

76 Queen St.
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CHEF PARTNER
Sean Brock

CHEF DE CUISINE
Travis Grimes

GENERAL MANAGER
Dan Latimer

OVERVIEW



Centrally located in historic downtown Charleston, Husk, the newest offering from James Beard Award-winning Chef Sean Brock of McCrady's and the Neighborhood Dining Group, transforms the essence of Southern food. Led by Brock and Chef de Cuisine Travis Grimes, a Lowcountry native, the kitchen reinterprets the bounty of the surrounding area, exploring an ingredient-driven cuisine that begins in the rediscovery of heirloom products and redefines what it means to cook and eat in Charleston.

Starting with a larder of ingredients indigenous to the South, and set within a building complex dating to the late 19th century, Brock crafts menus throughout the day, responding to what local purveyors are supplying the kitchen at any given moment. The entrance beckons

with a rustic wall of firewood to fuel the wood-fired oven and a large chalkboard listing artisanal products currently provisioning the kitchen, but like the décor that inhabits the historic building, the food is modern in style and interpretation.

At Husk there are some rules about what can go on the plate. "If it doesn't come from the South, it's not coming through the door," says Brock, who, for a while, would not even allow olive oil in the kitchen until his team procured a supply from Texas. As he explains, the resulting cuisine "is not about rediscovering Southern



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cooking, but exploring the reality of Southern food.” This modern approach results in playful dishes such as Deviled Eggs with Pickled Okra and Trout Roe, and new classics like South Carolina Shrimp

and Chopped Okra Stew with Carolina Gold Rice and Flowering Basil.

Seed-saving, heirloom husbandry, and in-house pickling and charcuterie efforts by the culinary team are the basis of the cuisine at Husk. The restaurant is as casual as it is chic, evoking a way of life centered on



seasonality and the grand traditions of Charleston life—one lived at a slower pace, preferably with a cocktail and a wide porch in the late afternoon. It is a neighborhood gathering place for friends, and a destination dining spot for travelers, with a little bite of the South for everyone’s palates.



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C U I S I N E



Brock brings this evolving vision of a new Southern cuisine from his successful kitchen at McCrady's. As one of Charleston's most decorated culinarians, he has twice cooked for the James Beard Foundation, was the winner of the "Next Great Chef" episode of the "Food Network Challenge," and appeared on "Iron Chef America"

in December of 2010. He was nominated in 2008 and 2009 for the James Beard "Rising Star Chef" award, and in 2009 was nominated for the James Beard "Best Chef Southeast" award, which he won in 2010.

Grimes grew up in the Lowcountry and knows Charleston well. He worked his way up through local restaurants before attending Johnson and Wales University. When Brock took the helm at McCrady's he stayed on to help transform the kitchen into the most innovative in the

city and now takes on the day-to-day operations at Husk. His philosophy on food closely mirrors that of his mentor, Brock, focusing on preservation techniques and the recovery of lost flavors, especially heirloom varieties of pork. Both men bring a love for the area and its history to creating the restaurant's concept.

Diners at Husk view an open, collaborative kitchen, where chefs freely interact with their guests, and personally deliver food to tables, but the work begins



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well before a pan begins to heat. Brock and Grimes exhaustively research Southern food—its history and provenance—and in the process reconstitute flavors and ingredients lost to time. They are also dedicated to sourcing heirloom grains and vegetables that once flourished in the region, but were lost to 20th-century industrial agriculture. Utilizing nearby farms to gain immediate access to what is fresh and available today, or even this hour, they transform the ever-changing ingredients into an evolving menu. Seasonal bounty comes in waves,

however, and what they can't use immediately is preserved, pickled, smoked, and saved.

The menu flourishes with Lowcountry ingredients, like Local Benne Seed, or Sesame, which flavors a Benne and Honey Lacquered Duck with Pickled Blueberries and Chanterelles and Crispy Pork Collar gets paired with Cornbread Purée and Greasy Beans. Other innovative examples include Sassafras Glazed Pork Ribs with Pickled Peaches and Rev Taylor Butter Beans; House Cured Country Ham Tasting with Acorn Griddle Cakes; and Rabbit-Pimento Loaf with Husk Mustard, Pickles and Rice Bread.



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COCKTAILS AND WINE



What once had disintegrated into an austere ruin beside Husk's main dining room now houses an innovative freestanding bar. A complete renovation transformed what had been a brick shell into the most exciting restaurant in historic Charleston. Tightly arranged and rough hewn, with century-old exposed brick still intact and a team of innovative mixologists stationed on the first floor, the bar recalls a bygone era of Charleston nightlife, and Husk's emphasis on classic cocktails continues the city's historic tipping traditions.

Husk offers an extensive

lineup of classic and creative cocktails on the bar menu, which is designed to honor the traditional spirits of the Southern table and trace the historical lineage of regional mixology. Patrons can sit upstairs in the second-floor lounge of the bar, overlooking the wide verandas of Husk's streetfront while tasting some of the most delicious drinks in the South. It is a place to relax, to wait for a table next door, and always a discovery of new tastes derived from old virtues.

