



CHICAGO FRENCH MARKET CELEBRATES GRAND OPENING IN CHICAGO'S WEST LOOP

Chicago's first and only year-round, European-inspired indoor market gives consumers convenient, permanent and personal access to local artisans, farmers and purveyors selling an expansive assortment of food, wine, small batch goods and flowers

CHICAGO — Chicago French Market opens today at MetraMarket in Chicago's West Loop — a 15,000-square-foot, European-inspired market that now includes 25 individual vendors offering an array of local and certified organic produce, meats, fresh fish and seafood, breads, pastries, small batch cheese and wine, chocolates and sweets, artisan-made goods, flowers, plus distinctive prepared meals and snacks for busy customers. Unlike seasonal outdoor farmer's markets, MetraMarket's Chicago French Market and its vendors will stay open year-round, six days per week — *the first and only market of its kind in Chicago*. Chicago French Market, located at 131 North Clinton Street, will serve as the anchor for MetraMarket, an accessible, one-stop destination that will provide not only cultural and culinary experiences, but also life's essentials and convenience products. At street level and connected to Ogilvie Transportation Center's bustling suburban commuter concourse, MetraMarket also includes a 14,000-square-foot CVS/Pharmacy now open at 101 North Clinton Street and a 2,045-square-foot Espresso by Lavazza Italian café scheduled to open later this year. The entire 100,000-square-foot transit oriented development spans two city blocks bound by Lake, Canal, Washington and Clinton Streets, and is a collaboration between developer U.S. Equities Realty, the Bensidoun family, Metra and the City of Chicago.

"We expect that Chicago French Market will transform the cultural and culinary breadth of Chicago for area residents, workers, commuters and tourists alike," said Camille Julmy, vice chairman of U.S. Equities Realty. "Other U.S. cities such as New York, Cleveland, San Francisco and Seattle have successful urban markets — now Chicago has its year-round, indoor marketplace too."

The Bensidoun family, the largest market operator in Paris, is co-developing the market with U.S. Equities Realty, and will operate and manage Chicago French Market. The family members are fourth generation market operators. Thousands of vendors sell goods at the more than 80 markets throughout the Paris metropolitan area, including Marche Raspail, one of the largest certified organic markets in Europe. In 1996, the Bensidouns decided to expand outside of Europe to develop French Markets in the United States and chose Chicago for their U.S. base of operations. The Bensidouns now operate sixteen seasonal markets in the U.S., thirteen of which are located in Chicago and area suburbs. All of the Bensidoun's markets bring a sense of local community found in the markets of Europe, and provide



customers with a place to gather, socialize, purchase quality goods at reasonable prices and meet directly with knowledgeable artisans, farmers and purveyors.

“The bustling, one-stop market with individual artisans and purveyors has been a staple of life and culture for centuries in cities and towns across Europe, and was also a central feature of American communities leading up until World War II when modern supermarkets and big-box stores replaced them in most U.S. cities and towns. As a result, the vitality, choice and entrepreneurial spirit offered by these markets nearly vanished here,” said market operator and co-developer Sebastien Bensidoun. “The new movement in America to support local farmers, artisans and businesses gives us an opportunity to bring the European-inspired marketplace back to life in Chicago, and provide the Chicago community with the year-round marketplace experience already found in other U.S. cities and throughout Europe.”

The collective vision for Chicago French Market has helped the Bensidoun family and U.S. Equities bring together a special collection of local artisans and purveyors that will offer distinctive grab-and-go options for breakfast, lunch and dinner, light snacks, picnics, easy party planning for home and office settings, catering for area businesses and residents, fresh ingredients for cooking at home, plus meaningful gifts, all in one convenient location. Chicago French Market will also host ongoing events, seasonal celebrations and other special offerings throughout the year.

Over the past five years, the area surrounding Chicago French Market has exploded with residential and office growth and is now dramatically underserved by food, retail and entertainment options for the new inhabitants and commuters. The residential population has expanded to 41,000 within a half mile walking radius, the Central Business District (CBD) includes 500,000 office employees within a half mile walking radius and 110,000 daily rail commuter pedestrians pass through the area each day.

