some of the best things he ever ate.

What is the best thing you ever ate?

I've lived in eight different states, so it's pretty diverse. I lived in Napa, California for 16 years, and I still have a home there. Probably the best dinner I ever had was at Masaharu Morimoto's (known as one of the Iron Chefs on the Food Network) restaurant in downtown Napa. He had a roasted bone marrow appetizer and a number of different sushi rolls on the menu. It was just a fantastic culinary experience.

Is roasted bone marrow just what it sounds like?

It is exactly what it sounds like; the bone is split in half. It was a veal bone from the leg, ginger spiced with soy and garlic. It was a Japanese experience that was excellent!

What is your favorite food at Evangeline Downs?

A couple of the best things we have here are our chicken and sausage gumbo. At Blackberry's, our fresh seafood and steakhouse, we have an excellent Kurobuta pork chop. A 10- to 12-ounce, double-cut pork chop on the bone, accompanied by rice dressing and shrimp-stuffed cabbage roll with wilted spinach and red pepper gastrique.

How does the Louisiana area and the Cajun influence play into your menus?



What we're attempting to do is use local ingredients of Louisiana and infuse the flavors into our menus. We like to pull from Acadiana and New Orleans influences and blend them into our restaurants.

What's coming up at Food & Beverage at Evangeline Downs?

We change our menus seasonally and are in the midst of our winter menus. We also have a new Executive Chef, Albert Tash. Albert has spent over 8 years with another casino company at various locations.