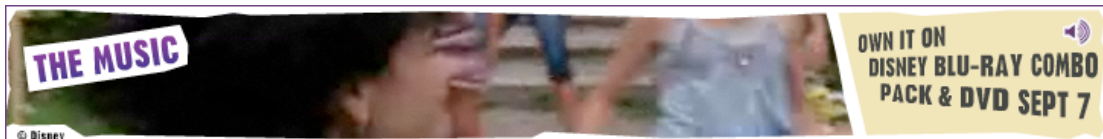




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Q&A with Chef Marc Murphy

by Joanna Prisco

The first time ever I went to one of Chef Marc Murphy's restaurants it was for a party at Ditch Plains in the West Village, New York City. Upon entering, my line of vision encountered waiters passing incredible-smelling sliders, small cups of fries, and *hot dogs topped with macaroni and cheese!*

Just looking at the melty elbows oozing over the lip of the [hot dog](#) bun gave me a heart attack. But when I

recovered from the shock, I managed to taste one of everything. Here, Chef Marc Murphy gives a little insight into his culinary quirks.

Chef Name: Marc Murphy

Restaurant: [Landmarc](#) and [Ditch Plains](#), NYC

Cuisine: Landmarc restaurants feature Mediterranean bistro fare; Ditch Plains offers casual, beach-style cuisine

What is the most important thing you try to achieve through your food?

I want to make people happy. No surprises. I want people to know exactly what they are getting when they order.

What is the most popular dish at the restaurant?

The top three dishes fluctuate week to week but one steady top seller is our burger. Actually, it's a top seller at all of our restaurants. At Landmarc, we make the *gruyere* buns in the restaurant so that adds a little something special.



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Are there any secret "off-the-menu" dishes we could order if we wanted to?

We regularly run specials in the restaurants that aren't on the menu. Often times these items do so well, we HAVE to put them on the menu. A fun secret item we have at Ditch Plains right now is fried jalapeños. They're great as a side or they are amazing topped on a burger.

How do regional foods influence your menu?

I was raised in Italy and France. Almost everything on the Landmarc menu has influence from one of those places. The ratatouille that has been on our menu since we opened is my French grandmother's recipe.

What ingredient/dish are you personally obsessed with right now?

I just bought two huge [paella pans](#) for the grill at my house. I have been playing around with different ingredients to make the perfect paella. I love to play around with dishes [at home](#) and serve them to friends, then I take them back to the restaurants and we figure out ways to incorporate them into our menus. I don't have a Spanish restaurant at the moment, but all this paella has made me anxious to open one.

What is the most underrated spice/seasoning agent?

Salt & pepper. People always ask me how I get so much flavor out of a piece of [meat](#) or fish and the answer is always salt and pepper. Don't be afraid to season with authority.

What do you predict as the next big food trend?

I've never been a big fan of trends - I never got into sun dried tomatoes or vertical food—I just do what I do and try to make really good, simple food. I haven't fluctuated from that since I started.

What current food trend are you sick of?

Foams. I think they are overrated and the flavors are not concentrated enough to make a difference on the dish.

Where do you like to eat besides your own restaurant(s)?

My buddy Frank Crispo has a place in the Chelsea [Manhattan] called "Crispo." It's a great no-nonsense [Italian restaurant](#). My friends and family eat there almost as much as we eat at our own restaurant. My wife loves the Pork Shank. I've been eating the veal lately but my favorite dishes change all the time.

What was your favorite dish that a parent made growing up, and why?

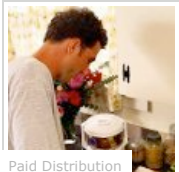
My mom used to make *pasta quattro formaggio*—baked [pasta](#) with four cheeses. She would make it for family dinner every once in a while. It was so comforting and delicious. Just thinking about it makes my mouth [water](#).

If you could choose, what would be your last meal on Earth?

Spaghetti carbonara. I'd want to make it myself just to make sure it was done right.

Joanna Prisco is PARADE's Associate Editor covering food and entertaining. When not feverishly editing articles about tasty trends and [recipes](#), she can be found exploring restaurants, sampling snackfoods, and otherwise pushing the boundaries of portion control. To talk food tips, restaurant recommendations, and general observations follow me on [Facebook](#) and on Twitter [@blueplateblog](#)

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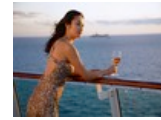
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