

RECIPES | BY LISA ARCELLA



KENNY GILBERT

Ritz-Carlton Style

America's next superstar chef can be found at the Ritz-Carlton in Jupiter, Florida. Emeril look out!!

As if vacationing in a beautiful and exclusive 285 acre, Jack Nicklaus designed golf club and a gorgeous 15,000 foot spa in Jupiter, Florida wouldn't be enough of a vacation spot for just about anyone, The Ritz-Carlton Golf Club & Spa also happens to be the home base of one of the most impressive young chefs in the country.

At age 32 Kenny Gilbert is the youngest executive chef in the history of The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company. He was also the featured chef at the prestigious James Beard House last August. Under Executive Chef Gilbert's direction, The Grill Room at the Ritz' Amelia Island, Florida resort won the coveted AAA Five Diamond award for seven years. Now he's got a book in the works and big plans in his future. He took time out of his skyrocketing career to speak to *Black Noir*.

BN: Where are you from originally and how did you learn to cook?

KG: I am from Cleveland, Ohio, and I scrambled my first egg when I was three. I loved playing in the kitchen banging on pots and I was used to being in there. My mom had a roast in the oven and I grabbed the potholder and I pulled out the rack and she saw what I had done. It's a miracle I didn't burn myself. From that point on, she decided to teach me the way around the kitchen. I cooked my first Thanksgiving dinner when I was 11. When I was a kid, my friends used to laugh at me and now they say wow and remember that I was always cooking.

BN: Are there certain prejudices you face in the cooking world, where most of the superstars are French or Italian?

KG: I think on a personal level I dealt with more prejudices growing up in the North than I have living in the South. When I went to the Ritz Carlton, they pride themselves on diversity. I just worked hard and worked my way up. I was the only African American running a 5 star restaurant in America and the youngest too.

BN: What's your ultimate goal?

KG: I would eventually like to have my own restaurant group like a Jean George and be an entrepreneur on your own. I am making sure I am building my name prior to doing that.

BN: What's your day like?

KG: In season, it's nothing to work 15-16 hours. A slow day is an 8-hour shift.

BN: You are married and have a 12-year-old daughter and two stepchildren. But you had some tragedy in your life early on. How did it make you stronger?

KG: My first wife died in car accident and I was raising a little girl who was a year-and-a-half then. But I was able to handle it because my parents raised me well. I could cook and clean and do everything that was necessary to do.

BN: How would you describe your style?

KG: I like to think I create International cuisine with a southern influence

Chef Kenny's Buttered California Squab with Fennel Puree & Persimmon Chutney

Persimmon Chutney

1 c. medium diced Persimmons
1 c. Rice Vinegar
1 c. Brandy
1 Vanilla Bean
1 Clove
1 c. Sugar
1 c. Red Onion Brunoise

Procedure: Combine all ingredients except Persimmons and bring to a boil. Reduce by half and add Persimmons.

Fennel Puree

1 c. large diced Fennel
1 c. Cream
Fleur de Sel to taste

Procedure: Combine ingredients and allow to steep on the stove until soft. Puree until smooth.

Squab

6 each Squab Breast
1 c. Butter
3 Rosemary Sprigs
Salt & Pepper to taste

Procedure: Heat up sautee pan and add butter. Season Squab Breast and place in pan along with Rosemary. Cook Squab 3-4 minutes on each side.