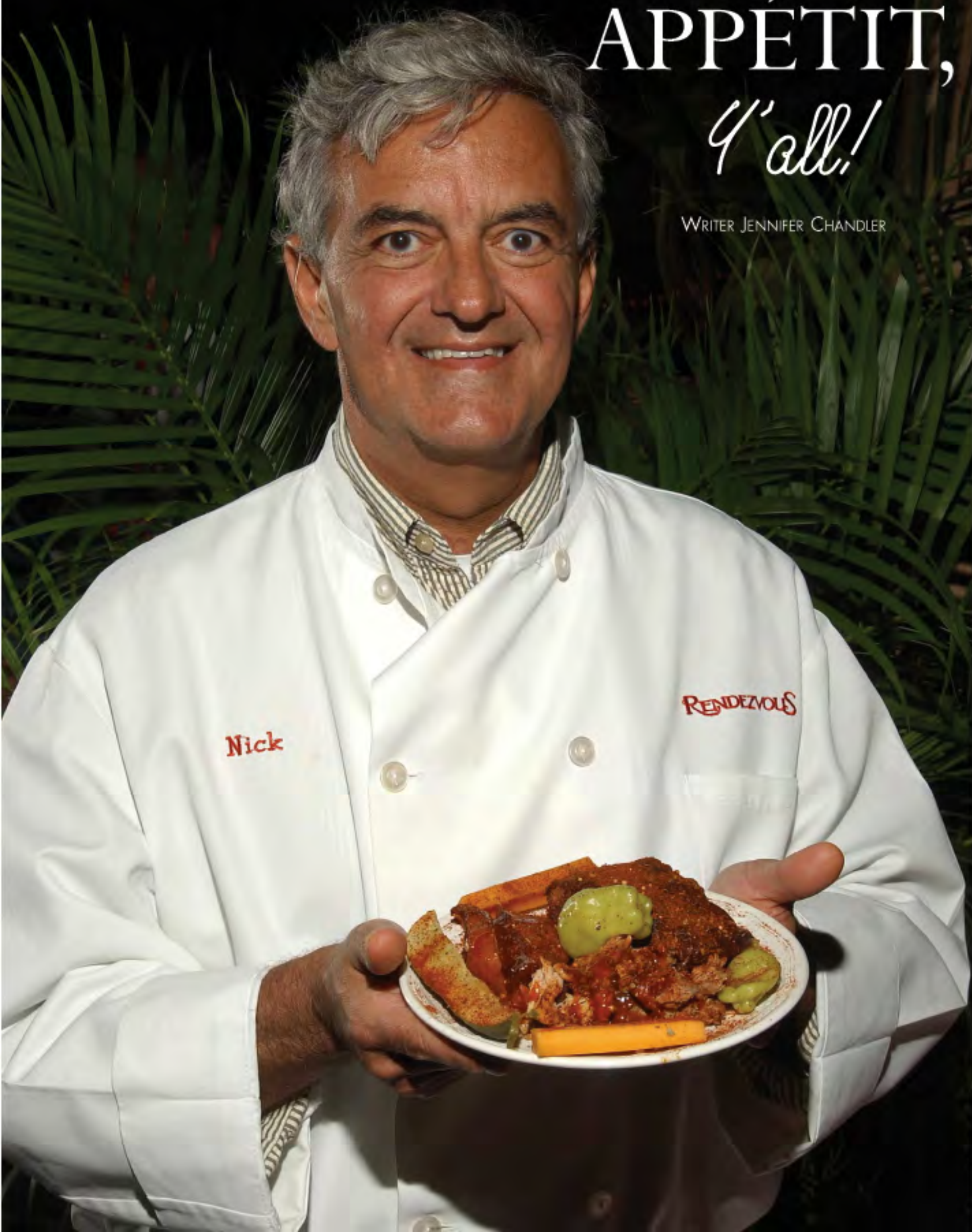
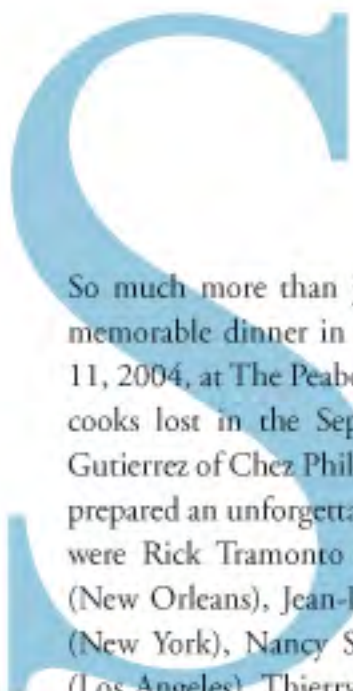


