

COMMANDER'S PALACE

Tory McPhail Executive Chef

BIOS



Executive Chef Tory McPhail has led the kitchen of Commander's Palace for 17 years, and has been an integral part of the Commander's Palace culinary team for 27 years.

McPhail hails from the small town of Ferndale, Washington 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 South Seattle College and received a degree in culinary science. Compelled by New Orleans' history, soul, and Mardi Gras celebrations, 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, Florida; 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. But New Orleans called him home in 2001.

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 alongside Commander's Co-Proprietor Ti Adelaide Martin and "The Today Show" where he has appeared regularly to be the voice of New Orleans for the show; 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, as one of Saveur magazine's inaugural "Tastemaker Chefs;" awarded the winner of the Great American Seafood Cook-Off; 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; launched his own sauce line, and has been a spokesperson for Wild American Shrimp and for McCormick's Old Bay seasoning. In 2014 he served The American Chef Corps as a culinary diplomat to Australia. He's reprised a similar role in London in July 2019 to celebrate the 4th of July.

In fall 2019, Chef Tory opened Picnic Provisions & Whiskey with partners Ti Adelaide Martin and Darryl Reginelli. A modern corner restaurant serving food you can eat with your hands – and the best crawfish boil hot fried chicken – Picnic is waking up that corner of New Orleans with fast fine food and a casual lively atmosphere. Picnic made the list of "Best New Restaurants" in Where Y'at Magazine in 2019 and their Crystal Hot Sauce pulp was named "Condiment of the Year" by Food & Wine in 2019.

Select Awards and Honors

- The Jamie Shannon Outstanding Chef Award (2018)
- Restaurant of the Year Nola.com | The Times-Picayune (2018)
- Food and Wine's 40 Most Important Restaurants (2018)
- Southern Living's The South's Best Restaurant (2017, 2018)
- James Beard Foundation Best Chef: South (2013)
- The Daily Meal's Best Chefs in America (2013)
- Great American Seafood Cookoff winner (2009)

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