
tupelo honey cafe

PRESS KIT



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TUPELO HONEY CAFE: A BRIEF HISTORY AND OVERVIEW

Tupelo Honey Cafe, the iconic Southern restaurant, first opened in downtown Asheville, N.C., on Dec. 7, 2000. Known originally as a late-night haunt for locals, the restaurant was a pioneer in Asheville's Renaissance as a thriving, creative downtown and one of the earliest farm-to-table eateries in the city.

Today, Tupelo Honey Cafe has 12 locations across the Southeast and continues to offer the same inspired interpretations of Southern food as the original restaurant. With a diverse menu featuring small plates for sharing, as well as entrees that pay homage to traditional Southern fare but embrace our eclectic creativity, Tupelo Honey Cafe is bringing a unique cuisine to our markets.

A commitment to fresh, scratch-made, creative Southern fare sets Tupelo Honey Cafe apart and appeals to diners of all ilks – couples on a date, families celebrating, girlfriends who brunch and craft beer enthusiasts eager to try local brews. Each location not only continues the legacy of the original restaurant with creative, eclectic, imaginative food but also adds their own hometown touches with local artists, local drafts, and local community outreach.

The restaurant has two nationally published cookbooks through Andrews McMeel, an imprint of Simon and Schuster. They have been featured in The New York Times, Southern Living, Garden and Gun, The Food Network and People.com. It continues to garner a tremendous following through online publications and social media outlets.

The flagship restaurant in downtown Asheville, N.C., has been drawing visitors from all over the world for years. Celebrating 15 years of bringing scratch-made Southern dishes and libations, Tupelo Honey Cafe has been starting new southern traditions across the U.S. They boast locations in five states and counting and employing more than 1,000 people with a Fair Start Wages commitment. In addition they provide culinary reimbursement programs, paid time off for full-time wait staff and strive to be a company that people want to work for.

Tupelo Honey also prides itself in its commitment to community through partnerships with various philanthropic organizations through Round It Up America, providing support to local charities in everyone of the restaurant locations.



TUPELO HONEY CAFE: HOME OF FRESH, SCRATCH-MADE SOUTHERN FOOD

Tupelo Honey Cafe is southern and we believe in paying homage to Southern food and drink traditions while creating new ones along the way. That is why you will always see southern classics like buttery drop biscuits, fried okra, fried green tomatoes and mac-n-cheese on our menu.

However, the South is full of interesting native and ethnic sub-cultures. Those cultures uncover unique indigenous foods and flavors born out of natural resources, economic necessity and family heritage. Tupelo Honey Cafe takes from Southern and Appalachian cooking the notion of scratch-made, the pureness and freshness of raw ingredients, and blend it with southern cultures old and new, to transform them into Tupelo creations. You will find dishes like our 'Fit to be Tied' Pickled and Fried, an assortment of pickled and fried vegetables with a scratch-made buttermilk ranch for dipping, the Seersucker Steak and Eggs served with maple bourbon bacon jam and Appalachian Johnny Cakes.

Thier Bar menus follow the same standard of southern interpretation like our Carolina Peach Mai-Tai, Honeysuckle Lavender Flip using local distillers and an assortment of local craft brews hand-picked for each location. They also partner with purveyors to deliver Tupelo Honey specific products for the restaurants, such as the Tupelo Honey Rye Ale in partnership with RJ Rockers Brewery.



A PROFILE OF TYLER ALFORD, BEVERAGE DIRECTOR

Tyler Alford was born and raised in Winston-Salem, NC where his fondness of hospitality quickly grew from helping his mother grow, cut and haul flowers from their backyard to catered events and farmer's markets. Soon after, football and family took Tyler to Mississippi for college and he enjoyed traveling with the team across the Southeast while playing punter and kicker for Millsaps College in Jackson, MS. Tyler studied English at Millsaps and continued with his love of writing and prose while studying journalism at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, NC.

After many part-time positions in restaurants, Tyler started his first full-time job bartending at the Mellow Mushroom in downtown Durham and soon graduated to bartending at The Cheesecake Factory at Southpoint in North Carolina. He then decided to use his studies in English, and joined the Americorps VISTA program where he was placed with a literacy non-profit in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. Tyler spent a year teaching ACT/SAT prep courses and event planning for the Teton Literacy Center. Tyler continued to hone his craft and mixology skills at the same time while working full-time as a bartender at the White Buffalo Club. There he helped to develop the cocktail program and bring in new and interesting wines for the new club's guests.

After completing his service with the Americorps, Tyler took the position of Beverage and Service Manager at the Wild Sage Restaurant of the Rusty Parrot Lodge in Jackson Hole. Tyler continued to develop his management and hospitality skills at the long-running and honored four-diamond hotel and restaurant. Tyler's love of cocktails and further development of his craft opened a door for him at the world-renowned Commander's Palace restaurant in New Orleans, LA.

