

Mr. Kerry Heffernan Biography

Born in Pennsylvania and raised in Connecticut, Kerry Heffernan began working in restaurants at age 15. Following high school, Kerry bicycled through Europe, eventually setting up camp in the South of France baking croissants. He returned home to attend the Culinary Institute of America, graduating second in his class. After spending another year cooking and traveling throughout Europe, Kerry came back to New York City, honing his skills at such highly regarded restaurants as Montrachet, Le Régence, Restaurant Bouley and Mondrian with Tom Colicchio before landing his first job as Chef de Cuisine at One Fifth Avenue.

Kerry later became the Executive Chef of the Westbury Hotel's famed Polo Restaurant, training ground of such extraordinary talents as Thomas Keller and Daniel Boulud. Soon afterward Kerry opened Union Square Hospitality Group's Eleven Madison Park as Executive Chef and eventually became partner. Under his leadership, the restaurant received numerous accolades, including a tie with Per Se on Zagat Survey's "Top 20 Most Popular Restaurants in New York," The James Beard Foundation's Award for Outstanding Service in America, and Esquire Magazine's "Best New Restaurant."

Kerry is currently Chef at [Grand Banks](#), a seasonal Oyster Bar and galley on the deck of a historic cod fishing schooner moored at Pier 25 New York. He previously spent a five-year tenure as Executive Chef of New York City's South Gate, and created the restaurant at "15 CPW," a private restaurant at Manhattan's toniest address. Kerry remains active outside the kitchen in philanthropy, serving on the City Harvest Food Council and cooking for Share Our Strength, Project by Project, and both the Central Park and Madison Square Park Conservancies and as an advisor to several nonprofit agencies charged with seafood sustainability and conservation. In 2012, Kerry was honored as the commencement speaker at the Culinary Institute of America.

An avid outdoorsman and seafood expert, Kerry has won several charity fishing tournaments, including the "Manhattan Cup" and the "Montauk Redbone." In addition to appearing as a guest judge on Top Chef All-Stars, Kerry has appeared on The Today Show, Good Morning America, Martha Stewart, CBS and CNN's American Morning. Kerry is currently working on a cookbook about foraging, fishing and cooking on the East End of Long Island.