

TOP CHEFS OF DC

By Anna Loris



Jonathan Seningen, Hook

For a chef whose first foray into the culinary world was whipping up a batch of his mom's famous sugar cookies at the elementary age of seven, Jonathan Seningen of Hook restaurant has come a long way. The eco-

mindful chef grew up roasting fresh catch pulled from streams in the shore town of Chestertown, MD. The decimation of these streams by pollution and over-fishing have since provided Seningen with a clear culinary mission: to cook the kind of food people crave, like his mom's sugar cookies, with sustainable, environmentally conscious sensibilities. The chef's profound respect for the product comes through in succulent dishes like Hook's tuna tartar, served with rich pomegranate smoked apples and a tease of cilantro oil. Seningen knows the ocean's harvest is not inexhaustible, and the artful plates at Hook make diners believe in his scrumptious version of conservationism as well.



Johnny Monis, Komi

Johnny Monis of Komi in Dupont Circle just wanted to get out there and do it — which he made clear at seven when he poured olive oil in a pan and whipped up scrambled eggs for his grandmother and brother. The youthful gastronomic

star opened his first restaurant at 24, though he no longer serves scrambled eggs. Originally pre-med in college, Monis dropped out to attend culinary school, and then dropped out again to rejoin the kitchen full-time. The chef's vitality and enthusiasm come through on every plate: even the after-dinner treat of homemade lollipops echo his youthful spunk. The food is Medi-

terranean with a unique, modern twist. The little bites served before the meal are often patron favorites. Among the best? A minute foie gras cream puff, and a tiny goat cheese s'more.



Cathal Armstrong Restaurant Eve

Once you know that chef Cathal Armstrong's childhood summers were spent exploring local vineyards and truffle farms in the French countryside, it's easy to understand the inspiration behind

Restaurant Eve's simple, vibrant plates. Growing up in Dublin, Ireland, Armstrong's family cultivated a large garden, and much of what his family cooked came from their land. These two influences left Armstrong with a hefty respect for the earth, and the produce and animals it sustains. This appreciation is undiminished in adulthood, and comes through with gusto in Restaurant Eve's elegant, uncomplicated food. Armstrong strives to maintain the integrity of each individual ingredient in his dishes (many harvested from Eve's on-site garden), and the flavorful results are often spectacular.



Heather Chittum Pastry Chef, Hook

Heather Chittum loves ice cream. And anyone who ends a meal at Hook restaurant with enough room for dessert quickly finds out why. She churns novel flavors of the frozen favorite like Rosemary, Earl Gray, and Nutella, quirky

updates that are just as delicious as their inspiration. Though she fooled us, Chittum hasn't spent her life training to be a chef. Born in Brooklyn, NY, she graduated from Clark University after studying government and international relations. The four years after graduation found Chittum

