



BAILEY'S COMFORT FOODS AT ITS FINEST

By Mary D. Scourtes

Dish up a serving of The Food Network spiced with a pinch of Comedy Central and you get a little taste of cooking with Kim Bailey. Bailey, 53, brims with euphoric energy for cooking and entertaining with his own soothing cuisine. He attracts a loyal following to his new Hyde Park restaurant, Bailey's Comfort Foods at its Finest. The eatery, just a few blocks from where he grew up, is open Tuesday through Thursday. He saves the weekends for his other joy, catering.

"Forget love, I'd rather fall in chocolate," quips Bailey, who is known for his over-the-top finales, such as Godiva Truffle Cheesecake, Chocolate Cream Cake and a Valhrona Flourless Chocolate Cake with Crème Anglaise Drizzle.

After so many became diet crazy, he wrote "The North Beach Diet: Add Belly and Hip Fat Instantly with Batter Fried Twinkies and More." You'll find some of his sinful sweets in this zany book.

Personal: A Jacksonville native, the bachelor has lived in Tampa since he was 5.

Family nickname: He won't divulge.

The TV remote is set on: "Seinfeld"

He ruined his first pie: At 10, Bailey didn't know about lemon zest so he added three whole lemons to a lemon meringue. "My father wouldn't eat it and he ate everything. Results were lock jaw."

First job: at 15, bussing tables at Licata's Steak House

Culinary dreams: His father took him to Trinidad in the fifth grade where he spent the entire vacation inside the Hilton pastry kitchen.

College life in France: He cooked for 50 priests and students at the Dominican House at the University of Dijon.

Cut the mustard: "I put Dijon mustard on everything."

In Bailey's kitchen: "We cook everything. We make our own stocks, ice creams, cakes and more."

Number of hours on the job: "A lot, but I don't consider it work."

On his day off: He entertains.

Favorite comfort eats: mashed potatoes, peas and meatloaf

The very best meatloaf: has shaved onions, bacon and Campbell's tomato soup, which makes the "best gravy you ever put in your mouth"

Dreamy destination: Asia or Africa

Best travels: Paris and Capri

Dream vacation: To work for a month with Geoffrey Zakarian, chef of Country (New York)

Specialties: French and Indian

Pour him: gin and tonic

Most fabulous dinner to prepare: Thanksgiving

Food to describe his personality: a peach — warm and fuzzy

His book cases are lined with: more than 2,000 cookbooks

If stranded on a desert island: Fly in a cow and an ice cream maker (for delicious sorbets).

Bailey stocks Bailey's Irish Cream: And so many liqueurs that the kitchen looks like a bar. There's sherry for the chicken Tetrazzini and Hennessy Cognac for the ribs. "We should call them drunken short ribs."

Cooking secret: Make a fine dessert; it can cover a lot of sins and it ends the meal on a spectacular note.

Crowning glory: "I like what I'm doing now. I have been very fortunate."

Motto: "Have fun; laugh often."

Bailey's Comfort Foods at its Finest
815 S. Rome Ave., Tampa
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Kim Bailey with his signature crab cakes

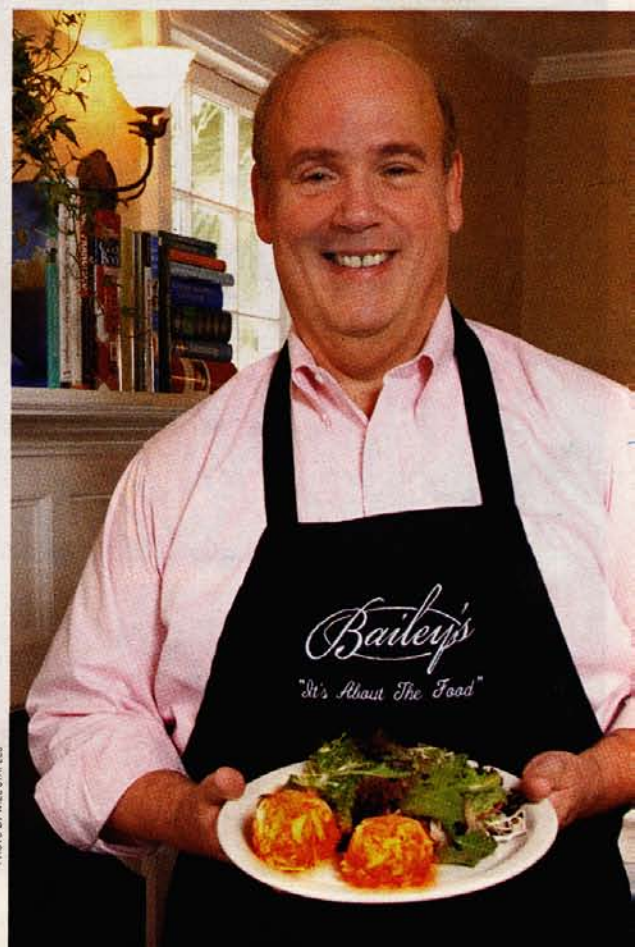


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