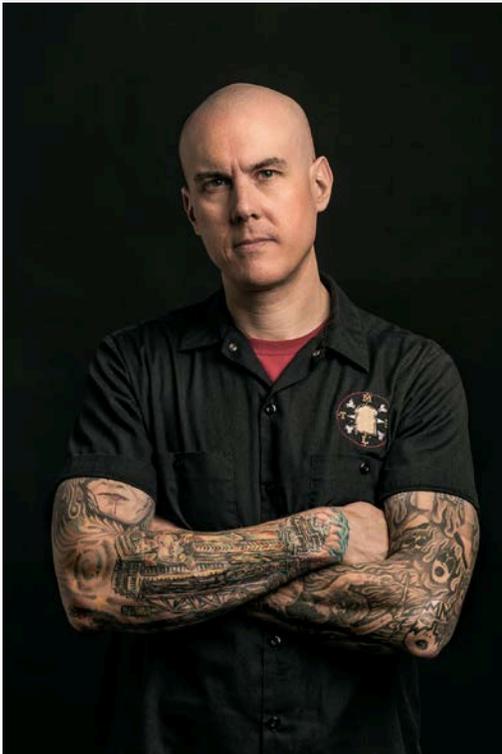


MATT FISH

OWNER/FOUNDER



Matt Fish is a restaurant entrepreneur and a musician. His connection to music is significant because it guides his vision and permeates every aspect of Melt Bar and Grilled. Fish wants every visit to be like attending a rock concert – exciting and memorable; and every menu item to be like a song – unique, meaningful and special in its own way.

Fish started his “real world” culinary education in 1992 when he got a job at a restaurant in his hometown of Parma, Ohio. He fell in love with the work and it derailed his plan of becoming an elementary school teacher. “Once I stumbled into the restaurant world, a light bulb went off, the stars aligned and I said, ‘OK... I’ve always wanted to do my own thing. So now it’s going to be a bar and a restaurant.’”

Matt Fish is a musician, and musicians are passionate people. They do what they do because they love it – that’s all there is to it. Fish learned right away that he was as passionate about the restaurant business and creating great food as he was about music.

He augmented his self-taught, on-the-job training with a degree in culinary arts and hospitality management from Cuyahoga Community College, which he earned in 1997.

Fish, who started his career in several popular independent Cleveland restaurants, always had a dream of opening his own restaurant and came up with the idea for Melt Bar and Grilled a few years before its actual opening. He really wanted something different and needed a completely unique concept. His earliest cooking memories from childhood were making grilled cheese with his mom, and it was always his go-to food of choice.

Quick, simple and delicious. A memory of childhood. Gourmet comfort food.

DECISION MADE: GRILLED CHEESE.

The thing about being a musician is when they create their art, they don’t put it in front of a focus group for validation – they put it into the world because they know it’s art. The same can be said of Matt’s art – the gourmet grilled cheese. It’s real, it’s authentic, it’s nostalgic. Each sandwich has a story to tell, just like a song.

The first Melt Bar and Grilled opened in Lakewood, Ohio in 2006, and was busy from day one, with lines around the block, lengthy waits for a table and insanely positive buzz. Soon, there was a second Melt location. Then a third. Now, with double-digit locations, Melt Bar and Grilled remains true to Matt’s vision and passion for awesome grilled cheese and gourmet comfort foods.

ACCOLADES:

- 2017 Inc. 5000 list of the fastest-growing private companies in America
- 2017 EY Entrepreneur of the Year Finalist
- Small Business Association’s 2015 Ohio Small Business Person of the Year
- 2012 Lakewood Chamber of Commerce Business Person of the Year