

THE PERIPATETIC GOURMET

MIDWESTERN EXPANSION

Nearly three years ago Gavin Kaysen, the former executive chef of New York's Café Boulud, moved back home to Minneapolis to open downtown's Spoon and Stable, his ode to American cooking. Now he returns to French cuisine with Bellecour, his dazzling new bistro and bakery on the shore of Lake Minnetonka. Here's how the city's prodigal son spends an anything-but-average day.

by **Jessica Flint** | Photographs by **André Carrilho**



Chef Gavin Kaysen at Bellecour, his restaurant in the tony Minneapolis suburb of Wayzata



Bellecour's baker starts working at 2 A.M. and finishes around 11 A.M.

10:33 A.M.
"Eighty percent of my job is dealing with restaurant logistics," says Gavin Kaysen, who on this day starts his morning at Bellecour with an hour-long videoconference discussing the business.

11:35 A.M.
Kaysen, 38, drives his Mercedes-Benz to Spoon and Stable, where preparation is happening for the restaurant's Synergy Series, which brings world-class chefs to town for a charity dinner. Chef Grant Achatz of Chicago's Alinea will be cooking at S&S the next two nights. The 160 tickets sold out in 38 seconds at up to \$450 per head.

11:58 A.M.
At S&S, Kaysen runs into his gardener. They chat about the restaurant's herb garden out front.

12:03 P.M.
"Let's get rolling!" Kaysen says to the 13 S&S employees

gathered for the managers' meeting. The team starts talking: "We don't have many dietary restrictions tonight...." "For Sunday brunch, a group wants scrambled eggs for the kids...."

12:43 P.M.
With the meeting over, Kaysen checks on the microgreens

growing in S&S's basement. Achatz texts Kaysen: His plane is delayed out of Chicago.

1:59 P.M.
Kaysen is back at Bellecour for an 11-person managers' meeting. The debate: whether to impose a bakery preorder minimum, as people have figured out they can skip



Bellecour's short rib with sauce au poivre



A martini being poured at Bellecour



One of visiting chef Grant Achatz's team members preps for dinner at Spoon and Stable.



At Spoon and Stable's mini microgreens farm

the line simply by preordering one croissant.

3:37 P.M.

"I should eat," says Kaysen, who, ironically, hasn't had a bite all day. As if on cue, he's told it's time to taste tomorrow night's special: the black truffle explosion burger. Kaysen requests that his chef add something pickled to it.

3:41 P.M.

"I have to set up my station," says Kaysen. He'll be in Bellecour's kitchen for the night, primarily directing. "The cooks, dishwashers, the servers, the runners—so many systems make a restaurant happen."

5 P.M.

Dinner at Bellecour begins, as does dinner at Spoon and Stable. "I'll get home around midnight," Kaysen says, "and do it all over again tomorrow."



On Fridays, Bellecour serves 25 special burgers at the bar starting at 4 P.M.



A custom white oak bed at Hotel Alma

HOT PROPERTY

THE ALMA COMPOUND

For nearly two decades in Minneapolis, James Beard award-winning chef Alex Roberts has quietly been running his seasonally driven **Restaurant Alma** out of a historic former firehouse and speedboat factory near the Mississippi River. A longtime renter, Roberts bought the building in 2014, and last November he debuted not only a renovation of the restaurant but also two additions: the casual **Cafe Alma**, which features an all-day menu plus coffee and baked goods to go, and, upstairs, the **Alma Hotel**, seven minimalist rooms done in hardwoods, brass, velvets, and leathers. "It's kind of like a house," Roberts says of his hospitality trifecta. "The hotel is like your guest room, the café like your living room, and the restaurant like your dining room." Indeed, the luxury of the Alma experience is wandering through the spaces as if they were your own: Do predinner cocktails in the café (try the Root Beer Manhattan), move next door for dinner (the three-course prix fixe menu changes four times a year), then turn in for the night upstairs—but not before placing an order for breakfast in bed. *Rooms from \$135; almampls.com. —J.F.*