

## Under the Toque

### Executive Chef Scott Serpas



Serpas True Food ◆ Atlanta, Georgia

South Louisiana native and executive chef Scott Serpas has a knack for carving out a style all his own, and his culinary charisma has culled attention from adoring diners and critics alike. From the prestigious James Beard Foundation to Gourmet, GQ and Food & Wine, this chef has garnered attention for his honest approach to Southern food with Louisiana flair.

Now an expatriated Atlantan, Scott has become an irreplaceable part of the city's burgeoning culinary scene with his first restaurant venture, Serpas True Food. Located in what was once a cotton storage facility in the heart of Atlanta's culturally rich Old Fourth Ward neighborhood, Serpas is known for its "true food" approach to cuisine with an edge. The restaurant has received local and national acclaim since its January 2009 debut and was named one of the 10 "Best New Restaurants in America" in 2009 by GQ magazine.

Scott began cooking at an early age at home, but was bitten - then smitten - by the restaurant bug when he worked as a busboy at restaurants in New Orleans. "I found I spent all my time in the kitchen with the cooks," Scott said. A spark was ignited, and he eventually pursued a career in culinary arts by attending Delgado's Culinary Institute in New Orleans, graduating in 1990. While in school he completed an externship at Mr. B's Bistro under executive chef Gerard Maras, as well as a second in the pastry department at the Le Meridien Hotel, both in New Orleans.



Executive Chef Scott Serpas

Scott moved to Dallas after graduating and worked under executive chef Kevin Rathbun at the popular Baby Ruth's, which introduced him to Southwestern cooking techniques and flavors. After four years in Dallas, Rathbun asked Serpas to move to Atlanta to become sous chef at Nava, an Atlanta restaurant that specializes in upscale Southwestern cuisine. After a stint in New Orleans to work as chef de cuisine under executive chef Mike Fennelly at Mike's on the Avenue, Scott made the move to back to Atlanta, where innovative restaurateur Sia Moshk selected him as executive chef of his restaurant, Sia's, in Alpharetta. Scott led the opening team and garnered local acclaim for his fresh take on Asian and Mediterranean fusion. The duo's success led to the opening of Moshk's second Atlanta restaurant, Mitra, in 2003.

In 2004 Scott served as executive chef at Atlanta's popular TWO Urban Licks, where he created and executed a menu of wood-fired meats, fish and barbecue in a high-energy environment. During his tenure at TWO, the restaurant received numerous accolades from Food & Wine, Gourmet, O The Oprah Magazine, Men's Health, InStyle, Conde Nast

*"I found I spent all my time in the kitchen with the cooks."*

— Scott Serpas

Traveler, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution and Wine Spectator.

Scott and his wife, Dawn, now consider Atlanta their permanent home. He spends much of his time volunteering in the community and is an active patron of non-profit organizations such as Share Our Strength, the American Liver Foundation, Camp Twin Lakes, the March of Dimes, Dining Out for Life and the James Beard Foundation. He has also participated in cooking classes at Cook's Warehouse, the Alpharetta Kroger Cooking School, Simple Abundance Cooking Classes and the Morningside Farmers Market. In addition, he has been featured on Food Network's "\$40 a Day with Rachael Ray," a New Orleans CBS segment entitled "Life, Love and Lunch" and on Fox's "Good Day Atlanta." **TR**

[editorial]



[The Reynolds Group Inc.] [www.thereynoldsgroupinc.com]