

Getting to Know You: Ford Fry Profile

There is no doubt that accomplished chef and our Harvest guest editor Ford Fry loves what he does. Faith, family, relationships, and food are most important to Ford and he tries to incorporate those values into each of his restaurant experiences. Ford's number one motivation for opening his restaurants is bringing people together, and all of those people get to enjoy his delicious food! Ford knows that it's not just about the food when people come together to eat, but rather the fellowship and stories people share while around the table.

Although many may think of Ford as an extremely serious chef, he's using his platform as our Harvest guest editor to try and change that image. Ford moved all across the country doing culinary residencies, which allow chefs to practice and hone their skills in various restaurants and settings. Ford now lives in Atlanta with his wife and two sons. He owns and operates 11 restaurants in the metro area, and one in Houston, with new openings soon in South Carolina and Tennessee. In fact, The Optimist in Atlanta received Best New Restaurant in 2013 by *Esquire Magazine*.

Ford was born in Houston, Texas, and uses the city as inspiration for his dishes. Seafood, authentic Mexican, and German foods are only some of the delightful foods found in Houston. For Ford, "exploring [Houston] as it relates to food is fascinating to me. I'm not looking to be blown away by something, but more of experiencing what is real to those who are a part of this blending of cultures." This zeal to explore food and restaurants goes far beyond the average food connoisseur, as Ford actually orders every single item on the menu on his first visit to restaurants, a treat if you're in his company.

Ford is enthusiastic about incorporating the different tradition of farm-to-table dining in his restaurants. Although Ford admits that buying locally grown foods can be more expensive, to him it's not about the money, but doing what he feels is right. Ford believes that mass produced food has lost much of its flavor, something he didn't realize until he began to eat freshly grown food on a regular basis. Ford works with over twelve farms to keep his restaurants stocked with food. Additionally, Ford works with Georgia Organics and hosts the Attack of the Killer Tomato Festival to bring awareness for organically grown food and bring that into schools, restaurants, and homes.

Ford loved working with Good Grit as a guest editor, but particularly enjoyed the opportunity to travel with his son. After a long summer, both father and son were able to let go of the hustle and bustle and relax into the surroundings of Texas on our Good Grit "Boy's Trip" with Senior Art Director Austin Richardson and photographer Caleb Chancey. He loved relaxing and enjoying the river in Houston while we learned about his home town. Throughout his time as guest editor, Ford has reminded each of us that returning to our roots is a rewarding experience, one which he had graciously shared with everyone through his restaurants and his contributions to Good Grit.

Learn more about Ford via our awesome issue on shelves and online now!