

the  
MUSTANG CLUB  
— sip, savor + celebrate —



PHOTO BY MORGAN MARIE PHOTOGRAPHY  
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# THE MUSTANG CLUB

MIKE THORP, EXECUTIVE CHEF

Chef Mike Thorp knew from a young age that food would play a central role in his life. Growing up in a large family with deep farming roots, he spent much of his time in the kitchen alongside his grandparents, where he first saw how food could bring people together. That early influence led to his first job as a dishwasher and eventually to culinary school in St. Louis, where he began building the foundation for his career. After nearly a decade working at the historic Fox Theatre, he returned to Bowling Green to be closer to family, a move that ultimately led him to The Mustang Club.

Set inside a building rich with local history, The Mustang Club offers an experience that extends beyond the plate. Originally built in 1929 as a segregated high school, the space later served as a community center before sitting vacant for decades. Today, after an extensive renovation, many of the original elements remain, including the gym flooring, creating a setting that blends historic character with a refined, modern atmosphere.

In the kitchen, Mike's approach is best described as agrarian French, combining classical training with a strong emphasis on local and seasonal ingredients. Influenced by his time studying in Provence, where weekly trips to the market dictated what was served, he builds menus around what is fresh and available, allowing dishes to evolve naturally throughout the year.

"Local and seasonal is paramount," Mike says. "What you can find here not only supports the community, but it gives you the best quality to work with."

That philosophy shapes every part of the menu. Rather than remaining static, offerings shift frequently to reflect what is in season, from spring ramps and morel

mushrooms to produce sourced directly from nearby farms. Relationships with local growers play a key role, with ingredients sometimes grown specifically for the restaurant. It is an approach that requires constant adaptation, but one that keeps both the kitchen and the experience dynamic.

Behind the scenes, Mike describes the kitchen as a collaborative environment where ideas are shared, refined and brought to life as a team. There is a rhythm to the work, a kind of choreography that unfolds during service, where timing, communication and precision come together. When everything aligns, it is seamless. And when that energy carries into the dining room, it becomes something guests can feel.

For Mike, that connection is what matters most. While the technical side of cooking continues to evolve, the purpose remains the same: creating an experience that resonates beyond the meal itself.

"We're in the business to make people happy," he says. "When you can step out of the kitchen and hear that from someone, it makes it all worth it."

That sense of intention is reflected in every detail, from the ever-changing menu to the atmosphere of the space itself. The Mustang Club was designed to feel elevated without being exclusive, offering a place where guests can enjoy fine dining in an environment that is both welcoming and distinctly rooted in Bowling Green.

At its core, The Mustang Club is a balance of contrasts. French technique meets Southern influence, history meets innovation and each experience is shaped by what is available in the moment. It is a place where tradition is honored, creativity is encouraged and every meal tells a story grounded in both craft and community.