

Stephanie Izard

Season four winner of Bravo's Top Chef, Stephanie Izard has been stirring things up in the kitchen since she was 10 years old. In her hometown of Stamford, Connecticut, her favorite childhood activity was "restaurant," – cooking her friends and family a menu she created from scratch. Influenced by her parent's global cooking and the gourmet club they hosted each month, her love affair with food continued.

Stephanie earned her Culinary Degree at the Scottsdale Culinary Institute in 1999. She began her professional career as a line cook at French-inspired Christopher's Fermier Brasserie. After two years in Arizona, she decided to pack up and move to the great food town of Chicago. She worked as line cook at Jean Georges' restaurant, Vong's Thai Kitchen. She next moved to the position of roundsmen at Shawn McClain's award-winning New American/Asian restaurant Spring, and afterward became sous chef at the critically-acclaimed French bistro, La Tache.



At La Tache Stephanie was in charge of creating the daily seafood special, and her dishes were so delicious that one day a colleague told her she should open her own restaurant. With the extra burst of confidence, she began her new venture. In 2004 she opened Mediterranean-influenced Scylla to critical acclaim, and in 2007 *Bon Appetit* magazine named it one of the ten finest small restaurants in the country. After three busy years of 110-hour weeks, Stephanie decided that it was time to take a break and closed Scylla.

In the fall of 2007 Stephanie received a call from the producers of Bravo's Top Chef, and began competing for the title. Determined to "just make it taste good," and not worry about the surrounding drama, Stephanie came away as the overall winner and was also voted fan-favorite.

Stephanie is now planning her next restaurant venture where she plans to incorporate innovative flavor combinations, take comfort food to the next level, and include pork and seafood dishes. Stephanie plans to open the to-be-named restaurant in the spring of 2009 in Chicago.

Involved in charity work, Stephanie serves on the Chef Advisory Board for Common Threads, an organization that uses cooking to educate children on the importance of nutrition, physical well-being, and cultural diversity. She also provides recipes for children to create and guest teaches in the Common Thread kitchens.

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