



2024 Menu and Chef's Bios

Appetizers

- **Maryland Crab Quesadilla**
 - **Chef and Owner Ryan and Neely James, [Mother's Cantina](#) (Worcester County)**

Neely James is the owner of Mother's Cantina, a beloved Mexican restaurant and bar situated in the heart of Ocean City. Since 2008, Neely and her husband Ryan James have successfully managed the business while instilling their core principles of positivity, excellence, leadership, and environmental stewardship.

In 2016, the Jameses expanded Mother's Cantina to include a commissary to meet the growing demands of their catering services, a tortilla bakery, and an additional dining room for accommodating large gatherings and community events. This expansion has further cemented Mother's Cantina as a hub for great food, drinks, and social gatherings.

Beyond their dedication to the restaurant, Neely and Ryan are deeply ingrained in the Ocean City community. They actively participate in their children's school and sports activities, embrace the joy of surfing the Atlantic Ocean, enjoy biking and playing the local pickleball courts, and training in local martial arts gyms. Additionally, they wholeheartedly support the hospitality industry by participating in and offering restaurant systems coaching, fostering a sense of unity and collaboration between Mother's Cantina and restaurants nationwide.

- **Producers:**
 - [Cross Farms](#) (Worcester County)
 - [JM Clayton Seafood Company](#) (Dorchester County)

- **Smoked Tomato Bisque**
 - **Executive Chef Brian Thorton, [Harper's Waterfront](#) (Anne Arundel County)**

With more than 30 years in the Baltimore, Washington D.C. and Virginia area, Brian is excited to bring his talents to Edgewater as the Executive Chef of Harper's Waterfront Restaurant.

Throughout the years Brian has put his heart into this industry, blessed with the support of his family. Brian and his wife Toni have been married for 34 years and counting – with her support through his journey being a key factor to his success. Brian was an influential figure to his two

children, both in the restaurant business. His daughter, Rita manages at Iron Rooster. His son, James, is a Sous Chef at The Foxes Den.

Brian was the Executive Chef of Libbey's Coastal Kitchen on Kent Island, before coming to Harper's Waterfront. He also served as Executive Chef at Cured 18th& 21st in Howard County, where he was named as Best Chef of the Year in Howard County for 2019 and runner up for 2020. Brian also works as Executive Chef at The Howard Theatre, and previously, Georgia Brown's. He is driven by the visual art of food creation, and strives to elicit "The Wow Effect," by using big, bold presentations to enhance the palate.

From his early years of cooking for Congress in the Member's Dining Room in the U.S. House of Representatives, through creating the Inaugural Celebration menu at The Howard for guests such as First Lady Michelle Obama, Beyonce, Floyd Mayweather and Stevie Wonder, Ziggy Marley, Brian has developed a style that blends comfort and decadence. He credits his mentors sharing their working insight into the business.

As the Saucier at The River Club in Georgetown, he learned the importance of fine ingredients and specialized skill from Jeff Tunks (DC Coast, Passion Fish, Acadiana). In the 90's, with Jeff Tomchek at Old Angler's Inn in Potomac, he learned menu creation worthy of praise from Washingtonian Magazine, Zagat, and The New York Times. During the past decade, he has been highly influenced by Capital Restaurant Concepts Master Chef Bryan Yealy, in many of their DC hotspots. Brian paid it forward and inspired others by teaching Introduction to Culinary Arts and Food Production to college students in the area.

- o **Producer:**

- Caroline County Produce Farms (*Caroline County*)

- [Wings Landing Farms](#) (*Caroline County*)

- **Maryland Crab Cake**

- o **Executive Chef Bryan Voltoggio, [Voltaggio Brothers Steak House](#) (*Prince George's County*)**

- Bryan Voltoggio isn't just a chef; he's a generational talent, respected by his peers and admired by food lovers everywhere. His restaurants—Voltaggio Brothers Steakhouse, Volt Burger, Vulcania (co-owned with his brother Michael), and the soon-to-open Wye Oak Tavern—each tell a story of culinary mastery and savory innovation.

- With accolades that include being a James Beard Foundation Award finalist and starring on Top Chef (season six), Top Chef Masters (season five), and Top Chef All-Stars (season sixteen), Bryan has firmly cemented his place in the culinary world. His cookbooks, HOME and VOLT Ink (co-written with his brother Michael), showcase his talent and offer a peek into his creative process.

