



GRAEME JENNINGS/EXAMINER

Chef Mallory Staley says her love of cooking and baking started when she worked part-time at a Domino' Pizza as a teen.

# Mallory Staley: Just desserts

By Alexandra Greeley  
Special to *The Washington Examiner*

Surrounded all day by butter, cream, flour and all the trappings of a pastry kitchen, Mallory Staley defies the odds. As executive pastry chef of D.C.'s elegant 1789 restaurant, she remains delicate and ladylike. The inevitable conclusion for many of us: Life can be unjust.

A native of Frederick, Md., Staley admits that her cooking and baking career started out when she started work at a Domino's Pizza place making pizzas when she was 14. "It was a good way to keep occupied," she said. After making pizzas, Staley decided that she really loved to cook.

To help her along the way, her father, who knew of a local bed and breakfast in Frederick, suggested she apply for a kitchen job there. "I started making their salad and desserts," she said. "Working there was a great experience." When the place suddenly closed a year later, Staley realized that cooking was more than just a job; it had become her passion. "I wanted to go to culinary school," she said. "The chef at the Inn suggested that I go to the French Culinary Institute in New York."

Deciding to apply became a major turning point in Staley's life: The institute accepted her. While waiting for her January semester to begin, Staley traveled to Manhattan and dropped off her resume at the renowned Gramercy Tavern. Much to her surprise, personnel

## What's your comfort food?

It's hard to choose just one. There are so many, so I don't know if I can answer. Perhaps steamed pork dumplings, pork barbecue. I love it all. My favorite dessert is ice cream with a lot of stuff in them.

## What's in your fridge?

Seafood, always cheese. I could live off cheese, bread and wine for the rest of my life. My favorite: Humboldt Fog Drunken

Goat cheese soaked in red wine.

## Which is your favorite restaurant?

I haven't been to too many. I went to Birch & Barley and Graffiato.

## What is your must-have ingredient?

Butter, eggs, milk, flour and sugar. I need all of them.

## How would you spend a year off?

I would travel to France, Spain, and go to Italy to sit on the beach with Limoncello.

## If you go 1789 Restaurant

- » **Where:** 1226 36th St. NW
- » **When:** 202-965-1789
- » **Hours:** Dinner, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. Monday to Thursday, 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. Friday, 5:30 p.m. to 11 p.m. Saturday, 5:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday

called her a week later, and offered her the job of pastry cook, and she accepted.

Balancing school and working at the restaurant became too difficult, and Staley opted to be a full-time student, graduating six months later. With diploma in hand, she baked for a series of Manhattan restaurants and caterers, landing up in the kitchens of the Plaza hotel. "I worked in the Oak Room at the Plaza hotel for one and a half

years," she said, "and by that time, I knew I had reached the maximum knowledge I could gain there."

With perfect timing, Staley read an ad on Craigslist for the 1789 position, and sent in her resume, thinking that it would certainly not work out. Instead, the former executive chef asked her to come do a tasting. "I didn't really know what was coming," she explained. "I wasn't as nervous as I should have been." In the end, her chocolate doughnuts won her the job offer. "They loved them," she said.

While she says her cooking interest started years ago at Domino's, Staley says that the biggest influence on her career choice was her grandmother. "They [grandparents] had a whole farm," she said. "From the age of three until I moved to New York, I shucked corn, peeled potatoes, picked tomatoes and berries .... I love that food background."

## The Vine Guy » Scott Greenberg

# German rieslings of the Mosel

I was recently reading a book that suggests that one of the best values in the wine world are German rieslings. The basis for making this statement stems from the fact that many of these wines have impossibly long names that are written in an imposing gothic script. These delicious gems often go unnoticed on retailer's shelves until they are marked down in order to make room for the next vintage. Good thing for me, since I happen to adore many of these wines.

German wines are not as well known in the United States as their other "old world" counterparts from Spain, Italy and France. Considering that only 250,000 acres is dedicated to wine grape vineyards (a tenth of the aforementioned country's vineyard land), it is easy to see why German wines often go unnoticed. But with newer winemaking techniques and better marketing strategies, the ninth largest wine producing country in the world is making inroads on U.S. wine shop shelves.

Personally, I am a fan of Germany's white wines, particularly the wonderfully aromatic riesling wines from the region that crawls along the Mosel River. These wines are produced in a variety of styles that range along a continuum from crisp and dry to sweet and bright. The vineyards are usually found along the steep river valleys that feature sheltered slopes, each with their own unique terroir. Much of the mineral laden soil is covered with slate that absorbs the sun's heat during the day and gently radiates it back into the vineyards at night. And as an added bonus, flavors of slate and mineral can be underlying characteristic trademarks of these wines.

Here are a few wonderful rieslings — complete with intimidating labels — from the beautiful vineyards of the Mosel region of Germany. Retail prices are approximate.

One of the best values for a genuinely delicious riesling is the **2010 St. Urbans-Hof Riesling Estate Bottled (\$16)** from Mosel. It is loaded with notes of bright Gala apple and ripe peach fruit, dotted with notes of baking spice and slate on a broad, tangy body. The wine is crisp and the flavors are well-delimited from start to finish.

## QPR 8

The term kabinetts in German literally means cabinet and is used as a category of wine that is

made from fully ripened grapes of the main harvest. These wines are generally lighter in style. The **2009 Margarethenhof Ayler Kupp Kabinett (\$18)** from Mosel is on the lighter side of most kabinetts and is just slightly sweet (lieblich). It features an aromatic honeyed nose, with concentrated flavors of white fig, ripe peach, nectarine and apricot. The wonderfully tangy citrus notes on the end provide a crisp and refreshing finish. **QPR 8.5**

The German word "auslese" is used to denote that the grapes originated from a "selected harvest." It applies to a riper category than kabinetts as the grapes are hand-picked from very ripe bunches in the vineyard. This category of rieslings is usually made in only years when the weather has been warm, such as in **2009 when the 2009 Leonard Kreuzsch Auslese Mosel (\$19)** was produced. Featuring aromatic scents of gooseberry, green melon and gardenia, the wine dives into a pleasant-yet-unusual creamy mouthfeel that sports luscious flavors of white raisin, mango and ripe fruit cocktail. A mere hint of slate on the slightly sweet finish is a reminder of its pedigree. **QPR 9**

One of my "go to" riesling wines if from a producer that I fondly call "JJ." The **2008 Joh. Jos. Prüm Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Kabinett (\$32)** from Mosel has a vibrant bouquet of white flowers, ripe pear and tropical fruit aromas. The mineral undertones support flavors of honeyed peach, baked apple and ripe nectarine. A hint of lime sherbet is punched up by the mouthwatering acidity on a finish that coats the palate and leaves you anticipating your next sip. **QPR 9.5**

**Note:** QPR is a rating system that compares the quality a wine delivers relative to the price. A QPR of 10 is considered an excellent value.



The 2009 Margarethenhof Ayler Kupp Kabinett is on the lighter side of most kabinetts and is just slightly sweet.

COURTESY PHOTO