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Thursday, Sept. 9, 2010

## Dining: Slam dunk for Carey's Cuisine in Hoodie Awards

Temple Hills restaurant honored for best fried chicken

Behind the Plate | Stacy Alleyne



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What do basketball and a basket of chicken have in common? Carey's Cuisine in Temple Hills, whose fried chicken is now award-winning after taking the prize last week in Steve Harvey's Hoodie Awards.



Christopher Anderson/The Gazette  
Crystal Carey decorates a cake at her Temple Hills eatery, Carey's Cuisine.



Crystal Carey, who owns the restaurant and catering company, knows how to slam dunk both on the court and in the kitchen. Before opening Carey's Cuisine, Carey was a college basketball player who whipped up dinners and sold them from her dorm room. And even though Carey's grandfather was a chef, Carey credits her success to the determination of herself, her husband and their four children.

Known for their soul food, fried chicken and baked goods, the three-year-old restaurant was the first restaurant to be nominated in two categories in the eighth annual Hoodie Awards — created by comedian and actor Steve Harvey to recognize local businesses, religious and community leaders, churches and high

schools for their contributions to their neighborhoods — held Aug. 28 in Las Vegas, and won first place in the fried chicken category.

Carey, who admits she isn't one for public speaking, said before the ceremony she wanted

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everyone to know, "If I pass out, I'll be OK. I'm just taking a break."

In addition to fried chicken and soul food, Carey's carries a variety of desserts, from banana pudding to sweet potato pies, as well as wedding cakes, cupcakes and cookies. But Carey says that once she's in the cooking zone, she doesn't want to have to switch to baking and vice versa. And according to her customers, her zone defense is well played out whether she's baking or cooking.

"Their fried fish is nothing but net," said Jimmetta Carpenter of Suitland.

And their "dessert is top-notch," said Leonard Spencer of Camp Springs. "All the ingredients are fresh, and the desserts are by far the best in the area," Spencer added.

Carey hopes to open a new location later this month in Iverson Mall in Temple Hills, called Carey's Cupcakes, Cakes & Sweet Creations.

The current Temple Hills location is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner, with entrees named after Carey's four children: Madison, Maranda, Donald and Jamall. The breakfast menu offers a la carte items with bagels for \$1 and omelets ranging between \$4 and \$5.50.

Carey's also offers breakfast sandwiches with a variety of meat options, including turkey and beef sausage and bacon, as well as ham. A basic egg sandwich is \$2.50, and you can get any of the meats listed above with the egg for \$4.50.

Lunch and dinner consist of an array of chicken or fish, as well as a variety of sandwich options. The least expensive item is Madison's lunch, for \$3.95, which consists of a chicken egg roll and fries. Most fried fish and chicken dinner entrees are \$6.

The highest-priced soul food item is the three-piece fried flounder and fries at \$13, but it's served with two sides. Carey's also serves Philadelphia-style cheese steaks, subs and sandwiches, with a double-decker fried fish sandwich (flounder/whiting) priced at \$6.50 and \$6, respectively, and chicken cheese steak for \$6.75. There are also chicken wingettes and tenders; a five-piece wingette is \$4.50 without fries or \$6 with fries.

Even though Carey no longer stands behind the three-point line on the basketball court, as long as she stays in the kitchen line, customers attest that you're sure to find a winning combination of chicken, soul food and dessert at Carey's Cuisine.

Carey's Cuisine

Address: 4311 Saint Barnabas Road, Temple Hills, MD 20748

Phone: 301-899-3885

Hours: Sundays, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., with breakfast from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.; Mondays to Thursdays, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., with breakfast from 9-11:30 a.m.; Fridays, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., with breakfast from 9-11:30 a.m.; closed Saturdays

Website: www.careyscuisine.com

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