

Chef Lee Richardson Bio



“What would you like me to prepare for your birthday dinner?” “Where would you like to go to dinner for your birthday?” Fairly typical questions for anyone born and raised in New Orleans, those two innocent but contrasting questions from his grandmothers indelibly framed Chef Lee Richardson’s perspective on food. After taking the conventional path of attaining a Psychology degree from the University of Colorado, Richardson dashed back to New Orleans to follow his heart into the exotic world of restaurants. Declining the opportunity to attend the

Culinary Institute of America; Richardson elected to embark on a traditional apprenticeship as a prep cook in world-renown chef, Emeril Lagasse’s French Quarter restaurant, NOLA,

With so many culinarians waiting in line at Emeril’s restaurants, Richardson accepted an invitation to join legendary Hotel Chef Kevin Graham (the Savoy, The Royal Orleans, the Sagamore and the Windsor Court Hotel), in an avant garde restaurant bearing his name, Graham’s. Ironically, it was during his tenure with Graham that Richardson had his first brush with another budding chef who would be his most important professional influence, John Besh.

Before their paths crossed again, however, Richardson had the opportunity to round out his veritable “Who’s Who” of New Orleans chefs with a stint at Anne Kearney’s award-winning Peristyle and another partnership with Graham before a multi-year sojourn to North Carolina. Ten years later he would finally reunite with John Besh ultimately becoming Chef d’Cuisine at Besh’s celebrated Restaurant August. It was to be Richardson’s his last stop before Hurricane Katrina occasioned his apotheosis at The Capital Hotel.