- 2024 is set to be another big year for Bryan with the debut of Wye Oak Tavern in his hometown of Frederick, MD. This new venture is all about celebrating local flavors and ingredients,

reflecting the city's growing food scene.

Despite his busy career, Bryan stays grounded with his wife, Jennifer, and their three children, Thatcher, Piper, and Ever Maeve. Recently earning his pilot's license, Bryan now enjoys exploring the country's beauty from 15,000 feet. As he continues to innovate and push culinary boundaries, Chef Bryan Voltaggio's impact on the food world keeps growing, driven by his passion and creativity.

- o **Producer:**
[Moon Valley Farm](#) (Frederick County)
[JM Clayton Seafood Company](#) (Dorchester County)

Salads

- **Eggplant, Goat Cheese and Tomato Salad**
 - o **Chef Ari Stern, [Dinnerfix](#) (Montgomery County)**
Dinnerfix's mission is to bring high quality scratch made foods to preschools, educate children to know where their food comes from and partner with parents and like-minded institutions to create food access pathways. Partnering with local farms to develop dishes and deliver locally grown produce, Dinnerfix also highlights the harvest as the driver of health and wellbeing for our preschool children. Ari Stern, a career chef, believes in improving the lives of children through delicious, locally grown and thoughtfully prepared meals.
 - o **Producer:**
[Moon Valley Farm](#) (Frederick County)
- **American Curry Chicken Salad with Local Harvested Greens**
 - o **Chef Shawn Lightfoot, [Let-Us Naturally Crafted Salads](#)**
Career chef of more than 25 years, Chef Lightfoot has always believed that food can change lives. "I'm a believer in creating foods that will wake up your taste sensors! Eating healthy and delivering an experience with every bite isn't an accident, it's a requirement!"
 - o **Producers:**
[Eco City Farms](#) (Prince George's County)
[Floencia Farm](#) (Prince George's County)

Main Dish

- **Chesapeake Blue Catfish Sandwich**
 - o **Chef David Murray, [Chesapeake Culinary Center](#) (Caroline County)**
A graduate of The Culinary Institute of America, David Murray is Chef and Operations Manager of the Caroline Culinary Arts Center. With a passion for teaching and sharing the "power of food", Chef Murray oversees the non-profit's culinary training for youth and at-risk families.

- **Producers:**
 - [Clayton Farms](#) (Caroline County)
 - [Nature's Garlic Farm](#) (Talbot County)
 - [Wittman Wharf](#) (Talbot County)
- **Chicken Chesapeake Mac & Cheese**
 - **Chef Matt Lego, [Leo Annapolis](#) (Anne Arundel County)**

Chef Matthew Lego's deep Maryland roots are apparent in the representation of Mid-Atlantic ingredients in his dishes on the Leo menu. Despite having a non-traditional culinary background, his love of cooking is lifelong. Whether it was learning how to can in his grandmother's kitchen, or baking dozens of Christmas cookies with his mom, he loves broadening his culinary knowledge in every way possible. Chef Matt honors the heritage of Mid-Atlantic and Southern cuisines while bringing a modern perspective to his dishes. Before becoming a Chef, Matt started his career the "safe way" working in marketing in Baltimore and at a DC think tank. However, Matt's love of food and drink soon took over, and he left his 9-to-5 to bartend at his favorite happy hour spot and, eventually, that road led to the kitchen at Leo. Chef Matt loves nothing more than delighting customers with dishes they've never tried before or twists on their familiar favorites. Even after long days' work, Matt can be found in his home kitchen testing recipes and practicing new techniques. On the plate, he hopes to highlight the hard work and unique flavors from local farms and purveyors and deepen the roots of our community.
 - **Producers:**
 - [Springfield Farm](#) (Baltimore County)
 - [Daily Crisis Farm](#) (Harford County)
 - [Chapel's Country](#) Creamery (Talbot County)
 - [Maidstone Harvest](#) (Anne Arundel County)
- **Beef Tongue Tacos**
 - **Chef Jesse Ramirez, [JesseJay's Latin Inspired Kitchen](#) (Anne Arundel County)**