A wine list grouped by terroir and soil type, rather than the traditional classifications of political geography or grape varietal, further connect the concepts of Husk's bar to the mission of the restaurant. Husk is proud of its boutique wine program and extensive list of rare artisanal Southern microbrews.



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DESIGN



Occupying adjacent spaces on Queen Street, Husk is housed in what was originally a Victorian double house built in the late 1800s. The main dining room, constructed in 1893, evokes the grandeur of Charleston, and speaks to the transformation of the city over time. Victorian details and turned

columns were layered over the original Queen Anne-style façade through the years, and the buildings fell into disrepair until discovered by Husk ownership. The Neighborhood Dining Group President David Howard set into a motion an extensive remodeling effort of both. Although both buildings retain their antique charm and stately character, the renovations imbued each with a modern, minimalist theme. Like the reinterpreted food served within, each space has been laid bare, reveal-



ing reclaimed floors, original windows, and exposed brick throughout. The main house features an open kitchen with a wood-burning oven creating a lively space in the main dining room. A more intimate, dining space is located

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upstairs with several window facing tables and a more relaxed atmosphere. Both floors are fronted on Queen Street by sweeping piazzas, or porches, with tables allowing diners to enjoy themselves while viewing the picturesque courtyard.

Next door, the adjoining structure houses the bar, a rusticated, exposed-brick affair, with a cozy, two-story outlay. Once reduced to a shell, the bar now comes to life in the evening, when patrons relax in front of the large upstairs windows. Both spaces feature abundant natural lighting and accurate trim details that make them true to their historic roots but remain modern in disposition.



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Sean Brock, Chef Partner



Many chefs have their first exposure to cooking at a young age. For Sean Brock, who was born and raised in rural Virginia, it was the experience of his family growing their own food that left a deep impression. “This was a coal-field town with no restaurants or stoplights,” he explains. “You grew and cooked everything you ate, so I really saw food in its true form. You cook all day, and when you’re not cooking, you’re pre-

serving. If you were eating, you were eating food from the garden or the basement--it’s a way of life.” These were the building blocks that Brock remembered as he began his career as a chef, inspiring a lifelong passion for exploring the roots of Southern food and recreating it by preserving and restoring heirloom ingredients.

Leaving Virginia to attend school, Brock landed at Johnson & Wales University in Charleston, SC. He began his professional career as chef tournant under Chef Robert Carter at the Mobil Four-Star/AAA Four-Diamond Peninsula Grill in Charleston. After two years at Peninsula Grill, Brock was executive sous chef under Chef Walter Bundy of Lemaire Restaurant at the AAA Five-Diamond Award/ Mobil Five-Star Jefferson Hotel in Richmond, VA. His success in Richmond led to his promotion within the Elite Hospitality Group in 2003 to executive chef at the AAA Five-Diamond Hermitage Hotel in Nashville, TN. Brock spent just under three years fine tuning his

craft in Nashville before accepting a position as executive chef at McCrady’s Restaurant.

Shortly after his return to Charleston, Brock began the development of a 2.5-acre farm on Wadmalaw Island. “While I was growing there, I began dabbling in resurrecting and growing crops that were at risk of extinction, such as those indigenous to this area pre-Civil War,” he says. These experiments have led Brock to become a passionate advocate for seed preservation and he continues to grow a number of heirloom crops, including James Island Red Corn (aka “Jimmy Red”), from which he makes grits, Flint Corn, Benne Seed, Rice Peas, Sea Island Red Peas, and several varieties of Farro. Brock has worked closely with Dr. David Shields and Glenn Roberts of Anson Mills, studying 19th century Southern cookbooks--which Brock collects—to educate himself on Southern food history and discover new ways to resurrect antebellum cuisine. He also cares deeply about the way animals are treated before they become food on the table and sources heritage breeds of livestock for his restaurants. He has even raised his own herd of pigs.

In November 2010, Chef Brock opened his second restaurant with the Neighborhood Dining Group. Husk, just down the street from McCrady’s, is a celebration of Southern ingredients, only serving food that is indigenous to the South. “If it ain’t Southern, it ain’t walkin’ in the door,” Brock says. The emphasis at Husk is on the ingredients and the people who grow them, and a large chalkboard lists artisanal products currently provisioning the kitchen. Working with local purveyors and vendors has had a great impact on Brock’s



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cooking, and the menu changes twice daily based on what is the freshest that day. "Gone are the days of a chef sitting in the kitchen creating recipes and then picking up the phone to order food from wherever it needs to come from," he says. "At Husk, we might get three suckling pigs, three whole lambs, half a cow, and upwards of 450 pounds of fish, as well as mountains of vegetables. We only take it when it's ready, so it shows up and we have to start piecing the recipes together; it's like a puzzle every day."

Brock is also passionate about wood-fire cooking and a firm believer that "low and slow" imparts the most flavor—evident by his two smokers, barbecue pit and spit, and wood-burning oven at Husk, all fueled by an old fashioned burn barrel. At McCrady's, he cooks food in the dining room fireplaces, originally built for this purpose in the late 18th century. Because the main dining room was actually the kitchen in the 19th century, Brock believes cooking this way brings the historical building full circle. In the future, he sees his cuisine being geared more toward the fireplace—the smell and visual of a chef cooking on an open hearth changes the feel of the restaurant and inspires him a great deal.

