

MARKET BASKET

MARKETPLACE

Building a
bigger Block

Photo for the Tribune by Peter Thompson

The Chopping Block owner Shelley Young in the school's new digs in The Merchandise Mart.

By Kelly Aiglon
Special to the Tribune

Call it a gourmet growth spurt. The Chopping Block cooking school has moved its original Lincoln Park location to an 8,000-square-foot space in The Merchandise Mart. The new school, which opens Thursday, will offer dozens of classes, a chance to snap up cookware and hard-to-find ingredients, and lots of room to roam.

More space, more cookin'

Two hands-on kitchens and a sweeping demonstration kitchen await, ready for action. The space can accommodate 200 people for private events and 100 for sit-down dinners.

Quick, lose the business suit!

New classes are aimed at workday reprieve. The Friday Night Dinner Club is equal parts culinary lesson and social mixer, featuring an informal class followed by a family-style meal. Lunch & Learn classes, held select weekdays, are 45-minute lunch-hour quickies devoted to everything from sushi to Middle Eastern meals. Class fees typically range from \$20 to \$75.

Shop around

Everything in the adjoining culinary-focused retail store comes recommended. "We don't carry 10 food processors and 10 different pans," owner Shelley Young said. "I pick what I personally think is the best." The inventory includes Le Creuset cookware, Global knives, specialty and ethnic food items, and many tabletop pieces.

The Chopping Block

The Merchandise Mart, Suite 107
312-644-6360;
thechoppingblock.net
(also at 4747 N. Lincoln Ave.)
Hours: 10 a.m.-7 p.m.
Mon.-Fri.; 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
Sat.; 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Sun.