

# chef kelly english

## restaurant iris

James Beard Award Semifinalist for Best Chef: Southeast, Chef Kelly English incorporates familiar flavors from his childhood in southern Louisiana into each dish he cooks at his premier restaurant, Restaurant Iris.

Restaurant Iris, a French-Creole restaurant near the historic Overton Square of midtown Memphis, is the result of many years of hard work by Chef English. After putting himself through college at the University of Mississippi by working as a cook in local kitchens, English decided to get serious about his passion for food. He graduated from the prestigious Culinary Institute of America at the top of his class, and has studied both in Spain and France. The majority of his culinary education, however, came under the direction of award-winning Chef John Besh.

After many years training under Besh, English was ready to spread his wings. He came to Memphis with hopes of opening his own restaurant and bringing his unique style of cooking to Memphis diners. In April 2008 English opened Restaurant Iris and celebrated the restaurant's first year anniversary with the announcement of Chef English as one of Food & Wine Magazine's "Best New Chefs for 2009."

And that's not all. English and his team continue to take the Memphis dining scene by storm. In 2010, Chef English's "Surf and Turf" won national acclaim on the Food Network's "The Best Thing I Ever Ate." Also in 2010, English was featured in the popular cooking magazine *Everyday with Rachel Ray* and cooked alongside Wolfgang Puck at the American Wine and Food Festival. English was awarded the Memphis Restaurant Association's "Restaurateur of the Year" award and was featured in the cookbook *Wild Abundance*. English also serves on the Founder's Council for the Atlanta Food & Wine Festival.

Restaurant Iris received a four-star review from the Commercial Appeal and was voted Memphis' "Best Restaurant," "Best Service," and "Best Chef," two years in a row by *Memphis* magazine readers. In 2009 and 2010, English's restaurant was voted "Best Restaurant" and "Best Chef" by the *Memphis Flyer*, was named "Editors Choice: Best Restaurant" by *At Home Tennessee*, "Best Bet Outside of Louisiana" by *Louisiana Life Magazine*, and "Hot New Restaurant" by *Delta Magazine*.

