



## The Tasting Room Announces the Hiring of Chef Michael Kramer

*"We are thrilled to have Chef Kramer on our team; he will be an integral part of our culinary evolution." ---- Jerry Lasco, Founder*

June 21, 2010 -- Lasco Enterprises, LLC, management company for The Tasting Room, MAX's Wine Dive, and The Black Door has hired nationally-recognized Chef Michael Kramer, formerly Executive Chef for VOICE at Hotel Icon, to be the Executive Chef for The Tasting Room Wine Cafés in Houston, Texas.

"We are taking our culinary program to its highest level ever," says Founder and CEO, Jerry Lasco. "Our original location in Uptown Park is almost seven years old and has a wonderfully loyal and supportive following – but we feel there still is improvement to be made with the culinary program – we know that Michael's considerable talent and experience will help us achieve our goals there, at our River Oaks location, and for future projects."

### Immediate Impact

Starting this week, Chef Kramer will begin updating the bar menus at both existing Tasting Room locations, as well as the daily lunch and Sunday brunch menus at the Uptown Park location.

### Private Events and Wine Dinners

Chef Kramer will be adding his touches to the extensive private event and catering menus at The Tasting Room, where the many private rooms and event spaces are booked most nights of the week. In addition, The Tasting Room will continue its tradition of hosting exciting food and wine tasting events, winemaker appearances, and gourmet wine dinners. Chef Kramer will bring an additional level of talent and skill to these special-occasion events. "I have watched this company grow and develop over the years, and have always been impressed with the success of these concepts – I am very excited to join this team, to help improve the existing culinary operations, and to have my hand in developing their future projects," said Kramer.

### Chef Kramer's Career Highlights



- **Training:** California Culinary Academy, San Francisco, 1992.
- **The Mansion on Turtle Creek,** Dallas, Texas, 1997-1998.
- **McCrary's, Charleston, South Carolina,** 1998-2005. Executive Chef and partner in 130-seat, nationally-recognized fine dining restaurant.
- **Michael Kramer Consulting,** Charleston, South Carolina, 2005-2007.
- **VOICE at Hotel Icon,** Houston, Texas, 2007-2010. Executive Chef.
- **Awards and Accolades:**
  - VOICE: Top-20 New Restaurants in the U.S., *Esquire Magazine*.
  - VOICE: Restaurant of the Year, TEXAS MONTHLY magazine.
  - VOICE: 10 Best New Restaurants, *Houston Chronicle* and *My Table Magazine*
  - McCrary's: Best New Restaurants in the U.S., *Esquire Magazine*.
  - McCrary's: AAA 4-Diamond Award, 2004-2005.
  - McCrary's: DiRona "Distinguished Restaurants in North America."

## **New Projects**

In addition to working on the food programs at the existing Tasting Room locations, Chef Kramer will help develop the next Lasco Enterprises venture in Houston, to be announced soon. “As a company, we are fortunate to have had some success over the years, and we’re currently in a period of significant growth,” says Lasco’s business partner Jonathan Horowitz. “We are opening the third MAX’s Wine Dive in San Antonio this fall, expanding the existing MAX’s in Austin, we have introduced The Black Door retail wine sales concept, and we have a number of other projects on the drawing board. It’s an exciting time for us, and we’re extremely fortunate to have someone with Chef Kramer’s talent and experience on our team.”

*About Lasco Enterprises – Formed in Houston in 2003, Lasco Enterprises is the management company for MAX’s Wine Dive (Houston, Austin and San Antonio), The Tasting Room Wine Cafés, and The Black Door, and now has over 150 employees in three cities. In 2009, The Houston Business Journal named Lasco Enterprises the 13<sup>th</sup> fastest-growing company in Houston and awarded the company its “Enterprise Champion” award for Lasco’s commitment to its employees, the communities in which it operates, and for its contributions to its industry. For more information visit [www.lascoenterprises.com](http://www.lascoenterprises.com); [www.tastingroomwines.com](http://www.tastingroomwines.com); [www.maxswinedive.com](http://www.maxswinedive.com); [www.theblackdoor.com](http://www.theblackdoor.com).*

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