

# COMMANDER'S PALACE

## Tory McPhail Executive Chef

BIOS



Tory McPhail has followed a path forged from hard work to arrive at the historic Commander's Palace restaurant's storied chef legacy, which has cultivated the likes of Emeril Lagasse, Paul Prudhomme, and Jamie Shannon.

McPhail hails from Ferndale, WA, a small town near the Canadian border, where he learned to appreciate local goods and the comfortable gathering place of his parents' kitchen. Corn planted in the spring would become dinner in the summer; fish caught in the afternoon from his family's stocked pond would make it to the plate by dusk. "I knew food didn't just come from the grocery store and magically appear there," he says. "Being able to watch it all grow gave me a passion for natural foods."

After high school, McPhail attended Seattle Community College and received an ACF-accredited degree in culinary science. Compelled by New Orleans' history, soul, and Mardi Gras celebrations won him over, he moved upon graduation and at just 19, he was hired by

Commander's Palace Executive Chef Jamie Shannon. He worked diligently through all 12 stations of the kitchen, honing his craft and making a positive impression on his boss.

In search of "as much experience as possible, as quickly as possible," McPhail later completed a series of stints at several culinary hot spots, including the Breakers Hotel in Palm Beach, FL; the Michelin-starred L'Escargot in London and its sister restaurant, the Michelin two-star Picasso Room; and the Caribbean/Creole-intensive Mongoose Restaurant in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

In spring of 2000, McPhail returned to the Commander's family as executive sous chef at Commander's Palace Las Vegas. Though he loved his job there, New Orleans and Chef Shannon beckoned, and he returned to the Big Easy where the Brennan family named him executive chef of the original Commander's Palace in January 2002.

Today, McPhail continues his dedication to creating and sustaining strong relationships with local purveyors, as well as executing exciting dishes in the Commander's kitchen. "I'm always thinking very forward when it comes to Creole food," he says. A passionate and resolute chef who pursues culinary perfection, McPhail delights in exploring a variety of flavors in his seasonal menus—embracing Creole traditions while updating classic dishes with fresh, local ingredients. His Creole Seared Gulf Fish, for example, showcases farm-fresh produce like Spring Mushrooms, Corn, Fingerling Potatoes and seared Speckled Trout.

McPhail's masterful work has not only kept Commander's Palace at the top of critics' lists, but has also led him to numerous TV appearances, including Bravo's "Top Chef," on which he was a guest judge along-side Commander's Co-Proprietor Ti Adelaide Martin; NBC's "Today"; CBS's "Early Show"; "Paula's Party" with Paula Dean; "After Hours With Daniel Boulud"; and numerous Food Network programs, including "Sara's Secrets," "My Country, My Kitchen," "Into the Fire," and "Bobby Flay's Food Nation." Tory also co-hosted "Off the Menu," which aired on Turner South Network for six years.

A James Beard Rising Star Chef and Best Chef South winner, McPhail was also named one of the best chefs in the country by TheDailyMeal.com in 2013, as one of Saveur magazine's inaugural "Tastemaker Chefs" in 2012; awarded the winner of the Great American Seafood Cook-Off in 2009; co-authored Commander's Wild Side with Martin, a collection of recipes taken from the legendary restaurant's kitchen; has served on the Nutrition Advisory Board for Cooking Light magazine; and has been a spokesperson for Wild American Shrimp and for McCormick's Old Bay seasoning.

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