

THE MAJESTIC - The Maryland-born chef loves all things pork fat and 4 AM Chinese.

Majestic chef (and mayo addict) Shannon Overmiller.



Locally raised, just like her restaurant's grilled chicken, Maryland-bred chef **Shannon Overmiller**

is approaching her third month as executive chef at the **Majestic** in Alexandria.

The beloved King Street restaurant, formerly known as the Majestic Cafe, opened 75 years ago, but last year, it faced a tragic fate—becoming a sports bar.

Enter Cathal Armstrong, Overmiller's then-boss at the nearby **Restaurant Eve**. He and wife Meshelle agreed to operate the Majestic and immediately crowned Overmiller queen of the kitchen.

Overmiller has worked her way up the local food chain. She started as a bartender at the Austin Grill, then became a line cook at Café Atlantico. After graduating from L'Academie de Cuisine, she took a job as sous chef at Ristorante Tosca in Penn Quarter, then made the jump to Restaurant Eve. And now that Overmiller has taken over the Majestic, she's proving herself to be one of the city's women in chef's whites to watch.

Though the Majestic has been busy with dinner reservations since its grand re-opening, Overmiller took time away from preparing succotash from scratch to chat with Kitchen Favorites.

Favorite form of pork: I truly enjoy the fat, the actual fat, of pork. Say on a pork loin, the fat around the edges...deep fried fat, or braised pork shoulder, the fat that coats it all and makes it yummy. Strange but true.

Mayo or Mustard?: Definite favorite condiment of all time is mayonnaise, hands down. Used to hate it as a child, and loved mustard, then switched one day--go figure.

Favorite edible crustacean: Blue crabs. I grew up catching them in the Chesapeake, and love everything about them. Crabs represent everything summer is about to us "Chicken Neckers" (People from the Eastern shore who catch crabs with chicken necks on a string or in a trap. My pastry chef Rebecca Willis informed me of this little pun).__

Arugula or romaine?: Personally, I prefer the peppery taste of a good arugula from a good local farmer, say Davoncrest farms. Though romaine has its definite purpose. You can't have a great Caesar with arugula. On the other hand, romaine doesn't have the natural bite arugula does to balance a light lemon and olive oil vinaigrette with some nice hard cheese shavings.__

Favorite olive variety: I enjoy the mild buttery taste and firm texture of Ceringola olives. But a childhood favorite are the large pimiento-stuffed Spanish green olives. I love the salt, and sucking the pimiento out. We always had them at Christmas At Grandma Overmiller's.__

French Fries or Potato Chips?: Definitely french fries, so I can dip em' in MAYO!__

Favorite greasy diner food: Breakfast at 2 AM: runny eggs, bacon, and toast, although I usually throw in a piece of scrapple, or some fried potatoes. Ketchup.__

Giada or Rachael?: Definitely not Rachael. Giada I suppose, although of all the ladies I truly prefer Nigella. She is just not fake. She cooks because she likes to, and she cooks what she likes to eat and feed

others. It's not about the hype. ___ **Best sugar-high cereal:** I never really had much high-sugar cereal as a child, so I actually never acquired a great taste for it. About as sweet as I enjoy are Honey Nut Cheerios, or Honey Bunches of Oats. And you can't beat rice Chex with a teaspoon of sugar, one sliced banana, and ice-cold whole milk. ___

Favorite take out-leftovers to find in the fridge: Cold Chinese out of the carton with your fingers at a 4 AM sleepy daze craving. ____