



LOCAL FLAVOR

Sustainable, seasonal and domestic fare is at the heart of Monroe-native Cory Bahr's culinary pursuits

BY *Ashley McLellan*

PHOTOS BY *Romero & Romero*

CHEF CORY BAHR IS A CULINARY shooting star. The Monroe native's extensive resume continues to grow, and includes a thriving catering business, a new restaurant, multiple national accolades, volunteer work throughout the state and TV appearances on Food Network's "Chopped" and "Food Network Star."

Like all good Louisiana boys, Chef Bahr cites his Southern upbringing and family lessons as the inspiration for his success.

"I was raised by my grandparents and they instilled a sense of hospitality and graciousness in me at a young age," he says. "I was always underfoot in the kitchen with my grandparents, so really my fondest memories of growing up were spent in the kitchen around the table so it's just a natural progression for me to be in the hospitality industry."

Community and his love of the outdoors remain essential to his take on culinary matters.

"Sustainability is at the forefront of everything we do; by building close relationships with our purveyors were able to assure that we are only using domestic seafood. We tend to offer only things that are in season and regional, that creates more work for us on the front end it's definitely something that makes an impact not only with our diners but also with our local and state economy."

Bahr brought his Louisiana love to an even wider audience as a finalist on this summer's "Food Network Star," although he remains ever humble. "The 'Food Network Star' experience was amazing," he says. "It allowed me to share my culinary point of view with the world."

Catch him while you can: Chef Cory Bahr's star is definitely on the rise. His latest venture, Parish restaurant — a modern Southern restaurant featuring a wood-fire kettle — is set to open in Monroe, late fall 2017. ■



LOUISIANA SHRIMP AND WATERMELON AGUACHILE

Combine **1 pound (10/15 count) Louisiana shrimp** (peeled, deveined and poached), **3 cups seedless watermelon** (cut into half-inch cubes), **1 jalapeño** (stemmed, seeded and roughly chopped), **1 tablespoon sugar**, **½ cup fresh juice**, **1 cup seedless cucumber** (sliced and a quarter inch thick rounds), **1 cup thinly sliced red onion**, **2 tablespoons whole coriander seed** (crushed), **2 teaspoons Korean chili flakes** and **kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste** in a large mixing bowl. Let marinate for one hour, then fold in **¼ cup packed mint leaves** (roughly chopped) and **¼ cup packed cilantro roughly chopped including stems** (or culantro works nicely as well and it is available in most Asian supermarkets). Serve immediately with **fried tortillas or plantain chips**.