



# South Carolina DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Hugh E. Weathers, Commissioner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



## 2023 South Carolina Chef Ambassadors Announced

**COLUMBIA — (January 26, 2023)** Today, three chefs were appointed South Carolina Chef Ambassadors for 2023.

Lt. Gov. Pamela Evette made the announcement on behalf of Gov. Henry McMaster, along with Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers and Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism Director Duane Parrish.

"We're proud to have these three outstanding chefs represent South Carolina this year as Chef Ambassadors," Gov. McMaster said. "The incredible culinary skill of these chefs and other chefs like them around our state greatly strengthens our cultural heritage and helps to bring millions of visitors to our state each year."

Chef Ambassadors represent South Carolina through culinary events and promotional opportunities. This is the ninth year of the program, which was enacted in 2014 to highlight South Carolina as a top culinary destination. The program unites agribusiness and tourism, two of the state's largest industries, which together contribute tens of billions of dollars to the state's economy each year and account for hundreds of thousands of jobs statewide.

"The Chef Ambassador program is a unique example of collaboration between two industries that drive our economy, bring visitors to South Carolina, and help feed the world," said Lt. Gov. Evette.

South Carolina Chef Ambassadors prepare dishes using [Certified South Carolina](#) produce, meats and seafood, supporting local farmers and honoring the state's food traditions.

"Together, chefs and farmers highlight our state's agricultural roots and fresh, seasonal foods," said Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers. "The Chef Ambassador program also helps lift up rural South Carolina and support South Carolina agriculture."

South Carolina's thriving restaurant industry is a key dimension of its appeal as a global tourism destination.



# South Carolina DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Hugh E. Weathers, Commissioner

“From our busy Main Streets to our off-the-beaten-path backroads, South Carolina cuisine is as diverse as it is mouthwatering,” said Duane Parrish, Director of the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism. “When visitors come to South Carolina, they are lured by both our landscapes and our flavors – and when they leave, they leave craving their next chance to return for more. The Chef Ambassador program showcases some of the best bites the state has to offer, and the 2023 class is poised to further elevate South Carolina’s rich culinary scene.”

The 2023 South Carolina Chef Ambassadors are:

## **Chef Erica McCier**

### **Indigenous Underground | Abbeville, South Carolina**

Chef Erica, also known as Chef Trudy, is the owner and executive chef of [Indigenous Underground](#) in historic downtown Abbeville. Formerly a schoolteacher, Chef Trudy went to culinary school after overcoming major health setbacks, and went on to open a catering business known as Trudy’s Personal Chef & Catering and co-found Off Tha Hook Seafood & Grill. Her menu at Indigenous Underground mixes Southern food and global influences.

## **Chef Rob Masone**

### **Kounter | Rock Hill, South Carolina**

After building an extensive resume as a chef across the country, Chef Rob returned home to Rock Hill to open [Kounter](#) in 2020. The Rock Hill restaurant is home to the historic Friendship Nine Sit-In lunch counter, which has given Chef Rob a landing place for his innovative culinary creations.

## **Chef Marcus Shell**

### **39 Rue De Jean | Charleston, South Carolina**

A New England native with a seafood background and classic French culinary training who graduated from Le Cordon Bleu Boston, Chef Marcus honed his skills in some of Boston’s finer establishments. He is now Executive Chef at Charleston’s beloved French brasserie, [39 Rue de Jean](#).

To learn more about the program and past Chef Ambassadors, visit [discoversouthcarolina.com/chef-ambassadors](https://discoversouthcarolina.com/chef-ambassadors).

###

## **MEDIA CONTACTS:**

Eva Moore  
Communications Director, SCDA  
[emoore@scda.sc.gov](mailto:emoore@scda.sc.gov)  
803-734-2196

Samantha Queen  
Director of Corporate Communications, SCPRT  
[sam@scprt.com](mailto:sam@scprt.com)  
803-734-1779