

Temple Hills Restaurant Puts 'Luv-in Every Byte'



Crystal Carey (Courtesy Photo)

By: Kristin Gray

AFRO News Editor

Nestled in the heart of Temple Hills, Md., Carey's Cuisine offers the delectable taste of Southern comfort foods with the inviting, cozy ambiance of an urban getaway. The restaurant and catering service, which owner Crystal Carey founded just over a year ago in August 2007, also offers a dizzying array of sweets and pastries, from savory homemade cinnamon buns to edible photo image wedding cakes.

Carey's Cuisine was recently named one of four top soul food restaurants in the nation at the sixth annual Hoodie Awards, an event celebrating small business owners, educators and community leaders in a variety of categories. Carey, a lifelong food enthusiast, says she was floored by the honor and hopes her restaurant will continue to thrive as a standout hotspot near the District and beyond.

"I was shocked," she says of her Hoodie Award nomination. "I heard it first through the radio. I heard them talking about the competition and I was just telling my son, 'It would be neat to be on there.' I still can't believe it. It was a nice experience only to be in business for one year."

Clinching the "best soul food restaurant" title is no effortless task, as Carey learned when she began to develop Carey's Cuisine. But it was her innate entrepreneurial spirit, sharpened as a youngster, that helped bolster her success in the dining profession.

"My grandfather is a chef and I always enjoyed cooking and baking. Even in high school, I sold candy in school, I always had entrepreneurship inside of me and I've always had a love for food."

The New Jersey native, who's former profession was teaching, used to envision an eatery that offered bustling D.C.-area professionals the finest in baking delicacies and down-home Southern foods served with charm. The Carey's Cuisine menu speaks to the African-American family experience, with mouthwatering items like "Granny Gwen's Fish Platter" and "Mama D's Pancake Platter," an idea Carey knew would entice smiles and resurface fond memories from patrons.

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And although Carey's Cuisine did not receive the top honor at the Hoodie Awards, Carey says her focus is directed more towards fulfilling the restaurant's motto than winning awards.

"Our motto is 'Luv-in Every Byte,' she said, "and that is something I try to keep in mind every time I cook or do something."

{Carey's Cuisine is located 4311 Saint Barnabas Road in Temple Hills, Md. For more information, call 301-899-3885 or visit careyscuisine.com.}