

# Secrets of Success

an online exclusive from Foodservice East

An ongoing series of interviews with chefs, restaurateurs and foodservice operators, Secrets of Success looks at the paths taken to professional recognition and acclaim.



*Executive Chef Bradford Thompson, a native New Englander from Connecticut, grew up picking blueberries with his grandparents in Maine and enjoying fried clams and fresh lobster rolls.*

*It was a background that cemented his culinary roots to the region's traditions and gave him a deep respect for seasonal cuisine. Classical training and mentors from Billy Grant to Daniel Boulud helped him develop his own style, which he describes as Modern American cuisine. His cooking won him a James Beard award as Best Chef Southwest in 2006, among various other honors.*

*He translates his passion for food into serious tailgating at Giants games at the Meadowlands with friends. (He once smuggled a suckling pig into the stadium under a trench coat and roasted it) and into giving back to help those less fortunate, participating in Chefs for Humanity and Share Our Strength.*

*As new executive chef of New York's Lever House, he's kicking off a national touring series of dinners, an event he founded, with other high-level chefs, to support Share Our Strength.*

**FSE:** How did you become involved with Share Our Strength?

**THOMPSON:** I started at Taste of the Nation 20 years ago and then became a chair for Taste.

**FSE:** What's the most gratifying thing about the work you've done with them?

**THOMPSON:** Most gratifying is the fact that it's so hands on and you work with the people who are affected.

**FSE:** What changes do you expect this year for restaurants? Will the economy have a negative effect on business?

**THOMPSON:** The economy will have a negative effect in some ways, but overall, restaurants will become stronger and more efficient.

**FSE:** How did you decide to become a chef and what were the major influences on your career?

**THOMPSON:** I started cooking after college and felt very at home in the kitchen. I've been influenced by great chefs that have taught me: Billy Grant, who bought me my first cookbooks, Vincent Guerithault, Alessandro Stratta and Daniel Boulud.

FSE: What is the 'secret' of your success?

THOMPSON: No secret – just hard work, love for what I do, and a few lucky breaks.

FSE: What kinds of food do you like to eat when you go out?

THOMPSON: I like anything as long as someone else is cooking it! I especially like any Asian cuisine – Korean, Chinese, Sushi and Thai.

FSE: What's in your refrigerator at home?

THOMPSON: Champagne, French butter and Jerk sauce (our own brand).

## FOODSERVICE EAST

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