cooking and entertainig

BON APPÉTIT, *4' all!*

WRITER JENNIFER CHANDLER





So much more than just a salutation, “Bon Appétit Y’all” was a memorable dinner in honor of James Beard hosted on September 11, 2004, at The Peabody Hotel. In memory of the fellow chefs and cooks lost in the September 11 attacks, host Master Chef José Gutierrez of Chez Philippe and six of America’s most respected chefs prepared an unforgettable six-course dinner. Joining Chef Gutierrez were Rick Tramonto of Tru (Chicago), Susan Spicer of Bayona (New Orleans), Jean-Louis Dumonet of Dumonet at The Carlyle (New York), Nancy Silverton of La Brea Bakery and Campanile (Los Angeles), Thierry Rautureau of Rover’s (Seattle) and Philippe Boulot of The Heathman Hotel (Portland).

“This is something I have wanted to do for New York City since the 9/11 attack,” says Chef Gutierrez. “I brought together great chefs from each corner of the U.S. to prepare this special dinner.” Gutierrez adds that James Beard events are great opportunities for chefs to cook together, exchange ideas, have fun and raise money for a good cause.

The James Beard Foundation’s mission is to celebrate the country’s culinary artists by providing scholarships and educational opportunities for students as well as serving as a resource for the culinary industry. Having authored 28 cookbooks and having served as a mentor to rising stars in the culinary world, James Beard is often credited with starting a culinary revolution in the United States. After Beard’s death in 1985, Julia Child and Peter Kump (founder of the Institute of Culinary Education) had the idea to preserve James Beard’s home as the gathering place it had been during his life. Almost every night of the week, unforgettable meals are prepared by the best of the best from around the country. These dinners not only provide the opportunity to enjoy incredible food



but also offer the chance for discussions among chefs, wine professionals, journalists, cookbook authors and other industry enthusiasts.

“I support the James Beard Foundation because it brings food and community awareness,” says Nancy Silverton of the famed La Brea Bakery and Campanile. “It is important for chefs to come together to experience each other’s talents,” she adds. “James Beard events are more than just money for the foundation. They provide invaluable education and support for chefs.”

In addition to the dinners in New York City, a handful of special James Beard events are planned in restaurants across the country. Bon Appétit Y’all was one of these events.

On the night before the dinner, Gutierrez asked several of Memphis’ finest to throw a party—Southern style—to welcome the visiting chefs. On a perfect fall night, guests enjoyed delicious Southern delicacies on the famed Peabody Hotel’s rooftop Skyway as they listened to classic Southern rock tunes performed by Southern Rock All-Stars.

Nick Vergos offered a mouth-watering selection of Rendezvous classics such as dry ribs, pulled shoulder, and cheese and sausage plates. Stan Gibson of The University Club, along with the help of cooks Nick Scott, Skip Schrier and Jonathon Davis, served Southern classics such as fried chicken, fried catfish with hot buffalo sauce, shrimp creole over cheese grits and sliced Tennessee country ham.





Guests experienced a rare gathering of some of the country's brightest culinary stars and enjoyed an extraordinary meal.



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Russian River Chardonnay was paired with this dish.

An Oregon Chinook salmon Vallée d'Auge with potato risotto and beef tartare was Philippe Boulor's contribution to the meal. Paper-thin apples encrusted the moist and tender salmon filet. A creamy risotto was made from perfectly cubed potatoes, and the dish was then garnished with fresh-diced beets. A light 2002 Olivier Leflaive Puligny-Montrachet was the perfect complement to this complex dish.

Thierry Rautureau's smoked guinea fowl nage with chanterelles and roasted pork belly was an interesting twist on a French seafood classic. The nage, or broth, had a smoky bacon flavor with richness that was derived from the addition of foie gras, where the wild chanterelle mushrooms were earthy and delicious. A spicy 2001 Foley Pinot Noir from Santa Barbara made a perfect match.

The savory additions to the meal were concluded with Susan Spicer's stunning lamb three ways with violet mustard, tapenade onions and mint served with a 2002 Ramey Claret. Spicer paired a spicy lamb sausage with a delicate violet-infused Dijon mustard. Her tender lamb chop was complemented by caramelized onions cooked down with an olive and caper tapenade. Lastly, as a modern twist to a classic pairing, a lamb loin seared rare was served with a jus drizzled with mint oil.

Keeping in mind that no meal is complete without a sweet ending, Nancy Silverton created a grand finale with her twice-baked almond croissant with plum ice cream and plum compote paired with a 1997 Churchill's late-bottled vintage port. Her secret touch was to soak the croissant in flower water before the second baking.

At the conclusion of the meal, each guest had a sublime, and well-satisfied, look on their face. They had experienced a rare gathering of some of the country's brightest culinary stars and had enjoyed an extraordinary meal. ■

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