



*Detroit*

THE CITY OF

CHEFS

Dedicated × Daring × Defiant

*Public Comments  
from Film's Premiere*



Visionalist  
Entertainment Productions



### **December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024 Premiere Comments:**

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If you're from Detroit or ever thought of this great city, you need to see the documentary ***Detroit: The City of Chefs***. Up until now most people across the US would think Detroit is car companies, Motown records or even at a low point we were called Murder City. This film shows the grit of the city through people, food, and culture. I was lucky enough to be a Chef that was part of the transformation of the food scene in this great city. The chefs really can't take credit. It was Detroit diners that were more well read and traveled than ever before, guys like Jimmy Schmidt, Ed Janos, Keith Famie and myself just stepped up to the challenge with great sharing and comradery. We were taught by old school greats, then we taught the next generation. Now, Detroit has a vibrant food scene like never before. It really does take a village.

**Chef Brian Polcyn, CEC**

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This was such an important story to tell. From a historical perspective, the film traces our culinary history and in doing so, it places the chefs that made our city the great food city that it is, into that dazzling history forever. I for one, appreciate that!

**Chef Rick Halberg**

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"Real mise en place". This film has everything in place to share what I have always believed and known. We are not only committed to excellence as Detroit Chefs but are unified in belief that our Chefs in Detroit embrace service elegance and have been quiet for too long. Through this film, our mission of upholding numerous cultures through cuisine is established. We roar like lions and tigers, and now all can see and share that we are a family with deep roots.

**Chef Shawn Loving, CMC**  
**Detroit Athletic Club**

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Chef Keith Faime's ***Detroit: The City of Chefs*** documentary was simply amazing. His ability to tie together the history of the mentors who established such high food quality standards while focusing on the culinary schools that prepared the remarkable future chefs, all while incorporating the cultural influences of the area, was simply brilliant. Preserving this rich history and honoring those who made it happen is critical, and this will truly inspire the next generation of young culinarians.

**Roger Kreager**  
**Chef Source**

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I had the opportunity to attend the preview of the ***Detroit: The City of Chefs*** and Wow!!! This film was done so well that it brought many memories and tears to me. It made me want to go back in time and become an upcoming chef again. The history, the photos, the videos, and the new generation of today's chefs was all included in this film in a very creative view.

Keith Famie has done it again as a great producer of documentaries. Attending the preview was much more than watching the film. Seeing my peers, my student alumni and industry friends at the preview was an event that I will never forget. Thank you, Keith, for taking on this project and I hope to see Part 2.

**Chef Jeffrey Gabriel, CMC**

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Keith Famie's vision for this documentary was a tremendous undertaking considering the vast history of the Detroit culinary scene. After watching the film, it became very apparent the true "love" for Detroit history Keith possessed. To fit all of the essential elements in an hour and a half is simply incredible. This is a must watch for not only for foodies, but for those who want to understand the importance of the culinary heritage Detroit possesses.

**Chef Chris Misiak, CCE, CEC**  
**Schoolcraft College's Culinary Arts Program**

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Dear Keith, our daughter, Molly, and I cannot thank you enough for the special treat you gave us. The whole evening was spectacular. Your film will open up not only Detroit to the importance and successes of the restaurant kitchens, but it sure will open the eyes of the Nation, and I have no doubt that Europeans, the near and Far East will get wind of it as well. Thank you, thank you.

Joe often told the kitchen staff that **THEY** made the restaurant successful, he just greeted and seated. He made sure the wait staff and bussers knew the same, and that prevailed throughout the years. One evening when Mohamed Ali was in, Joe asked him to greet those in the kitchen. Ali shook everyone's hand and told each one he just had the best meal ever. Those impressions went a long way.

Once again, thank you for all you have done for the efforts in the kitchen. You were truly selfless. Now, the seeds of your efforts will grow and grow.

**Jane Muer**  
**Joe Muer's Seafood**

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I cannot begin to express how incredible ***Detroit: The City of Chefs*** was! In addition to it being a creative, well documented and fun film, I was completely overwhelmed! I didn't expect to cry. The pride I felt of being a part of the history blew me away. Seeing Jimmy Schmidt and Madeline brought back such special times. We were hooting for all our special people. Oh, Achille, I remember him well. I could go on. Just know how proud I am of your continued success and happy to have had the opportunity to work with you.

