



Photo: Rey Lopez

**Kith and Kin's Kwame Onwuachi adds the finishing touches to one of his Caribbean, Creole, and African specialties**

## The District Wharf's Kith and Kin

**K**wame Onwuachi is back. This past October, he unveiled his highly anticipated Kith and Kin in the sprawling District Wharf. The successor to his short-lived Shaw Bijou, Kwame's 96-seat, Afro-Caribbean restaurant is ensconced in the stylish InterContinental Hotel.

"The process of bringing Kith and Kin to life has been a very exciting, rewarding, and a personal endeavor for me," said Onwuachi. "I'm thrilled to share this chapter of my story in Washington with locals and visitors...especially at The Wharf with its rich history. This food is a celebration of my heritage, and I strongly believe that the representation of these cuisines – many of which have direct connections to each other – has long been missing from our dining scene."

### The moniker Kith and Kin...

...refers to Onwuachi's multi-ethnic ancestry, as he draws on his Caribbean, Creole, and African

cultural roots. He was born in the Bronx a mere 27 years ago. Besides spending a few years in Nigeria with his grandfather — where "I was taught invaluable lessons about respecting food, including every single ingredient from raising animals and produce to paying respect to the animals used for meals" — he also lived in New Orleans with other family members and learned to enjoy and appreciate Louisiana's Creole cuisine.

"I grew up a Creole, Nigerian, and Jamaican in the Bronx," he told Eater DC. "If it weren't for the stories of my ancestors and my parents making sure I understood, I wouldn't be here (in the food world)



**Celeste McCall**  
**CULINARY**  
**CORRESPONDENT**

today...It's time I honored that. I'm looking forward to sharing these beautiful cuisines with our guests, educating them, enlightening their palates, and [providing] memorable dining experiences."

### At age 21...

...Onwuachi founded Coterie Catering company, inspired by his caterer mom, Jewel Robinson. He says his constant exposure to food while growing up had a positive impact. "Most kids watched the Cartoon Network or Nickelodeon," he recalled. "All I'd watch was the Food Network, the original 'Iron Chef,' and clips of Julia Child. I just loved it."

After attending Cardinal Spellman High School and the Bronx Leadership Academy, he followed his mother to Louisiana in 2009. While there, Onwuachi cooked on a boat for oil spill relief workers. Then, he returned to New York to start his catering business.

### By then...

...there was no stopping this

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Photo: Rey Lopez

## Weinstein Raises the Bar at Hank's on the Wharf

**BY LISA KEATHLEY**

**J**essica Weinstein's story wasn't supposed to turn out the way it did. But then, whose story does? She started out as a fine arts student at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore. But she returned to the Washington area "for a boy, which many people do when they are 18 and stupid!" she laughs. However, for her, it may have been the best thing that ever happened. While she was studying psychology closer to home at Montgomery College, her older brother worked in a whiskey bar, and it needed staff. "Why not," thought Weinstein, though she didn't know the first thing about whiskey. The boss suggested she read "Whiskey" by whiskey expert Michael Jackson. That awakened a thirst (ahem) for knowledge in the spirits business that continues unabated and unquenched!

"I never went to bartending school," Weinstein notes. "I learned on the job and through books." Plus, the D.C. Craft Bartenders Guild. "I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing now without the Guild. They have such an amazing program." As she learned more about spirits, she learned more about the creation

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