

Chef Jeff Qualls

Jeff Qualls grew up in North Texas. He began working in restaurants at the age of 14 and quickly fell in love with the fast-paced, high-energy environment. After high school, he continued his culinary education through travel and gained vital experience by opening several restaurants alongside seasoned restaurateurs. At the age of 20, he moved from North Texas to New York to train at the world-renowned Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park. Shortly after graduating in the fall of 2001, Chef Qualls moved to California's fabled Napa Valley to study wine and its vital interaction with various types of cuisine. While in Napa, Jeff trained at the Culinary Institute of America at Greystone. There he fine-tuned his skills in the fields of patisserie and artisan bread baking working with chefs Andrew Carmellini and David Burke.

Chef Qualls returned to his North Texas home in the spring of 2003, working for some of the most well-respected chefs in Dallas including Brian Lusher, Kent Rathbun, & Tim Byres. Chef Qualls held the title of Executive Pastry Chef at the Zodiac Room located inside the original Neiman Marcus in downtown Dallas before returning to McKinney to take the helm at the PGA partnered TPC Craig Ranch in 2008. After several years with the PGA Tour, Chef Qualls joined longtime friend & colleague Kent Rathbun at his eponymous catering company.

In the spring of 2015, Chef Qualls opened his first solo venture, a 45-seat farm to table, whiskey-centric restaurant, "Rye" in downtown McKinney. After a successful stint, he sold the business in 2018 to pursue culinary partnerships with life-long friends in Colorado and West Virginia, leading to multiple locations, several James Beard nominations & eventually a James Beard Award for his restaurant group.

After returning to Texas in late 2020, Chef Qualls formed Roots Hospitality, a bespoke catering & hospitality management company with his longtime friend & event planner, Lauren Twichell. He continues to cater & consult with high-end luxury brands all across North America.