



**Media Contacts:**

Ania Czarnecka  
Ward  
713-869-0707  
[aczarnecka@wardcc.com](mailto:aczarnecka@wardcc.com)

Jessica Berkin  
JW Marriott Global Brand Public Relations  
240-281-8309  
[Jessica.Berkin@marriott.com](mailto:Jessica.Berkin@marriott.com)

## **AWARD-WINNING PASTRY CHEF SHARON GOFREED JOINS JW MARRIOTT HOUSTON DOWNTOWN**

*Menu to Feature Desserts Highlighting Unexpected Flavors, In-House Bread Program*

HOUSTON, July 30, 2014 – JW Marriott Houston Downtown announced today that Chef Sharon Gofreed has added her award-winning expertise for creating imaginative desserts to the hotel's culinary team. She will serve as pastry chef, developing and executing seasonal dessert menus and an extensive bread program for the hotel's Main Kitchen restaurant and 806 Bar & Lounge slated to launch in September 2014.

Gofreed, who frequently incorporates unexpected herbs and spices, savory elements, and molecular gastronomy applications into her creations, will craft desserts that feature familiar flavors reconstructed in an artful presentation. Locally sourced ingredients and her favorite sweet and savory components such as cardamom, chocolate, shiso and coconut milk, will be highlighted throughout the dessert menus, and an in-house bread program will offer delights such as freshly baked croissants and a separate biscuit menu.

"Sharon is a talented chef with no boundaries to her creativity," said Erin Smith, JW Marriott Houston Downtown executive chef. "We share a passion for working with local purveyors and for cultivating creations that add an element of surprise to twist to the traditional. Together, we will place Main Kitchen and 806 Bar & Lounge firmly in Houston's thriving restaurant scene."

Named *Main Kitchen* to reflect its location on Main Street and the goal of becoming a staple on Houston's culinary map, the restaurant will seat 120 and boast an exhibition kitchen providing guests with insight into the creative culinary process. The open planned concept will provide a seamless transition to the hotel's 806 Bar & Lounge. The welcoming décor will pay homage to the building's rich history, evoking the understated elegance and approachable luxury that has become synonymous with the JW Marriott brand around the world.

Gofreed has gained a following in Houston and Austin with her innovative modern desserts. She served most recently as a pastry chef for Uchi in Houston, where she oversaw all pastry production for the restaurant. Her desserts have earned her coveted accolades, including winning the *2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Big Taste of Houston* as part of Uchi team and an inclusion on the *Houston's Best Dessert* list by Houstonia Magazine.

Gofreed studied culinary arts at Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts at Austin. She moved to New York City to further develop her talent working with the renowned pastry chef, Johnny Iuzzini, at Jean Georges and Nougatine restaurants by the world-famous chef and restaurateur, Jean-Georges Vongerichten. In 2011 she returned to Austin to work at Uchiko and Uchi. Shortly after Uchi Houston opened in 2012, she became pastry chef at the new location.

#### **About JW Marriott Houston Downtown**

Housed in the beautiful historic landmark Samuel F. Carter building, the JW Marriott Houston Downtown is the brand's first adaptive reuse project in Texas, celebrating the flavor of the city with refined design, intuitive service and thoughtful amenities that have become synonymous with the brand worldwide. Guests will enjoy a one-of-a-kind stay in an artfully crafted environment with their every need met graciously and authentically. Located at 806 Main St., the hotel will feature 328 guest rooms, more than 14,000 square feet of meeting space, a restaurant and full-service bar, a spa, health club, and an executive lounge. See [www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/houdj](http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/houdj).

#### **About Pearl Hospitality**

Founded in 2000, Pearl Hospitality is built on the belief that by investing in the growth of its people, it is investing in the future of the company. The focus on both personal and professional growth of the Pearl team results in a level of performance that far exceeds industry averages. Unlike many hotel companies, Pearl develops, constructs, and operates its properties to maintain the highest standards and dramatically increase the functionality and comfort of its hotels. See [www.pearlhospitality.com](http://www.pearlhospitality.com) for more information.

#### **About JW Marriott**

JW Marriott is part of Marriott International's luxury portfolio and consists of beautiful properties in gateway cities and distinctive resort locations around the world. These elegant hotels cater to today's sophisticated, self-assured travelers, offering them the quiet luxury they seek in a warmly authentic, relaxed atmosphere lacking in pretense. JW Marriott properties artfully provide highly crafted, anticipatory experiences that are reflective of their locale so that their guests have the time to focus on what is most important to them. Currently, there are 65 JW Marriott hotels in 25 countries; by 2015 the portfolio is expected to encompass 79 properties in 28 countries. Visit us online at [jwmarriott.com](http://jwmarriott.com) and on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#).

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