

FLAVORS

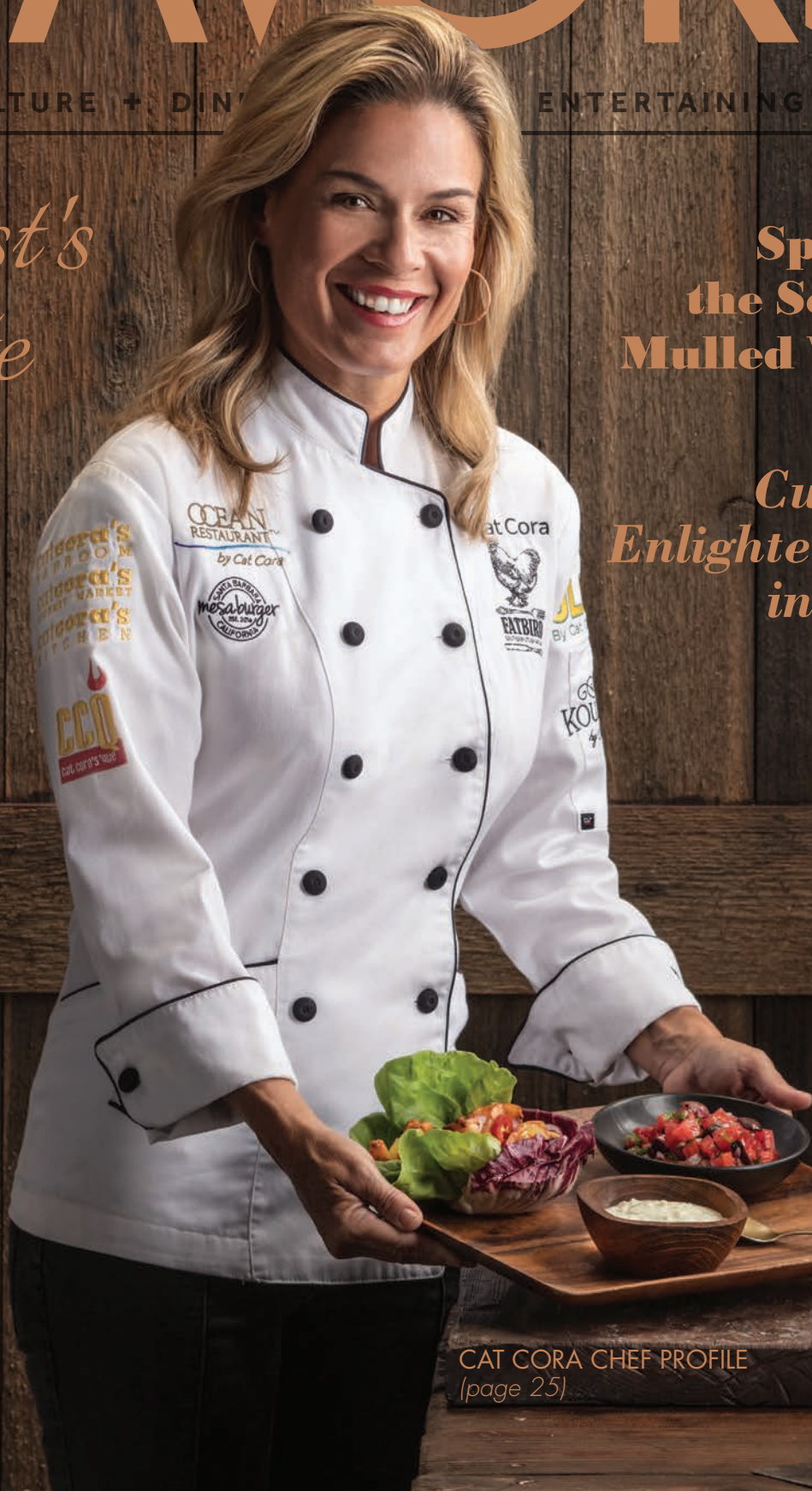
FOOD + CULTURE + DINING

ENTERTAINING + HOME

*Artist's
Palate*

**Spice Up
the Season:
Mulled Wines**

*Culinary
Enlightenment
in India*



75+
INSPIRED
RECIPES

WINTER 2017 \$4.95



Display until March 1

CAT CORA CHEF PROFILE
(page 25)

