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Philadelphia

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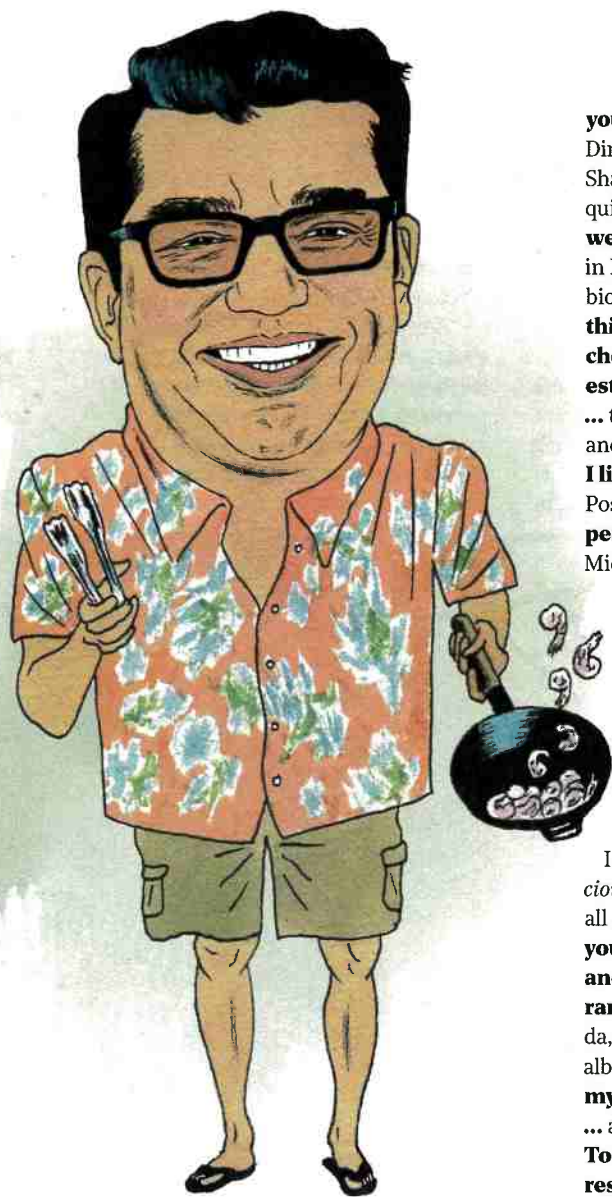


Jose Garces

On March 27th, the renowned chef hosts his annual Garces Foundation charity event at the Loews Hotel. Here, he predicts a Manayunk comeback and tells us what he really thinks of restaurant critics.

interview by VICTOR FIORILLO • illustration by ANDY FRIEDMAN

My full name is ... Jose Alonso Garces. There are accents on it, but I don't use them. I was named after my grandfather, who was from Quito, Ecuador. **I was born in ...** Chicago, and I went to high school and culinary school there. **I came to Philly ...** in November 2000 from New York, because I had the opportunity to be an executive chef. I worked with Stephen Starr at Tangerine, Alma de Cuba and El Vez, and then in 2005, I went out on my own with Amada. **I live in ...** Manayunk. I moved there last October. My kids go to Germantown Friends, and it makes sense geographically. Manayunk feels pretty resurgent. It feels like it could be on the verge of something big. **I remarried ...** in June of 2018. Her name is Jill Garces, and she works in sales for ADP. We got engaged in Hawaii, and our wedding, in Lafayette Hill, had a Hawaiian luau theme. **The strangest thing I've eaten is ...** pork sphincters, in Tokyo. And Morimoto gave me cod sperm one day. That was an odd experience. **I've had my ups and downs in Philly, but these days, I'm feeling ...** fantastic, rejuvenated, full of life and creative. And also humbled in many ways. **The purpose of the Garces Foundation is ...** to help the underserved immigrant community in Philadelphia. **Restaurant critics are ...** out of touch, out of date and not relevant. **The next big restaurant trend in Philadelphia ...** will hopefully be Ecuadorean food, because that is something I intend to work on. So here's hoping. **A Philly restaurant**



you should visit if you haven't is ... Dim Sum Garden. Fifth-generation Shanghai dumpling makers. It's the quintessential dumpling house. **If I weren't a chef, I would be ...** living in Hawaii and working as a marine biologist. I love the ocean. **One thing you should never put on a cheesesteak is ...** Whiz. **The hardest thing about this business is ...** the long hours, the physical work and the competition. **When I cook, I like to listen to ...** Chet Baker and Post Malone. **The most famous person I've cooked for was ...** Michelle Obama, at Amada in Ocean Resort. Well, when it was Revel. **When I want to relax ...** I play golf, take yoga, or do long hikes in the Wissahickon. **Bacon is ...** king. **Since I won Iron Chef, TV food shows have become ...** more gimmicky, at least the competitive ones. I'm more on the digital side these days. I like Netflix shows like *Ugly Delicious* and *Chef's Table*, and I like all the Munchies shows on Vice. **If you're only in Philly for one day and want to try one of my restaurants, I would send you to ...** Amada, for the tortilla Española, lamb albóndigas and gambas al ajillo. **For my birthday, buy me a bottle of ...** amarone, or reposado tequila. **To anybody who wants to open a restaurant, I say ...** run and hide. [Laughs] No. Understand the importance of location and how that impacts the viability and success. **One piece of advice I wish somebody gave me 10 years ago is ...** stay true to who you are.

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