

Chef Gale Gand

At the age of six, Gale Gand caught the eye of a Life magazine photographer while she was making mud pies. Today she is still known for her desserts now as executive pastry chef and partner of the acclaimed Tru and Cenitare Restaurants, her television show Sweet Dreams on the Food Network, six cookbooks, her own root beer company and the James Beard award for outstanding pastry chef.

A native of Deerfield, near Chicago, Gand study art and silver and goldsmithing in college, earning a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Rochester Institute of Technology's School for American Craftsmen in 1981. She discovered that the skills she had learned in art translated well to cuisine and worked three years at the Strathallen Hotel in Rochester, NY as a line cook and the pastry chef. There she met culinary partner Rick Tramonto. She also worked as a dishwasher, coat check girl, waitress, cooked at a vegetarian restaurant and started her own catering company.

During those early years, Gand went to Europe to study cooking at La Varenne in Paris and worked in a number of bakeries and restaurants throughout France. In 1985, Gand moved to New York City where she cooked at Jam's with Jonathan Waxman and later, at The Gotham Bar & Grill with Alfred Portale, where her desserts were awarded three stars by The New York Times critic Bryan Miller.

Gand moved back to the Chicago in 1987 to work at Carlos' in Highwood and over the next several years she worked as pastry chef at several notable restaurants including the Pump Room and Bella Luna. Bill Rice of the Chicago Tribune dubbed her "The Dessert Diva." After a stint as pastry chef for Bice, Gand and Tramonto moved to England to run the kitchen of Stapleford Park, a five-star hotel in Leicestershire, outside of London, for restaurateur Bob Payton. Stapleford Park received acclaim from some of London's toughest reviewers. Fay Maschler of the London Evening Standard called Gand's ice creams "the best that I have tasted in Britain." Perhaps the greatest accolades was receiving the red "M" in the 1991 Michelin guide, the first received by an American in five years.



Returning to Chicago in 1993, Gand was the pastry chef at Charlie Trotter's before joining Tramonto and Henry Adaniya to open Trio, earning the Chicago Tribune restaurant critic Phil Vettel's first four-star rating in six years. In 1995, Tramonto and Gand sold their partnership in Trio and opened Brasserie T. In 1994 Gand received the Robert Mondavi Award for Culinary Excellence and she and Tramonto were named among the Top Ten Best New Chefs by Food & Wine.

In 1999 they opened their fine dining restaurant Tru with Rich Melman of Lettuce Entertain You Enterprises in downtown Chicago, where Gale is the executive pastry chef and partner. Tru was nominated in 2000 for a James Beard Best New Restaurant Award and received the 2006 award for Outstanding Service. TRU was also the recipient of the 2003 IVY award by Restaurants & Institutions, earned induction into the exclusive Relais Chateau & Relais Gourmand group of restaurants, and was inducted into Nation's Restaurant News' Fine Dining Hall of Fame. TRU was also honored with the 2004 Wine Spectator Grand Award, one of the most highly coveted acknowledgements in the food and wine industry, and Best Restaurant in Chicago Magazine's 2002 and 2004 Dining Awards, with Gand being named Best Pastry Chef in 2004. Gand received the James Beard Award for Outstanding Pastry Chef in 2001 and was named top pastry chef of the year in Bon Appetit's annual Best of the Best awards in 2001.

In 2006, as consulting executive pastry chef and partner, Gand developed the dessert program for four new restaurants launched by Cenitare's, including Gale's Coffee Bar, Tramonto's Steak & Seafood, Osteria di Tramonto and RT Lounge. Two more locations are currently under construction. She continues to oversee the dessert and cheese program at Tru while she does the same for Cenitare Restaurants.

Her first cookbook, "American Brasserie", written with Rick Tramonto and Julia Moskin, was published in 1997 and named as a finalist in the Julia Child Cookbook Awards with the International Association of Culinary Professionals. Gand's second book, "Butter Sugar Flour Eggs", published by Clarkson Potter in 1999 received a James Beard nomination for Best Cookbook in the Baking and Desserts category. Her third book, "Gale Gand's Just a Bite" was released in 2001, "TRU: A Cookbook from the Legendary Chicago Restaurant", written with culinary partner Tramonto, was also published in 2004. "Gale Gand's Short + Sweet" hit the shelves in 2004 with a companion Short + Sweet Dessert Deck recipe card box in 2007, Gand's latest cookbook "Chocolate and Vanilla" was published in 2006 and she's currently working on a new title featuring her favorite brunch recipes.

A lifelong root beer aficionado, she manufactures her own brand of root beer called "Gale's"®, which is uniquely flavored with cinnamon, ginger and vanilla. She's also finishing up perfecting her new vanilla cream soda made with pure cane sugar and Tahitian vanilla. Gale has also developed her own line of bakeware called Gale At Home, sold at Macy's and on the Home Shopping Network. and is a member of the Macy's Culinary Council

Gand appears frequently on radio and television including appearances on Oprah, The Today Show and the Martha Stewart Show as well as hosting her own Food Network show, "Sweet Dreams," on since 2000. She appeared on the PBS program, "Baking with Julia" in 1996 and is included in Julia Child's book by the same name. She is currently working on two more shows, "The Heirloom Recipe Project" and "The Answered Chef", a new On Demand cooking show.

Gand is married to Jimmy Seidita, and loves cooking with her three children: twin girls named Ella Nora and Ruby Grace, age 3 and an 11 year old son Gio, who is a great cook for his age and was featured in Food and Wine magazine.

Eggs Poached in Tomato Sauce Recipe

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 1 jar Marinara Sauce, preferable Paul Newman brand
- 4 leaves fresh basil, torn
- 8 eggs
- 1 fresh crusty loaf of Italian bread
- grated parmesan

In a large All-Clad 3 quart sauté pan heat the Marinara Sauce till simmering. Tear up the basil and stir it in to combine. Make 8 depressions in the tomato sauce (one in the middle and the rest in a ring) with the back of a large spoon and break one egg into each one.

Baste the eggs with a little tomato sauce then put a lid on the pan and cook on medium to poach them, about 4 minutes.

Serve eggs and sauce in bowls, spooning out the eggs carefully so as not to break the yolks, with thick slices of fresh crusty Italian bread.

Top it off with some grated parmesan and serve with a spoon.