

People

Ladies and gentlemen who are embracing the future and celebrating the past of Southern food



1 | MEHERWAN IRANI

Decatur, Georgia
chaipanirestaurantgroup.com

This self-taught chef turned restaurateur and four-time James Beard Foundation Award nominee took a gamble when he opened his first Indian street food-style restaurant, Chai Pani, in Asheville, North Carolina, back in 2009—and it paid off big time. Since then, Meherwan and his talented team have opened four other restaurants across the South. Be sure to stop in and step out of your comfort zone—you'll be happy you did.



3 | AMA SHAMBULIA

Birmingham, Alabama
urban-ministry.org

"Changing how you eat can change your life." This is the ethos of Ama Shambulia's life, and it permeates through everything she does. At WE Cafe in the heart of Birmingham, she brings healthy and delicious pay-what-you-can fare, as well as a place of respite to anyone who passes through their doors. She also uses the café as a mentorship program, teaching young adults culinary and business skills. Ama's dedication to the idea that food impacts change is not only providing for those who need a meal, but it embodies the mission of WE Cafe—extend compassion and seek wholeness for anyone who enters.

2 | JEAN-PAUL BOURGEOIS

New York, New York
jeanpaulbourgeois.com

Raised near the bayou in Thibodaux, Louisiana, Jean-Paul serves up new and classic Southern cuisine at Blue Smoke in New York City. With his family's culinary roots and the training he received at the Chef John Folse Culinary Institute, he's made a name for himself by serving foods as varied as Alabama White Wings, crunchy Cornbread Madeleines, and tender Collard Greens alongside his famous Baby Back Ribs and 5 Pepper Beef Brisket.