**Kelli Damman**

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The film captures the feeling, emotion, and essence of food and restaurant history in Detroit and reminds us of the legacy of important culinary figures of the past and their connection to those that lead the industry today.

Restaurants and cooking are as much about people as they are about food. This film about food is really about people, and how those things interact. It reminds us of the titans of industry whose shoulders we stand on today.

**Charles Johnson**  
**Executive Manager, Detroit Athletic Club**

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I wanted to extend my heartfelt thanks for the opportunity to participate in ***Detroit: The City of Chefs***. It was a pleasure to be part of such a well-organized and impactful event. Your efforts truly created a wonderful experience for everyone involved. I am thrilled to hear about your plans for the next event in 2025 and fully endorse the idea of participating once again. Thank you again for all your hard work and dedication.

**Shasta Fase & Cory DeLong**  
**Old World Olive Co.**

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***Detroit: The City of Chefs*** is a wonderfully insightful dive into the rich, world sourced, culinary heritage and social gastronomy that shaped this great city. Detroit was a mixing pot of many diverse cultures, all drawn by the incredible world changing automotive industry, that brought the best from all over the globe to be celebrated at the table. This collection of culinary talent and bountiful local agricultural resources kindled a love for food through every restaurant and neighborhood.

Keith Famie, an accomplished chef in his own right, is the perfect guide into Detroit's rich culinary roots highlighting the famous chefs over the years. These early chefs mentored upcoming generations of culinarians that have expanded and continued to enrich the local culinary scene. The collection of renowned culinary schools and innovating creative chefs, planted some of the first seeds for a new emerging American Cuisine that grew up proud and took its place on the world culinary scene. This culinary celebration continues today as an important part of our substance, through nutrition and mental nourishment, for all of us to celebrate!

**Chef Jimmy Schmidt**

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Keith Famie brings important history to light in his latest documentary with a behind the scenes look into the who's who in the food/restaurant culture in Detroit. It is a wonderful tribute to chef Milos Cihelka featuring many of the chefs he has mentored. With heartfelt commentary emphasizing the important elements of training, apprenticeship, and commitment. The documentary is a walk down memory lane for those who lived it and will inspire others to pursue our craft.

**Chef Daniel G. Hugelier, CMC**

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***Detroit: The City of Chefs*** is a nostalgic delight that coaxed fond memories of meals at the Money Tree, Golden Mushroom, Les Auteurs, Muer's, Yvonne's, and shopping at Merchant of Vino.

Superb cinematography, scoring, interviews, animation, images research and especially storytelling.

**Alan Stamm**

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Storytelling stands as one of the most authentic forms of expression, capable of transforming lives when executed with care.

I was profoundly moved by this tribute to the remarkable chefs of Detroit and their culinary excellence. The narrative was not only enlightening and profound, but also a visual masterpiece.

This particular moment will surely be recognized as the spark that ignites a new era in Detroit's culinary narrative. I am deeply grateful to Keith for including my family in this sincere and touching story. It's a privilege!

**Adrian Tonon  
Café Cortina**

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I have known Keith Famie back to his days as a working chef. I have also gotten to meet or know several of the chefs profiled in the film because of my media career. That said, I never really understood the fraternity and rich history of chefs in Detroit. The film allowed me to appreciate the art, hard work and personal sacrifice each chef has made along the way. What a great piece of storytelling! I will certainly appreciate my next plated restaurant meal in a whole new way moving forward. Bravo to Keith and his team for a job "well done".

**Chuck Gaidica  
Former Director of Meteorology, WDIV-TV**

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I savored every moment of Keith Famie's sensational new documentary, ***Detroit: The City of Chefs***. As the publicist for so many iconic Detroit restaurants over the past four decades, including The Benchmark, Joe Muer's, Rattlesnake Club and Caucus Club, the film beautifully captures the perfectionism and passion that coexist with the chaos and pressure of the restaurant business in the front and back of the house. What a sentimental walk down memory lane to hear directly from Detroit's colorful culinary giants such as Joe Muer, Duglass, Rick Halberg, Jimmy Schmidt, Milos Cihelka and so many others in their own words and from their hearts about their triumphs, trials and tribulations. ***Detroit: The City of Chefs*** pulls back the proverbial curtain and shows us in an unflinching way what it took (and takes) to survive and thrive in Detroit's competitive restaurant environment by serving up a story that is rich with history and packed with intimate morsels of raw emotion. It's clear that making this film was a deeply personal endeavor for Famie, and it left me craving his next course.

