

# A SURE BET

By Ashley South

**T**errell Cole calls himself the dark horse of catering. A dark horse is a little-known person or thing that emerges to prominence in a situation. Terrell selected this name a decade ago. While it may have applied back then, the moniker is more a self-mantra to keep up with trends and keep his culinary craft fresh. After our meeting, we are convinced that the unlikely contender is more of a known champion.

Hailing from Philadelphia, Terrell

attended Walnut Hill College, a culinary arts and restaurant management school. During college, he worked at one of the top 25 restaurants in the country: Deux Cheminees, under the executive chef and owner Fritz Blank. From there, he went to another staple in the Philly fine dining scene: Frederick's Italian Cuisine. From French to Italian, each move was driven by the urge to learn and develop as a chef. One day, he received a call from a former coworker to take a position as head chef for Sullivan's Steak

House in King of Prussia, PA. Within a year of being there, Terrell was traveling all over the country to train teams and onboard new staff. Sullivan's Naperville offered him the head chef position, and he stayed for almost 11 years! For some perspective, the median tenure of a head chef is just under four years. Not only did Terrell have the staying power, but he also fell in love with Naperville and made it his new permanent home.

We were mid-interview when we

noticed an exuberant couple approach us calling his name. Joyce and Dominic Imburgia walked right up to Terrell, shook his hand, and talked with us for 30 minutes about Terrell's cooking! We were delighted to hear their firsthand account; their feedback highlighted things Terrell was far too humble to mention.

The Imburgia's were referred to Terrell by another satisfied client when planning Dom's 80th birthday party at their house.

Joyce and Dom discussed their backyard vision with Terrell and together they conceived the menu: tequila lime shrimp, pork belly tacos, veggie empanadas, and filet sliders. Terrell

**I was sneaking away tupperware of food to put in the fridge to keep for myself!**

**-Client, Joyce Imburgia**

planned the evening in meticulous detail and set up heated stations to keep the food ready and available for partygoers. Joyce said, "my goal was for the guests to depart by 8:00 pm, but many stayed until near midnight!" "I was sneaking away tupperware of food to put in the fridge to keep for myself!" Terrell laughed heartily at her admission.

"Oh, and those cupcakes!! Those cupcakes were delicious!" Joyce exclaims. Before the catering business and after leaving Sullivan's, Terrell opened a bakery, Dark Horse Pastries, in downtown Naperville in February 2016. He was also catering and making wholesale desserts (for Casey's Grocery). His phone kept ringing about catering.

Dark Horse is now a Naperville catering company with a large presence. Terrell caters any occasion, large or small; continues making wholesale desserts; and is regularly hosting pop-up foodie events at local breweries. He also produces cooking demonstration videos on his YouTube channel: Dark Horse After Dark and offers virtual cooking classes.

Terrell focuses on what he does well and still manages to evolve. He is not a one trick pony, nor does he ever want to be considered a specialist in one type of food. His menu



Swordfish with Roasted cauliflower

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changes every time he meets with a client and as the seasons change.

Thanksgiving. Let's talk about the big food holiday! Terrell will handle it all for you. Turkey from Casey's, of course, is on the menu. Along with the bird, you might enjoy zucchini and squash medallions, mashed sweet potatoes (That we swear taste like ice cream—no added sugar!), cauliflower mash, or apple cider Brussels sprouts with bacon. Pumpkin pie, apple crumb, banana crème, or cheesecake (his specialty) could finish off the meal.

Everything is customizable. Terrell can even help you with the wine pairings. He will consult with you just as he did with the Imburgia's.

Is your mouth watering yet? It should be. The man is talented.

(Psst! Thanksgiving and Christmas Day are available as of this writing.)



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Mussels with sausage  
Terrell Cole,  
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Pan-seared duck  
Terrell Cole,  
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