Tyler quickly took the opportunity to move to the cocktail and culinary capital of the world. While at Commander's Palace Tyler learned the finest points of service from the Brennan family and worked with one of the highest-rated wine programs in the world. He also managed the bar program under direct supervision by New Orleans' 'Cocktail Queens,' Ti Martin and Lally Brennan. Tyler also acquired a Level-1 Sommelier Certification, a Level-1 Cicerone certification, and an Advanced Mixologist Certification while further studying under Commander's Palace's Wine Director Dan Davis.

When Tyler married his wife Sara, they decided they wanted to move to Asheville, NC and start a family and Tyler quickly remembered his fondness of Tupelo Honey Café, having visited many times on the way to and from summer camp in the mountains of Western North Carolina.

Tyler's vision for the Tupelo Honey Cafe beverage program is built on three pillars: Delicious Craft Beer, Fresh, Flavorful Cocktails, and Responsibly-Sourced Sustainable Wines. Since joining Tupelo Honey, Tyler has expanded the craft beer offerings in each location and incorporated beer and wine pairings onto the menu. He has revamped the cocktail selection to highlight Southern craft spirits producers, and developed unique drinks that use fresh, in-house ingredients and flavors. Tyler has also developed the wine list to be one that only offers wines that are sustainable, organic, farmer/winemaker-owned, or socially responsible.

Tyler also enjoys helping to develop other mixologists and encourages submission of recipes from the bar staff at each Tupelo Honey location. He teaches regular courses on beer, wine and cocktails appreciation to all Tupelo Honey service staff and enjoys visiting the stores and talking with tables about their beverage selections. Tyler also plans to develop his own beverage knowledge and will be taking the Level-2 Cicerone and Level-2 Sommelier tests this year, as well as testing and submitting his thesis for a Master Mixologist certification.



A PROFILE OF OWNER **STEPHEN D. FRABITORE, PRESIDENT**

Since purchasing the original and only Tupelo Honey Cafe in downtown Asheville in June of 2008, Frabitore has worked diligently to highlight the unique culinary scope and environment of the restaurant. Recognizing the “fandemonium” around everything Tupelo, Frabitore was instrumental in securing two nationally published cookbooks, forming a Board of Directors, hiring knowledgeable and skilled employees and plotting a course for expansion. Under his leadership, the company has forged ahead with meaningful and exceptional metrics within the restaurant sector. The company will operate 12 stores at the conclusion of 2015 and another 12 will open over the 2016-2019 timeframe. The company, as well as Frabitore, continues to be recognized locally, regionally and nationally for their innovative cuisine and skill in translating the brand into new markets.

Frabitore is a builder and has a demonstrated track record of growth in both the corporate setting and entrepreneurial environment. After graduating Florida State University with a marketing degree, he joined Procter & Gamble as a sales representative in Tampa. This began a 16 year successful consumer products career spanning four different companies in positions of increased responsibility. He left his corporate career behind after the sale of Rexall Sundown, a vitamin and nutritional company that sold to Royal Numico, NV for \$1.85 billion in 2000. Frabitore joined Rexall Sundown as a Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing of its Sundown Vitamin division and ended his seven year tenure as President. He was instrumental in the sale as well as the growth of the company from \$63M to \$750M in revenue.

Successfully transitioning from corporate America to an entrepreneur, Frabitore has experienced diverse opportunities such as yacht building and outdoor power equipment superstores. Most recently, Frabitore built and sold one of the most successful power equipment dealerships in the Southeast after a desire to return to North Carolina, and the mountains to retire. Purchasing Tupelo Honey Cafe was envisioned as a part time endeavor.

Frabitore is married to his college sweetheart where he also caught the Flying trapeze and walked the Wallenda Seven Man Pyramid on the high wire as Part of the FSU Flying High Circus. He was named North Carolina’s Restaurateur of the year in 2012, served as past President of Asheville’s Independent Restaurant association as well as various other Boards and Associations.



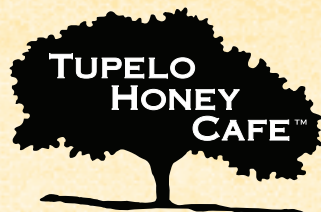
TUPELO HONEY HOSPITALITY CORPORATION

AS A GROWING ENTERPRISE

Exhibiting huge growth since its purchase by Steve Frabitore in 2008, Tupelo Honey has gone from one location in downtown Asheville, NC, to 12 restaurants by the end of 2015. It has also grown from a \$4 million a year company to more than \$26 million annually in 2014 and from 85 employees to nearly 800 employees. He has also overseen publication of two nationally distributed cookbooks by Andrews McMeel, an imprint of Simon & Schuster.

Frabitore saw the potential of the Tupelo Honey brand when he purchased the restaurant, and he proceeded to invest in infrastructure, technology, training and development. As a result, he brought a level of business savvy to a small start-up in an industry where business best practices are not always paramount. Tupelo Honey cafe wants to spread good southern traditions and faire accross the country.





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