Cat Cora

CELEBRITY CHEF, CAT CORA'S KITCHEN

Written by Kelly Jordan / Photographed by John Haigwood and Kyle Ripley, Haigwood Studios

IT'S DIFFICULT TO THINK of a time when Cat Cora wasn't on television. Ever since celebrity chefs have become integral to American culture, Cora has been a part of it. The Jackson, Mississippi-raised chef landed her first television gig in 1999 and has become a household name—and brand—since, with regular appearances on shows and networks such as NBC, Bravo, Food Network (including “Iron Chef America”) and Fox. “I did everything the opposite way,” Cora says of her career trajectory. “I worked on TV first, and then I opened restaurants.” Regardless of chronology, Cora has experienced a level of success that speaks to her mettle, as well as a lifetime shaped and inspired by food. Growing up in a food-centric home, she recalls watching her mother make Greek yogurt over the kitchen sink and learning about smoking meats from her father. When she was 15, Cora presented her father and grandfather with a business plan for a Greek restaurant. When Cora eventually opened her first restaurant, Kouzzina, at Disney World in 2008, it closely resembled the business she imagined as a teen. Now, she's overseeing a food empire with 10 restaurants and 300 pop-ups, including Cat Cora's Kitchen, opened in 2015 at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. Additionally, she manages a product line, cookbooks, a charity and television shows, including three new ones that she was pitching at time of print. On a busy fall morning, she took a break to talk about food, family and the future.



Cat Cora presents ingredients for her Lettuce Gyros Filled with Spicy Georgia Shrimp. Find the recipe to this dish (as well as to Cora's Crab and Avocado Sandwiches with Mango) at flavorsmagazine.com.

Q: *I've heard Julia Child encouraged you to enroll in culinary school.*

A: She did! I went to a book signing to meet her and she was as gracious as you'd expect. She gave me great advice about entering the business and told me that I *had* to attend The Culinary Institute of America at Hyde Park, which she called the “Harvard of culinary schools.” I enrolled the next day. About two years later, I got to go to her home in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where she was doing a show with Rick Bayless. I got to tell her my story and spend the day with her. I left feeling so inspired.

Q: *Like Julia, you've had quite a TV career. How did you break in?*

A: I was in the Bay Area running a restaurant, and I was asked to appear on this local show and just got bit by the bug. So, I took the VHS tape from that show and sent it to Food Network and got lucky. The person who received that tape sent it up to the president. A week after, I got a call asking if I wanted to appear as a guest. It's been a steady, incredible climb ever since. I didn't go to culinary school expecting to become a celebrity chef. I have taken big risks, big leaps of faith and it's been so worth it. I love what I do, and I know I'm lucky to say that.

Q: *What inspired you to open restaurants in airports? Why Atlanta?*

A: I found that when I traveled, I couldn't find any cool, healthy concepts. I wanted to provide that for people. I've loved Atlanta for years—way before I opened the restaurant. I was so happy I got the opportunity to open a restaurant there in partnership with Hojeij Branded Foods (HBF). My team at HBF is amazing; I can't say enough about what a great group of people they are.

Q: *You're also the creator of the charity, Chefs for Humanity. What sparked the idea?*

A: I started it in 2004 when the tsunami hit Southeast Asia. I thought, “Wow, there needs to be a go-to place for chefs to get involved when something like this happens.” I thought we really needed an anti-hunger, nutrition education, emergency organization. In the time since, we've worked in places like Haiti, Honduras and America. During Hurricane Katrina, we fed 3,000 people a day 24/7.

Q: *In addition to your busy career, you have a full home life with your life and business partner Nicole Ehrlich and six children, all boys. What's your go-to dish when you don't feel like cooking?*

A: I have to say, I can make a stir-fry out of anything in the refrigerator. It's always delicious, new and different!

Q: *What is one ingredient you always keep on hand?*

A: Citrus. It's so good for you and adds flavor to everything. I probably put a hit of lemon or lime on all my food. It just enhances everything.

Q: *What's next for you?*

A: In addition to the shows we're pitching, we have a cookbook planned, a food product line we're working on, and then, I'm going into more commercial projects like voice-overs, TV and movies. I'm having the best time, and I'm doing it with the person I love most.

CAT CORA'S KITCHEN
6000 North Terminal Parkway, Terminal A, Gate 26
catcora.com/restaurants