Drawing from his early education, the chef also pickles, cans, and makes preserves from the produce that cannot be used immediately, saving it for a later date and for new creations. His favorite old southern preservation techniques include lactobacillus fermentation and making vinegar using his grandmother's 40 year old vinegar as the base. Brock pulls from his memory of ingredients and their flavor profiles to create the menus at McCrady's and

Husk depending on what is delivered to the kitchen. It's a modern approach to cooking that comes from a pure appreciation of the food itself. The results are constantly changing offerings for diners that always surprise. "We emphasize the importance of the food from the Lowcountry region and constantly refine our cooking processes to best honor our relationships with the farmers, artisans and fishermen that provide us with their amazing products," he says.

Brock's abilities have resulted in a number of awards and accolades, both locally and nationally. He was nominated in 2008 and 2009 for the James Beard "Rising Star Chef" award and in 2009 and 2010 for the James Beard "Best Chef Southeast" category, winning the award in 2010. Most recently, he was nominated for the James Beard "Outstanding Chef" award for 2012. He was the winner of the "Next Great Chef" episode of the "Food Network Challenge" and appeared on "Iron Chef America" in December 2010, taking on Michael Symon in "Battle Pork Fat." Bon Appétit magazine named Husk "Best New Restaurant in America" in September 2011. Later that year, Chef Brock joined an exclusive group of chefs from around the world in Japan to take part in the prestigious Cook It Raw.

When he does carve out free time, he's often at his home just outside of Charleston, which he shares with his two dogs and his wife, Tonya, to whom he proposed while cooking at the James Beard House. Chef Brock sports a full-sleeve tattoo on his arm depicting his favorite vegetables, including Jimmy Red Corn. He is soon to begin work on the other arm, planning a map of Southern food. He is working on a cookbook, due out in 2013.



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Travis Grimes, Chef de Cuisine



Travis Grimes has been cooking almost as long as he's lived in the Lowcountry of South Carolina—which is to say, most of his life. He was taught the basics at home and worked as a cook at different restaurants in and around Charleston throughout high school, where he learned how to make bona fide Southern food from some of his older co-workers. Grimes enrolled in Johnson & Wales University in Charleston after high school, from which he graduated in 2000—the same year he completed an internship at former James Beard Best Chef Southeast winner Louis Osteen's restaurant, Louis's Charleston Grill. After school, Grimes helped open the Cypress Lowcountry Grill on East Bay Street in Charleston—not far from McCrady's Restaurant. In 2003, he moved to McCrady's working his way up to sous chef under Chef Michael Kramer, and then working alongside Brock, who took over as executive chef after Kramer's departure in 2006.

Grimes and Brock share a passion for creating authentic Southern cuisine from indigenous and local ingredients—so when Brock opened Husk in 2010 it was a natural progression for Grimes to move there with him as his Chef de Cuisine. “At Husk we very much celebrate the traditional South,” Grimes says. “We support local farmers and fishermen; if it's a quality Southern product, we want it at the restaurant.” Among those products are sustainable seafood from the

nearby Atlantic; pork products from pigs raised on a farm in Virginia; as well as fresh, pickled, and canned produce. “We are also bringing back heirloom varieties of grains that are native to the area, as well as growing an entire crop just for seed saving,” he notes.

The curing of meats and the pickling and canning are of special interest to Grimes, who talks often of his “love for pork” and who worked with Brock to elevate both Husk and McCrady's charcuterie programs. “They've been some of the most motivating experiences of my career: the curing of meats, pickling, canning—taking things like peppers, peaches, and more at their peak of quality and preserving them and making them incredible year round.”

As chef de cuisine, Grimes runs the kitchen and oversees the menu, working closely with Brock, who pulls double duty at both Husk and sister restaurant, McCrady's. Husk's menu focuses on Southern classics, using as many local, indigenous ingredients as possible, with Grimes researching antique cookbook recipes to ensure the menu's authenticity. In addition, Grimes oversees numerous other touches that keep the restaurant true to this goal, including making hot sauce, bitters for culinary-influenced cocktails, and even sarsaparilla in house.

In the rare moments when he's not in the kitchen, Grimes can be found at home in Charleston with his wife, dog, and two cats, simply enjoying some down time or tending to his own garden.



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HOURS

Restaurant

Lunch: 11:30 a.m.- 2:30 p.m. Monday-Saturday

Dinner: 5.30-10 p.m. Sunday-Thursday; 5:30-11 p.m. Friday and Saturday

Brunch: 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Sunday

Bar

4 p.m.-close daily

11 a.m.-close Sunday

MENU PRICES

Lunch entrées: \$9-15

Dinner entrées: \$18-24

PARKING

Parking is available directly across the street in two parking garages on Queen Street.

Husk Restaurant is managed by David Howard,
President of the Neighborhood Dining Group,
for the local ownership group - ndgcharleston.com

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SOUTHERN


HUSK

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