**Carolyn Krieger**  
**CKC Agency**

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Thank you, Chef Famie, for an emotional trip down memory lane!!! The thousands who contributed to the restaurant industry over the last few decades and beyond are all connected as a sort of family with deep emotional ties from living and breathing the service industry and all of its ups and downs. You showed this throughout the film as chefs were more than mentors. They were father figures, friends, entrepreneurs, and pillars of society. The stories deeply touched me as I've witnessed the kind of drive, effort and talent it takes to open and run a restaurant, train cooks and staff, etc, and to be financially successful.

Bravo to all who built a beautiful Detroit food culture that thrives today! I really enjoyed the film and I look forward to watching part two!! Congratulations Chef!

**Donna Prentice**

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Hats off to Keith Famie's documentary film, ***Detroit: The City of Chefs***. Truly a great undertaking of such a comprehensive subject that is an important part of Detroit's history. A city's culinary scene is so vital to a city's identity, and it helps drive so much in a community, in so many ways. It was great to see that story be told in Keith's film. I can't wait for chapter two!

**Chef Ed Janos, CMC**

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I really enjoyed ***Detroit: The City of Chefs*** for multiple reasons. The film really captures the essence of our community, our culture and our cuisine. The film does a great job of taking us on the journey of where our cuisine was formed from. The beginning of the immigrant movement and how the food and culture was brought to Detroit and adapted. The journey (film) takes us from the past and to the here and now. So many conversations that focuses on where it all came from, where it is now and where it is going. I can't wait for the next installments.

**Chef Paul Grosz, CEC  
Cuisine**

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I learned about this documentary about six months ago. As time went by, the anticipation of the premiere grew at a fevered pace for all those involved and those in the know. All I can say is it did not disappoint. The crowd was electric, and the theaters were packed. We all came away with wanting more. As one friend stated that this documentary was the best thing that he's seen on PBS, ever. Hats off to Keith and his crew of professionals. In the restaurant industry, we would call this a "Perfect Night of Service."

**Chef Steve Allen**

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Perhaps since Anthony Bourdain's ***Kitchen Confidential***, no one has taken us behind the swinging doors of the culinary world quite like Keith Famie has with ***Detroit: The City of Chefs***. This documentary offers an intimate look at a community of extraordinary chefs—where they came from, their inspirations, and the mindset behind their love of food.

Detroit's culinary scene was uniquely shaped by the great migration of populations from around the world during its heyday as the "Paris of the Midwest." Over generations, this cultural convergence gave rise to distinct interpretations of classic global dishes. With such a rich local history to draw from, Detroit's chefs have held their own against culinary competition from the coasts and across the Atlantic.

Attending the premiere, I couldn't help but notice how much we've matured as a community. Keith presented the chefs with honesty and insight, showcasing their well-earned celebrity and almost rock-and-roll status. The room was filled with a massive amount of creative talent—talent born and bred locally, from chefs who have paid their dues and continue to teach and inspire the next generations.

**Chef George Vutetakis**

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What a magnificent production – something only you could put together. Your passion for food and the food industry was on full display. Your artistry of film production and storytelling shown how the restaurant business came of age in Detroit. Through the '50s, '60s, and '70s, we took for granted the many great restaurants and chefs. Through the production, ***Detroit: The City of Chefs***, they came alive again and reminded the viewer that many culinary delights are still out there. Continued blessings to you and your staff.

**Carl & Carol Schiller**

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The ***Detroit: The City of Chefs*** documentary really captures the essence of Detroit's culinary scene past and present. Seeing the history of the ACF Michigan Chefs de Cuisine association on the big screen from its early days was truly inspiring. It was amazing to see all my mentors coming up as a young chef in metro Detroit being celebrated in a format that will be remembered forever. Keith Famie did a fantastic job putting this film together.

**Jim Churches CEC, CCA, AAC**  
**Sr. Corporate Executive Chef & Culinary Team Leader, Land O'Lakes Inc.**

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What a gem! Filmmaker Keith Famie and his team expertly weave together the stories, struggles and triumphs of Detroit's most celebrated chefs and restaurateurs in the newly released film ***Detroit: The City of Chefs***.

