

Bryan Yealy: Master chef

By Alexandra Greeley
Special to *The Washington Examiner*

Every so often, some super-charged person crosses your path. You may stop and think, "Wow. Such energy." You may say "wow" three or four times when you meet Bryan Yealy, corporate chef of the Capital Restaurants Group that brings you Old Glory, Neyla, Paolo's and J. Paul's, plus a few more entities. And, yes, Georgia Brown's, that famous Southern eatery on 15th Street NW — Yealy is also its executive chef.

Overseeing all these kitchens, chefs and menus is a daunting task. And this Pennsylvania native is one guy who knows his job and does it well. And with his curiosity he digs into the basics about each ingredient he uses. Take porchetta (fatty Italian pork belly roast), for example. He tells of going to a meat wholesaler and buying porchetta, then studying what is the belly and how is it cooked: smoked or boiled? "I am never done learning," says this kitchen whiz kid.

When asked to name his specialty, all Yealy could answer is that he didn't know. "I want to know about everything," he says. "If I need to know what humus is, then I want to start with chickpeas from scratch."

In fact, if you are a true foodie, you'd probably want to spend a few hours — maybe even days — listening to Yealy's kitchen tales and gathering up some of his special recipes. After all, it sounds like he has seen and cooked it all, you realize, as he rushes back to the smoky kitchen of Old Glory, back where the hickory oven rests.

His immense food passion began in his childhood, thanks to his mother's exemplary home cooking. "She is a down-home cook," he says, recalling how he watched his mom fry chicken and bake delicious fruit and other pies. (Yealy, who loves to play around with fried chicken recipes, concedes this: "I am loyal to Crystal Hot Sauce," his condiment of choice for his mom's crispy fried chicken.)

On top of this, his dad had always dreamed of being a chef. "From the time I went to culinary school [the Culinary Institute of America]," he says, "I wanted to make dad proud of me." Apparently, he has succeeded, confirms his mother.

As it turns out, Yealy has passed along his food/cooking passion to his daughter, Jess, who just graduated from the Culinary Institute. She is now working at Paolo's, recounts Yealy, who goes on to praise her caramel-filled chocolates. "She was just goofing around," he says. "And that



If you go Georgia Brown's

- » **Where:** 950 15th St. NW
- » **Info:** 202-393-4499; gbrowns.com
- » **Hours:** 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday to Thursday, 11:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday, noon to 11 p.m. Saturday, 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. (brunch) and 5:30 to 10 p.m. (dinner) Sunday

What is your comfort food?
Yankee pot roast

Which is your favorite restaurant?
My wife and I had an anniversary dinner at Blue Duck Tavern.

Do you have a favorite cookbook?
I have 4,000 cookbooks, but right now my favorite is Paul Bocuse.

What is your signature dish?
Fried chicken and collard greens

What's in your fridge?
Bananas, yogurt, truffle butter, butter, cheese, vegetables and herbs

meant a lot to me. ... Her attention to detail is what I forget."

A self-described workaholic, Yealy wraps it all up by saying he just loves food. "I love to cook, and I will never stop," he says. "But I want to inspire others. I am not old, but now my whole focus is on my staff. I have found the best of the best, and I am looking at the next generation of chefs." Well, chef Yealy, we hope they attain your level of excellence.

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The Vine Guy » Scott Greenberg

Blind tasting of Washington wines: Part 2, the reds

Last week, while reviewing delicious white wines from the state of Washington, I pointed out that the state's wine industry has been on a proverbial tear for the last several years. But Washington is not new to the winemaking game. The state's wine history can be traced back to the early 19th century, when European immigrants realized the agricultural potential of its fertile valleys. Following the end of Prohibition in the '30s, the acreage devoted to vineyard cultivation began to grow rapidly in both the Columbia and Yakima valleys, located to the east of the Cascade Mountain range.

It's no coincidence that many of the grape varieties planted in these valleys quickly adapted to their new surroundings. It turns out that Washington's wine country is situated on just about the same latitude — 46 degrees north — as some of the greatest French wine regions of Bordeaux and Burgundy. And just like European wine-growing regions, Washington has been blessed with an abundance of prime wine grape-growing areas.

The majestic Cascade Mountains cut a swath through the state from the north to the south, effectively dividing the state into two distinctive regions. The more mild and lush lands lie to the west of the range, while the more arid and volcanic-rich soils lie to the east. The majority of the wine grapes are grown on the eastern side of the range, where the combination of long daylight hours and careful irrigation control provide ideal conditions for cabernet sauvignon, merlot and various other Bordeaux and Rhone varieties. Cool autumn temperatures allow the grapes to reach full maturity, resulting in wines that possess concentrated aromatics and complex fruit profiles.

This week's column will review several red wines from a state that offers a lot more than apples these days. Retail prices are approximate.

Blends seem to be the name of the game in Washington, but the **2010 Baer Winery "Star" (\$29)** relies heavily on merlot (87 percent) as its anchor. Cabernet franc and cabernet sauvignon are also added to provide structure in a wine that offers plenty of silky smooth dark fruit and chocolaty flavors upfront and prominent black cherry and red currant on the midpalate. Hints of mocha sneak in on the lovely medium-bodied finish. **QPR 9**

The **2010 Seven Hills Winery Ciel du Cheval Vineyard Red Wine (\$45)** from the Red Mountain region is a study in classic Bordeaux-style wine. Made from a blend of four of the five traditional varieties (cabernet sauvignon, merlot, petit verdot

and cabernet franc), it offers up attractive scents of blackberries, cranberries and earthiness. Refined flavors of black plums, black cherries and cocoa entice the palate, while notes of tobacco and cedar take up residence on the stylish finish. The noticeable dry tannins will keep this wine evolving over the next eight to 10 years. **QPR 8.5**

The Folonari family has been producing wine in Italy for more than 200 years. Now, through the Long Shadows project — where top winemakers from around the world are invited to make artisanal wines from Washington fruit — Ambrogio and Giovanni Folonari have produced the **2009 Saggi (\$45)** from a unique blend of sangiovese, cabernet sauvignon and syrah. It delivers fruit-driven aromas of baked cherry cobbler and dark strawberry on the fragrant bouquet. The soft, full flavors of ripe red plums, dark cherries and whispers of earthy dried herbs stays focused all the way through to the end of the

elegant finish. **QPR 8.5**

Not all red wines in Washington are blends. The **2010 Browne Family Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon (\$32)** from Columbia Valley is a straight-forward cabernet sauvignon where bold flavors of blackberry, black raspberry, baked cherries and cocoa sit firmly on the middle of the palate. There is just a hint of minerality that keeps the wine focused, providing wonderful integration of the fruit all the way through the velvety finish. **QPR 9**

It was the delightful aromas of cinnamon, crushed berries and cherry that grabbed my attention of the **2008 Pomum Shya Red Wine (\$35)** from the Yakima Valley. The palate is rewarded with flavors of black plums, cherries and hints of spice. The firm tannins contribute to the remarkable structure and the well-balanced finish. **QPR 8.5**

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.



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