



Seconds in Command!

Market's hot prospect, Addison's five-star sleeper, George's go-to sous—meet the right-hand men for S.D.'s top toques | *By Jeff Pitboud | Photography by Peden + Munk* |

Behind every star is another. Mario Batali was Four Seasons' greatest sous. Marco Pierre White had Gordon Ramsay. Michael Jackson had Sheryl Crowe. In S.D.'s culinary scene, these are the men behind the men.

Scott Caygill, Market

"That guy sounded just like John Wayne!" shouts Market chef Carl Schroeder, hanging up with his ice supplier. "You should see the guy," adds sous Scott Caygill. "Looks just like him!" It's 3PM in Market's cozy Del Mar kitchen, and the two converse without pausing prep—which means Caygill's blindly chopping onions at high speed. Digits are in peril. Line cooks unleash jokes at the expense of cowboys everywhere. The fraternity cackles.

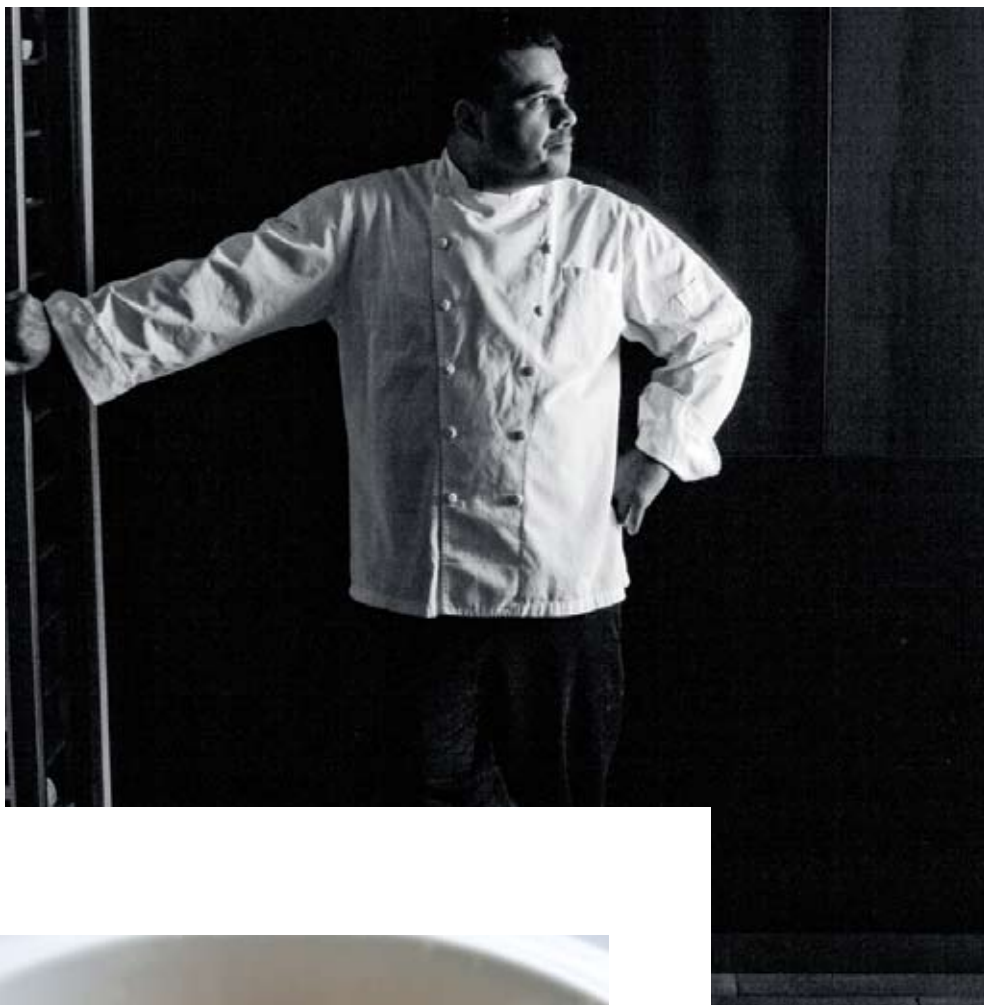
Caygill has been part of this elite kitchen crew for eight years, starting at Arterra, where Schroeder was exec chef until 2006. "That was really when my education began," Caygill says. "Carl is possessed by food. He's unwilling to compromise quality or flavors. I hadn't come across anything like it before."

Now the 28-year-old is getting his shot. He'll run the kitchen at Market's new venture—a wallet-friendly spot in Banker's Hill set to open in early 2010. "He's the perfect guy to be where I can't," says Schroeder. Unfortunately, Market's Cabernet-braised short ribs—a Caygill specialty—won't be coming with him. But the Springfield, Illinois, native does plan to reinvent a hometown classic. "The horseshoe sandwich is a legend," he explains. "One piece of Texas toast, a large burger patty grilled, enough french fries to completely hide the burger and toast, and a rich cheese sauce. It's called a sandwich, but really, it must be eaten with a fork."

Caygill lives blocks away from the new location; he'll skateboard to work. And he's ready. "Carl forces everyone to be better than they think they can be," Caygill says. "It's a great learning experience. And kinda stressful." marketdelmar.com.

Martin Fraire, George's

Martin Fraire waited eight years for chef Trey Foshee to arrive at George's, daydreaming from the industrial dishwasher. "I'd watch how the chefs worked and I knew that was for me," says Fraire, the youngest of eight siblings from a small Mexican town east of Guadalajara. In S.D. kitchens, it's not rare that a dishwasher outshines CIA grads. Whether a chef recognizes it is CONTINUED...



KEY INGREDIENTS
Clockwise from top left:
 George's Martin Fraire;
 Kemar Durfield at
 Addison; butter-roasted
 John Dory served with
 herbs and bouillabaisse,
 prepared by Durfield.

...CONTINUED another matter. "George's had a history of hiring young sous chefs with good résumés," Foshee says. "After six months, I realized Martin did most of the work."

Fraire is Foshee's multitasking backbone: He works every station, acts as interpreter, mentors new line cooks, even utilizes his skills as a former construction worker when needed. But four-star food isn't made with work ethic alone, so every year Foshee sends Fraire to apprentice at other top American restaurants (Thomas Keller's Bouchon, JiRaffé in Santa Monica, etc.). Regulars taste the results whenever they order his halibut ceviche.

Living in Mira Mesa with his three daughters and wife of 17 years, Fraire talks of opening a casual California cuisine eatery some day. But no rush. "Being promoted to George's sous chef changed my life," he says. georgesatthecove.com.

Kemar Durfield, Addison

Any given Monday, Kemar Durfield can be found at Mr. Peabody's in Mission Valley watching football and taking down turkey tacos. He's easy to spot—just look for the only guy who hasn't spilled any on himself. After all, he's the chef de cuisine at Addison under William Bradley, one of SoCal's most decorated, dapper and obsessively immaculate chefs. "A clean kitchen plus a clean chef equals clean food," says Durfield of the Addison ethos.

It's a lesson he learned the hard way. When they first met 12 years ago at The Phoenician in Arizona, "I told him to go home and shave," Bradley laughs. The young chef returned the next day sans facial hair, and they've been a package deal ever since—from The Phoenician to Scottsdale's Vu to, finally, Addison. Durfield is a whiz with slow-cooked meat; Addison serves his Port-braised short ribs with horseradish crèmeux as proof. As for what he appreciates about Bradley? Learning the intricacies of Escoffier-inspired French food is nice. But, mostly, it's his pingpong skills.

"I'm better," Bradley clarifies. "For sure." addisondelmar.com. 