Vendors include:

Abbey Brown Soap Artisan

Founder and proprietor Deborah Kraemer brings handmade cold-pressed olive oil soaps, soothing body oils and relaxing bath essentials to Chicago French Market. All products are made in-house at the first Abbey Brown location in Chicago with fair trade ingredients including herbs grown organically and locally by Smits farm. Abbey Brown soaps and bath products are truly 100% natural, and are balanced for all skin types. Abbey Brown also offers classes on soap making, plus makes most packaging in-house.

Bowl Square

Young Sun Jang and her husband, Gwang Ho Jang, will make traditional Korean dishes such as *Bi Bim Bap* (seasoned beef and white rice topped with *namul* / sautéed vegetables and *gochujang* / chili pepper) and *Bulgogi* (marinated barbecued beef). The Jangs will offer a simple menu that gives consumers an opportunity to sample and experience Korean fare, widely viewed by top chefs and food trend experts as one of *the* hot new cuisines in the U.S.



Buen Apetito

Buen Apetito is a family owned taqueria that specializes in traditional Mexican favorites with modern flair and a focus on healthy, fresh and flavorful ingredients. The menu features grilled steak, chicken, salmon and vegetarian tacos and tostadas, plus burritos. All dishes are flavored with fresh herbs and distinctive spices of Latin America. For a sweet side of Buen Apetito, guests can also enjoy Dona Mona's signature cheesecake flan.

Canady Le Chocolatier

Chocolatier Michael Canady, who attended Richemonte School in Lucerne, Switzerland, and studied in Antwerp, Belgium, will offer his distinctive selection of artisan chocolate bon bons, truffles, nougat, ganache and dipped fruit slices — all handmade by Michael and his team. Canady Le Chocolatier opened his first Chicago location in 2005.

Chicago Organics

Operated by a Chicago-based team dedicated to the expanded production, marketing and distribution of locally grown and responsibly produced foods, Chicago Organics will offer an array of competitively priced, 100% certified organic produce, meats and dairy products.

Chundy's Bistro

David Chundy will bring Indian-fusion dishes, plus a variety of quality grab-and-go meals, salads, snacks and drinks to Chicago French Market. Menu highlights include cold sandwiches, meat and vegetarian Panini, soups such as green curry coconut, traditional Indian mulligatawny and lentil, salads, side dishes, a selection of chutneys and slaws. Chundy's Bistro will also serve a collection of fruit and vegetable sweet breads, flatbreads, plus fresh fruit smoothies, milkshakes and iced fruit teas.

City Fresh Market

Brothers Danny and Ray Kovacevic opened the first City Fresh Market location in 2004, a European-styled grocery shop in Chicago. Now both brothers will open a second, smaller location within Chicago French Market with a focus on fresh poultry and grass-fed beef raised without antibiotics and hormones, fresh fish and seafood, plus a variety of other meats, fruits, vegetables, cheese and meat pies, grab-and-go salads, fresh-squeezed orange juice and a selection of grocery items including olive oils, vinegars, salad dressings and more.

Completely Nuts

Former construction worker Phil Mostaccio began selling his roasted nuts at a local fair back in 1991, all from a cart that he handcrafted in his garage. Now Phil's business, Completely Nuts, is one of Chicago's most renowned nuts shops and will offer a variety of nuts at Chicago French Market including roasted and candied almonds, cashews, pecans and peanuts, all sold from Phil's handcrafted carts.

Delightful Pastries

In 1998, mother and daughter Stasia Hawyrszczuk and Dobra Bielinski opened the first Delightful Pastries bakery in Chicago and now will open another location within Chicago French Market. The bakery specializes in authentic European pastries, using local, natural and sustainably grown ingredients. The majority of Delightful Pastries' products are also made low-sugar and include seasonal breads, cookies, bars, cakes and morning pastries, plus traditional Polish and French savory specialties such as pierogi and quiches.

Espression by Lavazza

In addition to its 2,045-square-foot Italian café within MetraMarket, the 114 year-old, family-owned business will also serve its award-winning espresso and coffee drinks, plus authentic gelato, within Chicago French Market. Lavazza's entire booth at Chicago French Market was handcrafted in Italy and shipped by boat to Chicago.



