

A chef in a dark kitchen with arms crossed. The chef is wearing a dark chef's coat with "AR5" and "Ario" on the sleeve. The background shows a professional kitchen with stainless steel surfaces and two large, conical pendant lights hanging from the ceiling.

ARIO

GULF CAUGHT SEAFOOD — DRY AGED STEAKS

Chef Gerald Sombright Chef de Cuisine, Ario

Growing up in St. Louis as the child of a single mother, Gerald Sombright was always a part of the dinner process. He was either cutting vegetables, cleaning collard greens, or putting ingredients into the crockpot before he went to school. He was proud of his contributions to the family dinner and remembers his first dish ever was making Rice Krispies Treats while standing on a milk crate in order to reach the counter at his grandmother's house!

Gerald began his professional career as a dishwasher, yet what intrigued him most in the restaurant, was a picture of a man framed on the kitchen wall. The Executive Chef there refused to tell him who was in the photo and tasked Gerald with finding out on his own. This quest sparked his curiosity — the man in the photo was Auguste Escoffier — and thus Gerald began his term at the "Culinary Education School of Hard Knocks". The budding chef spent countless hours on the Internet, reading blogs, purchasing books, watching programs, and cooking dishes alone in the kitchen late into the night in order to understand the recipes.

Chef Gerald remembers being shocked when he read about the infamous Chef Bernard Loiseau, who took his own life when he learned his restaurant might lose its third Michelin star. He could not stop talking about it, and a chef bought him a book about this story, which he treasures to this day.

"The notion of creating something and adjusting it and tweaking it until it is a masterpiece. That's when I fell in love with cooking! Making it perfect and if it's not, don't even serve it," recalls Chef Gerald. It is no wonder, then, the young chef quickly rose from dishwasher to Chef de Cuisine in just three years.

New to the Marriott family as he steps into the kitchen at the JW Marriott Marco Island, Chef Sombright has held a series of impressive culinary positions across the country including working most recently as Chef at the Four Seasons Resort Orlando at Disney World, as well as at Wit & Wisdom — A Tavern by Michael Mina in Baltimore, Maryland, and at the Four Seasons and The Westin in St. Louis.

For more information, visit jwmarco.com

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