

# New “Indigenous Restaurant” to Open May 4th In Kemah, TX

*The brainchild of James Beard Finalist  
“Best Chef Texas” Chef “G” Benchawan  
Painter of HTX’ Street to Kitchen and Chef  
David Skinner of eculent*

HOUSTON, TX, USA, May 2, 2023  
/EINPresswire.com/ -- ABOUT [th\\_prsrv](#)  
(The Preserve @ [eculent](#)):

Indigenous cuisine.  
Ancient techniques.  
Modern presentation.

## WHO IS BEHIND THE CONCEPT?

-Chef David Skinner (Chef Owner of  
eculent, Clear Creek Winery and  
Meticulous Spirits)

-Chef Benchawan Jabthong Painter  
([Street2Kitchen](#) & 2023 James Beard Finalist for Best Chef Texas)



Interior of Indigenous Kemah Restaurant Th\_Prsvr at  
eculent

## CHEFS' CONCEPT STATEMENT:

“

As an indigenous Chef, I'm  
passionate about preserving  
traditional culinary practices  
with modern techniques. I  
look forward to sharing my  
Choctaw culture, history,  
and traditions of indigenous  
food.”

*Chef David Skinner*

“As Native American and Thai indigenous chefs, our joint  
goal is to spotlight the old world and at the same time,  
bring forth an even newer world of progressive cuisine.”

From the pre-colonial era to the present, food has been  
largely dominated by European techniques and approach,  
leaving lots of native wisdom by the wayside. Ours is a  
journey of exploration, but also of the reverse  
colonialization of food.

th\_prsrv (@thprsrv) will invite diners and curious foodies to  
join us as archeological excavators and discoverers of their

food as it spans time, as we embark on indigenous journeys, starting with our own Native

American and Asian roots.”

#### QUOTE FROM CHEF G

“I’m excited to dig into the history of my biggest passion—food—and bring lost cooking techniques to the new world. Chef David Skinner of eculent, is one of my favorite chefs, and so the opportunity to work, cook and conceptualize together with him in the kitchen, is a dream come true.” said Chef G.

#### Chef G BIOGRAPHY:

By all accounts, Chef Benchawan Jabthong Painter (Chef G) is a young chef. But her experience in the kitchen goes as far back as she can remember. At the age of 6 years, she began helping make Central Thai classics from scratch with her grandmother in their neighborhood restaurant in the North Central Thai metropolis of Nakhon Sawan. She has never stopped cooking since.

After working in a number of Bangkok restaurants and pastry shops, Benchawan met her husband Graham Painter and moved to Houston, TX with him 5 years later. She put her skills immediately to use at such lauded restaurants as Justin Yu’s Theodore Rex and Saltair Seafood Kitchen.

In August 2020, Chef Benchawan and husband Graham Painter launched “Street to Kitchen”, their East End dream restaurant. Dedicated to unapologetic Thai staples, the restaurant has garnered fans and acclaim both regionally and internationally.

This year, Chef Benchawan is 1 of 5 finalists for the title Best Chef Texas by the James Beard Foundation. Last year, in 2022, Street to Kitchen was awarded Culture Map Houston’s Tastemaker Awards “Restaurant of the Year” and Chef Benchawan won the coveted “Rising Star Chef of the Year” award. Street to Kitchen is also listed in Eater Magazine’s 38 Essential Restaurants Houston and made the Houston Chronicle’s Best 100 Restaurants Houston in the Top Ten.



th\_prsrv logo



LtoR: Chef David Skinner, Graham Painter, Chef G of th\_prsrv in Kemah, TX

Chef Benchawan and Graham are opening their second concept The Preserve (@thprsrv) with Choctaw native and chef/owner of eculent, Chef David Skinner, and plan to keep serving unapologetically creative dishes together.

#### PRESS LINKS FOR CHEF G

<https://www.bizjournals.com/houston/news/2023/03/29/2023-james-beard-awards-final-round.html>

<https://southernsmoke.org/chef/benchawan-painter/>

<https://www.chron.com/food/article/2023-james-beard-award-nominees-17866618.php>

<https://www.houstoncitybook.com/benchawan-jabthong-painter/>

#### QUOTE FROM CHEF SKINNER

"As an indigenous chef I am passionate about preserving traditional culinary practices while incorporating modern techniques. I look forward to sharing my Choctaw culture, history, and traditions with guests while creating a greater understanding and appreciation of indigenous food. I believe food is one of the most powerful tools for storytelling and I am excited to share my personal journey as we create th\_prsrv with Chef G and Graham."

#### Chef Skinner BIOGRAPHY

Chef | Winemaker | Distiller | Author | aka the "Willy Wonka of Food"

Growing up in Oklahoma Chef Skinner learned at an early age about the bounty of the land and Native American traditions. His earliest recollections are planting gardens with his grandmother and spending the summers harvesting, canning, and storing the crops. His love of food and gastronomy really took shape at the age of four when he asked his grandmother to make him a carousel cake, which she kindly obliged. That experience set him on a lifelong path of learning about food, exploring different lands and cultures, and embracing his Native American ancestry.

His grandmother "Mimi" saw his passion and encouraged him to fully pursue it. At the age of 12 she gave him a Sabatier chef's knife and Julia Child's two volume set "Mastering the Art of French Cooking" and challenged him to make every recipe, which he did. As he grew older, he wanted to open a restaurant. Once again, his "Mimi" offered help and encouragement by giving him space in her gourmet store to set up his first restaurant while still in high school called La Vie en Rose, after the Edith Piaf song. The restaurant was of course French, and fine dining, and run by a teenager in the evenings.

Chef Skinner's next restaurant was during college. In 1985 he opened "Christopher's on Washington" which featured French infused California cuisine, the precursor to today's farm to

table. When he graduated college, he left professional cooking behind, but not forgotten. A decade with an international oil company and twenty plus years building a large consulting firm allowed both the time and financial resources to travel the world learning the history, cultures, and gastronomy of people from over 50 countries.

His international travels also provided the opportunity to dine at the world's greatest restaurants and become friends with their chefs. By the spring of 2014 David was ready to embark on a new journey and opened eculent, his avant-garde, immersive restaurant in Kemah, TX. In 2019 he created a record-breaking event "Around the World in 10,000 Bites" which featured 43 Chefs from 10 countries presenting a 101-course dinner to 100 diners in the Morian Hall of Paleontology at the Houston Museum of Natural Sciences. In 2020, he started Meticulous Spirits a distillery devoted to small batch gins, rums, and vodka. David's passion, attention to detail, and a love of food has now led him to partnering with Graham Painter and Chef G to bring historically accurate indigenous cuisine to the 21st Century with th\_prsrv.

#### PRESS LINKS FOR CHEF SKINNER:

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/food/outside-houston-a-chef-with-a-flair-for-the-avant-garde-serves-up-three-hours-of-sorcery/2019/06/10/03d5e2b4-85f6-11e9-98c1-e945ae5db8fb\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/food/outside-houston-a-chef-with-a-flair-for-the-avant-garde-serves-up-three-hours-of-sorcery/2019/06/10/03d5e2b4-85f6-11e9-98c1-e945ae5db8fb_story.html)

<https://houston.culturemap.com/news/restaurants-bars/08-12-22-whats-eric-eating-podcast-david-skinner-eculent/>

<https://houston.culturemap.com/news/restaurants-bars/07-08-22-the-preserve-at-eculent-new-restaurant-tapas-bar-david-skinner-benchawan-painter-street-to-kitchen/>

<https://www.papercitymag.com/restaurants/10000-bites-dinner-houston-eculent-restaurant-david-skinner/>

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