FlIP Crepes

In 2003, France-native Antoine Elie began making and selling crepes at farmer's markets throughout Chicago. Using his grandmother's crepe recipe as a base, Antoine enhanced the recipe with healthy ingredients such as wheat flour, buckwheat and wheat germ, while also seeking opportunities to bring his crepes to market year-round. Antoine's FlIP Crepes at Chicago French Market start with this perfected crepe recipe, and incorporate select sweet and savory ingredients to make a distinctive version of the traditional French crepe — a burrito-shaped crepe wrap called the FlIP.

Frietkoten

Netherlands-native Jeroen Hasenbos will bring Amsterdam's traditional Frietkoten 'fry shack' experience to Chicago for the first time, with Belgian fries that are served in a cone and distinguished by a crisp outside and soft, delicious potato inside. In keeping with the popular 'fry shacks' in Amsterdam, Frietkoten will offer these traditional Belgian fries with up to 20 different sauces and aiolis to choose from on any given day. Soon after the grand opening, Frietkoten also plans to offer Dutch and Belgian beers to complement these traditional grab-and-go Belgian fries of the Netherlands.

Fumare

Dick McCracken left banking to pursue his love of good food and sharing his culinary finds with others. Fumare ('smoke' in Italian) brings traditionally cured and smoked meats from local producers to Chicago French Market. Items include locally made prosciutto, hams, smoked sausages, bacons and other delights. Sandwiches, drinks and sides are also available.

Juicy Orange

The Gasienica family, who moved to the U.S. from Germany in 2001, will serve fresh, squeezed-to-order fruit and vegetable juices, plus smoothies homemade with seasonal fruits. All juices are 100% juice, with zero added sugar or concentrates.

Les Fleurs

With more than 35 years in the floral business, Les Fleurs proprietor Dean Futris will bring a colorful collection of fresh-cut flowers, potted plants, orchids and European-style floral arrangements to Chicago French Market. Les Fleurs will offer grab-and-go bouquets, plus custom arrangements. The Les Fleurs team works with area residents and companies throughout Chicagoland, including well-known movie production teams that have trusted the Les Fleurs team with floral arrangements for various film sets.

Necessity Baking Company

Chicago-born Ellen Carney Granda enjoyed a successful career in non-profit fundraising and a brief stint in corporate America before turning her love of artisan bread baking into a growing bread company serving North Suburban farmer's markets and now Chicago French Market. Ellen and the Necessity Baking Co. 'Hive' (a team of bakers, market tote makers and worker bees) bring the art of old-fashioned bread baking techniques back to bread making, delivering hand-shaped and seasonally flavored breads to market goers. Specialties include sweet and savory French boules, olive oils from around the globe, aged balsamic vinegars and market bags constructed from oil cloth and vintage linens. Necessity Baking Co. uses only natural ingredients and infuses flavor through the most premium ingredient: time. 'Hive-made' fresh pasta will also be available every day soon after the market opens.

Pastoral Artisan Cheese, Bread & Wine

Chicagoans Ken Miller and Greg O'Neill own and operate this European-inspired, authentic neighborhood cheese and wine shop, offering the highest quality fine and artisan cheeses from America and around the world, select small production wines and freshly baked breads, along with a full complement of related items such as charcuterie and olives. Pastoral also offers custom gift collections, gourmet sandwiches and salads, picnics, catering, plus ongoing classes and events. Pastoral already operates successful locations in Lakeview and in the Loop and is known for its approachable and knowledgeable staff.



Pop This!

Lauri Bourgeois was inspired to launch her Pop This! popcorn business by her dad, Art Hixson (aka 'The Popcorn Man'), who started his own popcorn business in the 1980s selling at Chicago art festivals, Navy Pier, Taste of Chicago and eventually at his own storefronts in Chicago and Denver. The Pop This! team will make their gourmet popcorn onsite at Chicago French Market. They will offer more than 17 flavored popcorn varieties, and specialize in personalized, custom popcorn creations.

Produce Express

Fourth generation farmers in Chicagoland, the Jeffrey family will offer a variety of seasonal and locally grown fruits and vegetables, plus grab-and-go and made-to-order fruit baskets for holiday gifts and throughout the year.

