



Frank Lee
Executive Chef

He's been standing at a stove for nearly 40 years, but Frank Lee has never lost the fire in his belly – and a passion for combining French technique with his beloved Southern ingredients. Known as a guiding force in the Lowcountry's culinary renaissance, Lee has mentored dozens of young chefs. He's also helped grow the businesses of local farmers and crafts people. Local before it was cool, and sustainable before it was sexy, Chef Lee believes in trying the untried and doing the undone.

Lee, who still spends at least three to four hours a day at the stove, spreads the gospel of sustainability. Under his direction, Maverick Southern Kitchens chefs are encouraged to source as much produce and meat from regional growers as possible. And all practice the fine art of conservation, using every possible ingredient to its fullest potential.

On any given day, Lee oversees kitchen crews breaking down a whole hog, braising game livers for pate, turning a whole tile fish into a heady combination of dishes, and experimenting with the flavor profiles of in-season vegetables. He also tends a diverse herb garden behind Slightly North of Broad.

It's all a far cry from his first professional assignment, when he and his buddies pooled \$5,000 to launch a vegetarian restaurant in Columbia, SC. "We literally did not know how to boil beans," he laughs. Over the years, Lee traveled to numerous top kitchens throughout France and worked in as many across North America (Le Perroquet and Les Nomades in Chicago, Le Pavillion in Washington, DC, Restaurant Million in Charleston, SC).



In 1992, restaurateur Richard Elliott recruited Lee to The Colony House, Charleston’s then-oldest restaurant. In time, Lee became a partner with Elliott and David Marconi in Maverick Southern Kitchens, Inc.

While his role as executive chef requires business savvy, Lee notes: “I really love the doing. There’s a Tao about cooking. For us chefs, the kitchen is the only place where things make sense.” His philosophy and his talent have not gone unnoticed. Lee has been lauded in *Food Arts*, *Food & Wine*, *The New York Times*, *Southern Living* and *The Washington Post*, among scores of others. He has appeared on “ABC’s Good Morning America,” and has thrice served as guest chef at the James Beard House. His Maverick Grits earned a Golden Dish award from *GQ Magazine*, and he is featured on the “Great Chefs of the South” television series and its corresponding cookbook.