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By RHONDA CROWDER
Staff Reporter

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But, Chef Wells is serving something new in Cleveland – the in home romantic dinner for two service. He’ll come into your home, bring everything – including the table linen –prepare then serve the meal and clean up! And it is his absolute pleasure to do so.

He even shares recipes for departing.

“I always had a passion for the culinary arts,” said Wells, who grew up in the Kinsman area watching his mother prepare meals and taking notes. He also made it known that he played sports as well, yet saw something special in cooking and serving food.

However, during a recent interview with the Call and Post, he explained how he didn’t decide to pursue his passion until after his mother passed in 2003. That was when he enrolled in the International Culinary Arts and Sciences Institute then went on to become one of the first African-Americans to graduate from their program.

Actually, The John Marshall High School alum attended Florida A&M as well as Cleveland State University and studied journalism. He even worked as a beat writer covering sports for CSU’s student newspaper, “The Cauldron.”

Currently, aside from running his catering service, he works full-time for Progressive insurance company. He’s been there for 10 years. But, when thinking about how long he’s been cooking, he calculates more than thirty years. “It’s a blessing. Cleveland as a whole has embraced me.”

And a blessing it has been as he’s done close to 200 romantic dinners for two in the Cleveland area and also offers cooking classes for families and girls night out. He does bridal showers and cooking demonstrations as well.

He even participates in charity events. Recently, he helped the Coit Road Farmer’s Market raise funds. “I love to serve,” he said.

Chef Wells explained that he’s really into combining spices and herbs. His favorite kinds of food to prepare are regional Italian. He said the misconception is that all Italian food is pasta, but in actuality Northern Italian cooking is totally different.

“They eat a lot of fresh fishes,” he said yet emphasized that he does a little of everything when it comes to food. For example, his own family loves pasta so he likes to prepare wheat pasta with ground turkey or grilled meat. He said he doesn’t experiment with his daughters, but his wife enjoys sampling his creations.

He’s been married 12 years to Lori and their girls are named Skye and Nani. The catering business, Skye Larae’s Culinary Services, is named after Skye yet promises to name the next one after Nani.

Overall, he is trying to bring a different concept to Cleveland and wants to educate the community on more than soul food. According to Wells, you can still eat good while being healthy as we simply need to know the different dining options that are available.

With plagues such as heart disease and colon cancer running rampant through our community, we need to be more conscious about what we eat.

“We need to realize that eating healthy is not always about raw vegetables,” he said.

Visit www.skyelaraes.com to learn about Chef Eric Wells and his culinary services, or contact him at (216) 254-2808.