Provo's Village Bake Shoppe

After immigrating to the United States in the 1980s and working for several bakeries, Wesley Kuras purchased the Village Bake Shoppe in 2000. Now focused on selling his family's homemade baked goods at farmer's markets throughout Chicago, Wesley will open a year-round location at Chicago French Market with a variety of breads, coffee cakes, sweet rolls, pastries, cookies, cakes and pies made with seasonal ingredients from local farmers. Provo's offerings are all free of high fructose corn syrup and preservatives.

RAW

Raw food-enthusiasts Polly Gaza and Carole Jones will offer a variety of meals, drinks and snack items, all made fresh daily onsite at Chicago French Market and based on a raw food diet of uncooked and unprocessed vegan foods. Featuring all organic ingredients, RAW's menu highlights include fresh salads, pizzas, pastas, muffins and granola, with a focus on nut-free. RAW will also offer a selection of super food smoothies, sunflower sprouts, vitamins, wheat grass shots, coconut water and rejuvelac, plus host onsite classes.

Saigon Sisters

Two sisters, Mary Nguyen Aregoni and Theresa Nguyen, along with their mother Suu Nguyen will offer signature Vietnamese cuisine with French accented flavors. The menu includes traditional summer/spring rolls (*Goi Cuon*), the quintessential *Pho* soup, salads and *Banh Mi*, Vietnamese sandwiches which have garnered significant attention in Los Angeles and New York City. The ingredients will focus on healthful, flavorful and aromatic herbs, spices, vegetables, seasoned meats and seafood from locally sourced farmers and purveyors.

Sweet Miss Giving's

Sweet Miss Giving's Bakery and Gifting opened last year as a premier bakery and jobs program that offers decadent baked goods for a good cause: more than 50 percent of all profits support the formerly homeless and HIV/AIDS-affected men, women and children of Chicago House. Its Chicago French Market location will serve homemade cupcakes, scones, cookies, biscotti, breakfast items such as croissants, muffins and bagels, plus a variety of breads and gift items.

Vanille Patisserie

Owned by Dimitri Fayard, the World Pastry Champion of 2008, and his wife Keli Fayard, an accomplished cake designer, Vanille Patisserie is an award-winning French pastry shop that melds classic European traditions with modern flavors. Vanille Patisserie specializes in wedding and special occasion cakes, handmade chocolates and candies, mousse cakes, tarts and French macarons. The Chicago French Market location will be Vanille Patisserie's second shop.



Wisconsin Cheese Mart

Headquartered in Old World Third Street in downtown Milwaukee, the Wisconsin Cheese Mart is a 70 year-old tradition. The Chicago French Market location will offer a large selection of the finest sheep, cow and goats milk cheeses, all made by local Wisconsin cheese producers.

Created by the Bensidoun Family with an authentic European market in mind, Chicago French Market's design elements include colorful canopies above each vendor's storefront and at Chicago French Market entryways, plus European-inspired wall graphics throughout the public area.

Chicago French Market is part of MetraMarket's first development phase which encompasses 66,000-square-feet of the total planned 100,000-square-foot retail development, and is already 50 percent leased. Chicago French Market and the overall MetraMarket development are an exceptional example of adaptive reuse and Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), a fast-growing trend to create compact, walkable and sustainable communities centered around high-quality rail and other transit systems. TOD makes it possible to live a higher quality life without complete dependence on a car. MetraMarket's adaptive reuse and TOD characteristics also promote sustainability, while at the same time help to reduce traffic and pollution and re-energize the areas surrounding transit centers.

Chicago French Market creates a cost-effective and high-traffic marketplace for small local artisans and purveyors, and follows in the footsteps of other bustling markets in urban hubs, such as Seattle's Pike Place Market, San Francisco's Ferry Building, Cleveland's West Side Market and New York's Grand Central Market, as well as the markets located near rail and other transit stations throughout Europe.

Architect OWP/P designed MetraMarket. W.E. O'Neil is the general contractor, Eurohypo AG is the primary construction lender and Metra is the grand lessor.

For more information, visit www.chicagofrenchmarket.com

###