

Not just food and gaming



Black Gaming Director of Food Operations Bruce Landvik has worked all over the country and joined the company in 2008. He likes Mesquite's environment.

Submitted Photo

Black Gaming's director of food operations also organizes events to benefit community

For the Desert Valley times

When 49-year-old Bruce Landvik walks into a restaurant, he immediately eyeballs the food and the environment. As director of food operations for Black Gaming, he has been involved in cooking in one fashion or another since he was 10, so he's definitely an expert in the profession.

"My grandmother owned restaurants when I was growing up," said Landvik, a native of Dayton, Ohio who grew up in Goodland, Kansas. "I would go home after school and then cook for my mom. I guess you could say that I grew up in the restaurant business."

In fact, Landvik's family also

includes great-grandparents who owned restaurants in Sweden.

Landvik has been all over the country working in the restaurant business. In 1980, he joined the Navy, where he was stationed in the Philippines and traveling throughout Asia. He got his first taste of fine dining working for The Broadmoor Resorts in Colorado Springs in 1984. He then opened The Peabody Orlando and Wyndham SeaWorld serving from 1985-89.

Landvik opened The Jefferson Sheridan in Richmond, Va., where he stayed until 1990, when he moved to Las Vegas.

"It was way too cold for me in Virginia," Landvik said. "I had

already been an executive in Virginia. My first job in Las Vegas was at the Old Frontier as a line cook. I could not be hired as a chef because I didn't have the Vegas experience. Nobody comes close to how many meals are served in Las Vegas. Disneyland and Disney World might be the only places with more meals served."

Landvik opened his own Cheyenne Café in the northwest portion of Las Vegas before joining the Mirage from 1993 for the first of three stints. He opened the Hard Rock, Santa Fe, Orleans and the Sun Coast before moving on to the Gold Coast.

However, as fast and glamorous as Las Vegas has become since its

growth spurt, Landvik received a career-changing call when Black Gaming Chief Operating Officer Anthony Toti contacted him in 2008. In December, Landvik joined Black Gaming and hasn't regretted a minute of living in Mesquite ever since.

"I love living in Mesquite," said Landvik. "I'm from a small town anyway, so I had no problem whatsoever getting used to Mesquite. I felt good about the city the first time I visited."

"I spent more than 20 years living in big cities and I had enough of them."

Landvik has expertise in both

FOOD

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the food business and promotions. He was responsible for landing the wildly successful Smokin' in Mesquite BBQ Championship three years ago. The event now attracts top teams from all over the country to Mesquite on Labor Day weekend with a \$40,000 purse.

Since landing that event, which dominates the parking lot east of the CasaBlanca Resort, Landvik has also been instrumental in securing the Open Dutch Oven Cook-off and the Smokin' Big Chili Challenge,

which ran in conjunction with Mesquite Motor Mania.

Each cooking event brings a long line of competitors from several states, with trucks and trailers filled to the brim with equipment and food needed for competition. The CasaBlanca and the Virgin River benefit, and so does the city of Mesquite.

"Food festivals are a lot of fun and they attract great, fun-loving people," said Landvik. "The events bring attention to Mesquite and you can bet that we have other ideas in mind in the future, too. The events we have had in the past

are amazing especially when you tie in the media coverage we have received from them. I can't believe the turnouts we have received not to mention the delicacies that have been produced with our cooking events."

Just as important is the fact that Mesquite's residents have provided tremendous support in each case. "Thousands of dollars have been raised for both the Cancer Help Society and the Virgin Valley Lions Club thanks to the cooking events.

"It's fascinating to me to see an event start out over a cup of coffee or a cold drink," Landvik analyzed. "When we start formulating an idea, the creative juices begin to flow and before you know it, we have a cooking event that would be welcomed in any big city in the country."

"And when we're cleaning up after an event knowing that one of our charities has benefited, that's the icing on the cake. There is a sense of

satisfaction that is unmatched."

Landvik was quick to point out that the teamwork effort exhibited by the Black Gaming team includes everyone from CEO Randy Black all the way down to the bussers; along with the waiters and waitresses; bartenders and cocktail

waitresses. "When people come to Mesquite, they have a good time," Landvik explained. "They have a good time because our people care, whether it's the executives or the maids who clean the rooms. People leave here and return to their homes thousands of miles away singing the praises of Mesquite and Black Gaming."

"And in just about every case, those same people return again and again, bringing their friends with them."

Almost every time food is served in any Black Gaming establishment, Landvik has something to do with it.

When Landvik needs his time away, he fills up his Harley, which he's had for 7 years, and rides off into the sunset.

"My Harley is my therapy," he said. "It's an Ultra Classic. I have been riding bikes since I was 10. ... This year I'm going to Sturgis and then into Canada. I have traveled more than 80,000 miles on my Harley, and I look forward to the next 80,000 miles."

Randy Black said Black Gaming was lucky to secure Landvik's services.

"He has worked at the Mirage as well as with the Boyd Group and at several of the Coast Resorts for Michael Gaughan," Black said.

"We really got lucky to get a big-time chef like Bruce to move here to Mesquite. It made me pretty nervous when he won our last Chili Cook-Off. Thank goodness it was the people's choice. He is skilled, from chili to Steak Diane."

ASK THE DOCTOR

ALL THINGS FEMALE

MIRANDA

• Continued from C1

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