This behind-the-scenes peak at the lives of highly lauded food and beverage professionals will take you back to the pioneering days of the Detroit restaurant scene and budding local culinary school programs in a way that has you applauding their achievements and leaves you emotionally touched by their stories. Sure to be regarded as the quintessential telling of the evolution of the Detroit restaurant community, ***Detroit: The City of Chefs*** is not to be missed!

**Adrian Lark**

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What a delightful journey through the rich culinary heritage of Detroit. It's no wonder with our great history that Detroit is such "foodie" city. It's so easy to eat a beautiful meal out without thinking about the skill, hard work and dedication it's taken that chef to get where he or she is. Not anymore. Thank you, Keith, for shining a light on those who work when we play! Now I can't wait to visit many of the restaurants featured that I have yet to go to!

**JoAnne Purtan**  
**Radio Host, WOMC**

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Having been fortunate enough to be on the periphery during the ascent of Detroit's chef-driven restaurant scene in '80s and '90s, this wonderful film was a trip down memory lane. It was especially nice to hear the perspective of all the chefs I knew—or thought I knew—and what they were thinking and experiencing while we all sat in the dining room enjoying the fruits of their labors. Thankful that Keith was wise enough to acknowledge the tie-in with wine and the wine trade and how it helped complete the circle for the guests at all the wonderful restaurants highlighted in the film. Hats off to Chef Keith!

**Rick Lopus**  
**Great Lakes Wine & Spirits**

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Keith, I wanted to congratulate you on the work the team did in creating what I believe is an outstanding film! I have received countless calls from many of my colleagues and friends stating that you did an amazing job of telling the story of the journey and how the current culinary scene is a result of those European chefs, along with the various immigrant cultures, laying the groundwork for what we have today. The inclusion of the culinary arts schools and the role they will play in the future was a standout! Kara Gordon specifically called that out, she said they are the future. The film pulled at our emotions as well, there was a deep sense of pride for the industry as a whole. You were able to capture the feeling of a 3rd generation restaurateur as he spoke of his father and grandfather, and when CMC Shawn Loving described how you made him feel, there was not one dry eye in the theatre! It is so important to highlight the sacrifice and love that goes into being a committed chef and you did a marvelous job of that! We have such a rich history in the Detroit area! I cannot say enough about the film! Thank you for your passion for storytelling!

**Alex Agbay**  
**Commercial Sales Director Great Lakes East Division, Gordon Food Service**

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From a journalist's perspective, Keith Famie's film has that vital linchpin perspective that explores a crux period when Detroit moved from mom-and-pop ethnic cuisine to a new world of culinary exploration, led by talented and inventive young men and women who saw an entirely new way forward. That time and those new chefs totally reshaped how the entire city saw itself through food. The importance of that movement alone and what they achieved, for us all, cannot be understated.

**Christopher Cook**  
**Wine Writer & Restaurant Critic, *Detroit Free Press* & *HOUR Detroit***

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The warm experience of watching this film was a deep enjoyment of the fabric of my professional life. I grew up alongside many of these chefs, hearing their names at the beginning of their careers. I saw a story of chefs who were competitive and ambitious but without malice. Everyone worked so hard and there was room for everyone at the table. There's a fellowship in this city that reflects the Midwest which is the pulse of America for me. I loved seeing the young student chefs respectfully learning technique and discipline from the many master chefs who have worked among us. And seeing Eddie Jonna talk about the beginnings of the Detroit wine community was a great pleasure, his irrepressible, creative spirit has always been something special.

I loved seeing the credits at the end, the names of people whose work wasn't officially celebrated in the film but who were recognized, and who are honored in our memories. Matt Prentice, in particular, quietly supported so many young culinarians, as he called them, nothing gave him more joy than helping them along. I worked for Matt for many years and learned true teamwork from him. And I have a very soft spot in my heart for the food and wine writers of Detroit, notably Molly Abraham, who celebrated up and coming restaurants, and rarely if ever spotlighted their challenges.

I'm so happy to have been included in this film. I owe my profession to the culinary and service staffs of Metro Detroit, and to their guests. Thank you for your loving touch, Keith and company!

**Madeline Triffon, Master Sommelier**  
**Plum Market**