Jesse Jay's Latin Inspired Kitchen serves fresh, delicious Latin foods inspired by their Mexican and Puerto Rican heritages. Chef Jesse is a talented chef, passionate about food and family. He graduated with a Culinary Arts degree from the Johnson & Wales University in Charlotte, N.C. Jesse has nearly 20 years of cooking experience and has won numerous awards since opening the restaurant in 2019. He co-owns the restaurant with his wife, Jayleen, who manages the business and front of house operations.
 - **Producer:**
 - [New Roots Farm](#) (Anne Arundel County)
 - [Miss Plum's Farm Stand](#) (Anne Arundel County)
- **Honey Miso Butter Catfish with Sweet Corn Puree & Tomato Corn Salad**
 - **Chef and Owner Jason Daniloski, [Silver Queen Cafe](#) (Baltimore City)**

Jason Daniloski grew up in Carroll County, and now lives in Baltimore City. Growing up, he always had an appreciation of Maryland cuisine, and local foods. His career as a chef began 15 years ago, and has culminated in the ownership of Silver Queen Cafe. His focus on seasonal, local dishes and products truly highlights the best of Maryland.

- **Producer:**
[Burton Farms](#) (Baltimore County)

- **P.A. Bowen Cheese Dog**

- **Chef Alex Flynn, [Preserve](#) (Anne Arundel County)**
Annapolis Local Alex Flynn has been working at restaurants in Annapolis for seven years. Passionate about bringing together local and seasonal ingredients in a fun creative manner and relationships with farms and businesses to showcase Maryland food in new ways.
- **Producers:**
[P.A. Bowen Farmstead](#) (Prince George's County)
[Floating Lotus Farmstead](#) (Anne Arundel County)

- **Chicken Fried Chesapeake Channa Sandwich**

- **Chef Scott Harrison, [Boatyard Bar & Grill](#) (Anne Arundel County)**
A native of Maryland, Chef Scott Harrison found his passion for cooking while still in high school, shucking oysters in downtown Annapolis restaurants. Graduating Summa Cum Laude from culinary school, Harrison immediately began working in Philadelphia restaurants to expand his horizons and deep dive into the gastronomic scene. Using the ever-evolving culinary landscape of the city, he launched his career working in Forbes 5-star hotels and for multiple Iron Chefs.

Harrison's career over the past quarter century has taken him across the country and back, working in all aspects of back-of-house operations. Transferring from Philadelphia to Washington D.C. to continue working for Four Seasons Hotels. Traveling to San Francisco and Toronto to continue extensive training. Relocating himself and his entire family from the Mid-Atlantic to Florida for Landry's to run another opulent seafood house.

Chef Scott's professional pedigree echoes his 25 years of culinary expertise and dedication to his craft. His down to earth vibes combined with his classical training is a unique yet humble experience that results in his truly exquisite seafood creations that will tantalize and excite the consumer.

- **Producers:**
[Maidstone Harvest](#) (Anne Arundel County)
[Wild Country Seafood](#) (Anne Arundel County)

Desserts

- **GF/NF/DF Watermelon Cookies**

- **Baker and Owner Natoscha McKinnon, [Les Cookies Delight](#) (Washington County)**

From shaping young minds to crafting delicious delights! After teaching/counseling in the Public-School Systems for 18 years, Natoscha decided to start baking the best gluten free/nut free baked goods in the area. Les Cookies Delight is an allergy friendly bakery that is a step above the rest. They are able to customize their baked goods to fit an individual's dietary needs while also staying soy and yeast free.

Prepare to be mesmerized by their delectable creations that are guaranteed to leave you begging for seconds. Don't be surprised if you end up craving pastries and knowledge at the same time!

- **Producers:**

- [Moon Valley Farm](#) (Frederick County)

- [Copper Moon Meadows](#) (Frederick County)

- **Peach Tart w/Whipped Mascarpone & Raspberry Drizzle**

- **Chefs Sonya Harris and Dora Watters, [Sondor's Catering](#) (Harford County)**

Sondor's Event Catering is a Harford County family-owned catering business servicing all of Maryland, DC, Virginia, Delaware and Pennsylvania.

Sonya Harris and Dora Watters are sisters with a combined 40 years of catering experience who specialize in "Comfort Cuisine with a Professional Touch." Our love of catering began with our parents and grandparents' passion for entertaining guests. Throughout the years we have cultivated and transformed our love of cooking into a professional service.

- **Producers:**

- [South Mountain Creamery](#) (Frederick County)

- [Lohr's Orchard](#) (Harford County)