

BLUEPOINT HOSPITALITY

Glenn May

Master Baker, Bluepoint Hospitality Group

Baltimore native Glenn May was already a successful self-taught savory chef with a restaurant of his own, but when his young daughter's love of croissants prompted him to try his hand at just baking and pastry, a new culinary challenge began to take shape. A quick study and an insatiable learner, he set out to master the demanding skills that are the foundation of the baked goods – as the Master Baker – offered by Easton, Maryland's Bluepoint Hospitality Group: tempting *croissants* presented at Weather Gage; slices of sourdough for each salad at Sunflowers & Greens; airy and robust Roman-style pizza crusts at Roma; and a selection of freshly baked artisan breads for The Wardroom, which he considers to be, frankly, perfect.

May earned a degree in Sociology from Maryland's Towson University. While bussing tables for travel money after graduation, he found himself drawn to the energy of the restaurant kitchen; so, on his return from backpacking through nearly every country in South America, he threw himself into pursuit of a cooking career. At a local Towson restaurant, he quickly worked his way up the kitchen hierarchy, and became a sous chef within two years. He then set off to explore Southeast Asia and India, absorbing the vibrant culinary traditions with a newly professional interest. Back in the Baltimore area, he broadened his experience in a number of establishments, learning the art of wine pairing, teaching cooking classes, running a catering operation, and executing picture-perfect wedding banquets at a popular historic inn. In 2004, drawn by the opportunity to open a restaurant of his own, he moved to the Eastern Shore and for the next three years, created traditional smoked barbeque at the Kennedyville Inn. The need for more family-friendly hours led him to an eight-year tenure with Whole Foods Market, in charge of the robust prepared foods department. The inability to find fresh, well-made, and reasonably priced croissants for his children triggered his first forays into the baking field.

With Thomas Keller's *Bouchon Bakery* cookbook as his springboard, May supplemented with copious research and experimentation. He expanded his efforts to bread baking, and, landing an interview with Bluepoint Hospitality Group for a general cooking assistant, declared that he wanted to be "the baker." Now, with two assistants of his own and a fully equipped basement *boulangerie* – with plans underway for a grand expansion – he provides the distinguished block of eateries with its daily bread:

Loaves of the signature sourdough are sold at the counter of Sunflowers & Greens, along with rotating cookie selections. The Stewart requires brioche buns for its waygu and lobster burgers, as well as warm soft pretzels, and a short list of exquisite sweets, such as sticky toffee pudding, to complement the fine libations. Next door at Weather Gage, May's artistry is on display under a fanciful arrangement of glass domes on the brass-sheathed counter: croissants, *pains au chocolat*, classic Italian olive oil cake, and *bambalone* – Italian pastries filled with various creams

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or jams, and topped with a sprinkling of sugar. “These have taken on a life of their own!” reveals May, delighted by their popularity.

The Wardroom and its baked goods selection means nothing less than a classic sourdough, a seasonally inspired focaccia, or a slice of the daily Bundt cake – displayed elegantly within its own glass cake stand. The most satisfying to him is the simplicity, yet oh so perfection and comfort, says the chef, of a fresh loaf of bread. “It is both understated and exquisite at the same time. To some, it may appear to be just flour, yeast, and water, but considerable skill, technique, and attention to detail is needed to make that crunchy crust and chewy center.”

May’s baking education has been enhanced by the Group’s annual January sabbatical, during which Mr. Prager has been known to bring in European professionals for intensive staff tutorials. “My first year, it was a team of French bakers, who worked with me to refine the sourdough, and really enhance the croissants and other pastries,” notes May. “Another year, it was an Austrian chef who provided important guidance to overcoming the learning curve of certain traditional desserts.” With a variety of operations and cuisines in his portfolio, it’s just as well that May thrives on exhaustive research and development: there remains plenty of dough-experimenting ahead.

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