

Chef Thomas Wolfe

Executive Chef/Proprietor

Wolfe's of New Orleans Restaurant
Peristyle Restaurant

From his earliest memories, Tom Wolfe recalls a childhood filled with food, and a passion for preparing it and serving it to others. He grew up in a large family with five brothers and sisters, and all of his parents' friends had similar sized families.

Wolfe knew that he wanted to funnel his years of cooking in a casual setting into a career in the culinary profession. He began by starting a catering business, which taught him the basic principles of owning a business in the food industry, then by enrolling in Delgado University's Culinary Arts program.

After he fine tuned his culinary abilities, Wolfe worked for New Orleans' esteemed family of restaurateurs, the Brennan family, at their popular French Quarter restaurant, Mr. B's Bistro. The menu at Mr. B's was comprised of gumbos, jambalaya, barbecued shrimp and other wonderful local dishes. This environment of preparing Louisiana foods only fostered his love for the local cuisine.

From Mr. B's, Chef Wolfe went on to work at one of the most highly acclaimed restaurants in the country, Emeril's, shortly after it opened. He worked and mastered all positions, both AM and PM, including Pastries, Saucier and Butcher stations eventually ascending to hold the position of Sous Chef of Emeril's flagship restaurant. Chef Wolfe worked alongside Emeril to develop dishes and menus and was often selected to assist him at nationally recognized culinary events, such as The Dinner of the Decade and James Beard Dinners, where he had the opportunity to cook with chefs such as Charlie Trotter, Patrick Clark, Norman Van Aken, and Larry Forgione. At Thanksgiving, it was Chef Wolfe who appeared on *Good Morning America* with Emeril to demonstrate the preparation of a Cajun fried turkey, which is a traditional New Orleans holiday meal.

During his tenure at Emeril's, Chef Wolfe worked on his days off building his catering business. He always had a dream that when he gathered enough experience, he would open his own restaurant. After marrying his high school sweetheart and obtaining invaluable experience working at Emeril's for eight years, Chef Wolfe and his wife had saved enough money, found the perfect quaint restaurant on New Orleans' lakefront and decided the time was right to launch the next chapter of his culinary career.

Wolfe and his wife Tracy opened Wolfe's of New Orleans in May of 2000 in an intimate New Orleans cottage. Chef Wolfe implemented the detailed service techniques he had keenly observed at Mr. B's, Emeril's, and the hundreds of fine dining establishments he had experienced during the past decade. "My rule of thumb for the service staff is to create an ambiance where the guest truly feels special, but to provide that service in a relaxed and comfortable environment," summates Wolfe.

Wolfe's of New Orleans caught the attention of *Bon Appetite* and was named "best new formal dining restaurant" in New Orleans in January 2001. Wolfe's also received glowing reviews from *New Orleans Magazine* and *Esquire Magazine* where John Mariani named Chef Tom Wolfe one of five chefs to watch in the United States. Chef Wolfe was named Rising Star Chef in 2003. He received the Gold Medal for Food at the New Orleans Food and Wine Experience Grand Tasting in 2003, 2004, and 2005. In October of 2004, Wolfe was invited to host a dinner at the James Beard House in New York.

Wolfe would draw upon traditional dishes and expand on them, creating the perfect combination of complex flavors. Favorite dishes at Wolfe's of New Orleans included the Duck, which was slow roasted after being cured in Steen's Cane Syrup brine and served with Calvados glazed Brabant sweet potatoes, seared Hudson Valley Foie Gras, sautéed spinach, Duck crackling crusted goat cheese cake, and a kiln dried cherry reduction. Wolfe's innovative culinary artistry carried through to his dessert menu. The White Chocolate Butter Bars seemed to be the dessert of choice

by most. The light melt-in-your-mouth white chocolate brownie with homemade vanilla bean ice cream and drizzles of raspberry coulis is a derivative of his mother's own recipe.

On August 29th, 2005, Hurricane Katrina ripped through the city, severely damaging Wolfe's of New Orleans. The loss of his flagship restaurant was a devastating blow for Chef Wolfe; however, he feels blessed that he has two other restaurants while others have nothing. Although Wolfe's of New Orleans was nestled on the outskirts of the French Quarter, it received just as much recognition as other prestigious formal dining establishments that were located in the heart of New Orleans. Wolfe looks forward to reopening his flagship restaurant in the future, as it marked the beginning of his success.

Four years after opening the doors at Wolfe's of New Orleans, Chef Wolfe felt it was the right time to expand his culinary resume. He became the new owner of Peristyle Restaurant.

When Chef Anne Kearney decided to turn over the reigns of her award winning restaurant, she looked to her old friend with whom she worked in sync with in both Mr. B's and Emeril's kitchens, Chef Tom Wolfe. Wolfe and Kearney worked the same stations and she understood and appreciated the high standards Chef Wolfe held in regard to food, presentation, and service. He was honored that she chose him over the many talented chefs that reside in New Orleans.

Peristyle has gotten impressive reviews since Chef Wolfe has taken over. It was one of the top ten places to eat (2004). *Zagat* named Peristyle as having the "best food of New Orleans" in 2004 and 2005. Peristyle also received the "Best of show award" at the New Orleans Wine and Food Experience, Grand Tasting (2005).

One of the menu favorites is a taste of Peristyle's Crispy Veal Sweetbreads served with roasted leeks, fingerling potatoes, and prosciutto di Parma, fennel and herbes de Provence finished with Marsala infused fond de veau. A popular entrée choice is the Muscovy Duck Breast that is cured with juniper berries and Steen's cane syrup served with sautéed Louisiana farmed kale, bleu cheese stuffed seasonal freestone fruit and huckleberry brandy butter. The dessert menu boasts dishes such as the Duet of Crème Brûlée and the Key Lime Tart.

In 2005, Chef Wolfe embarked on yet another culinary adventure. Marriott International sought out Wolfe to implement his concept of a great restaurant. They knew he would be the right Chef for the task. In July of 2005, Chef Wolfe's design concept as well as his own menu creation was born when Wolfe's in the Warehouse opened.

In addition to running two restaurants, Chef Wolfe also finds time to support his favorite charity, the March of Dimes. He has supported the March of Dimes for many years. Wolfe was selected to be the host Chef Chair for the organization. He gladly accepted, and will continue to be Chef Chair through 2008. Chef Wolfe also supports many other local charities.

Owning both Wolfe's of New Orleans Restaurant and Peristyle Restaurant has been a great milestone in Chef Wolfe's life. His childhood dreams have quickly become an incredible reality. Everyday is a challenge to progress and develop a menu even better than the night before.

HONORS AND ACCOLADES

- “Award of Excellence,” *Wine Spectator*, 1999-2004
- “Rated #5 in the top ten places to eat,” *City Business*, Tom Fitzmorris, 2004
- “4 Beans,” *Times Picayune Lagniappe*, Brett Anderson, 2005
- “Best Food in New Orleans,” *Zagat*, 2004, 2005
- “One of the top 40 restaurants in New Orleans for Food and service,” *Zagat*, 2005
- “Best food of New Orleans,” *Zagat*, 2005
- “Best of Show Award,” New Orleans Wine and Food Experience, Grand Tasting, 2005

Chef Wolfe was invited to Cakebread Cellars in September, 2004 to participate in the American Harvest Workshop.

Chef Wolfe was one of the chefs invited to participate in the James Beard Dinner at Muriel's in June, 2004.

Chef Wolfe hosted a James Beard Dinner at the James Beard House in New York representing Wolfe's of New Orleans and Peristyle in October, 2004

Chef Wolfe was invited to host a dinner at the French Culinary Institute in New York in June, 2005.

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