



GARY MENNIE
Executive Chef

Gary Mennie has received critical acclaim for his signature progressive American cuisine. Born and raised in the heartland of Pennsylvania, Mennie was introduced to the culinary world at a young age. His family grew vegetables and fruits in their backyard which left a lasting impression on Mennie, "By growing our own produce I was exposed to different kinds of foods and cooking which convinced me it was my calling to be a chef."

Mennie attended the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, NY. After graduating, he set his sights on the "California Cuisine" movement that was happening out west. He was determined to work in the most exciting and progressive kitchens he could, and learn from great chefs with dynamic culinary approaches.

Chef Mennie acquired the knowledge and culinary inspiration by training in the kitchens of French Master Chef Jean Francois Meteigner at the Mobil Five Star L'Orangerie in Los Angeles, Chef Wolfgang Puck of the famous Spago in West Hollywood, and Chef Guenter Seeger at The Dining Room of the Ritz Carlton in Buckhead, Atlanta. "I learned discipline and execution from the French kitchens, but Wolfgang Puck taught me to think differently about food, that it must be approachable and to really give the guests what they want," said Mennie. "Chef Seeger taught me about the craft of cooking and refinement."



From those experiences Chef Mennie developed his personal approach to food, which he describes as “straightforward inspired American cooking that celebrates the food of the region, yet refined with modern, fresh sensibilities in mind.”

In 1995, Mennie’s hard work and preparation paid off when a group of Atlanta restaurant developers, including Gerry Klaskala selected him to lead the opening culinary team of Canoe. The new restaurant was an instant Atlanta sensation and garnered a Mobil Four Star rating, making Chef Mennie one of the youngest chefs in America to receive this award.

While the bright lights of Atlanta were appealing for many years, Chef Mennie says the decision to move to Greenville was an easy one for him, wife Karen and their three children. “The restaurant scene here is advancing rapidly and High Cotton is a wonderful opportunity for me,” he said. “The economy here is solid and the way downtown is developing tells me the community really cares about its future.”