

A chef in a dark kitchen with arms crossed. The chef is wearing a dark chef's coat with a logo on the left chest that says "Ario" and "Gerald Sig". The kitchen background is dimly lit with two large, conical pendant lights hanging from the ceiling. The chef is standing in front of a counter with various kitchen items.

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 recalls the first dish he ever made was crafting a batch of Rice Krispies Treats while standing on a milk crate in order to reach the counter at his grandmother's home.

Gerald began his professional career as most chefs do - as a dishwasher in a local restaurant. What intrigued him most in this particular restaurant, was a picture of a man framed ceremoniously 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 — leading him to discover the man in the photo was Auguste Escoffier — the father of modern French cuisine. Researching Escoffier's many culinary contributions piqued Gerald's interest and led him to begin his own quest to learn as much about fine dining and cuisine as possible. 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.

Another impactful moment that shaped Gerald into the chef he is today was when he learned about the infamous Chef Bernard Loiseau, who took his own life when he learned his restaurant might lose its third Michelin star. This deep passion for cooking stuck with Gerald and the story still resonates with him to this day. He keeps a book about Loiseau's story to remind him of his passion. "Adjusting and tweaking a dish until it is a masterpiece, striving for perfection, and the possibility of achieving it both fascinated and pushed me," recalls Chef Sombright. "Crafting a dish that is memorable and more importantly, something that I am proud of, is what made me fall in love with cooking."

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 his most recent stint as Chef at the Four Seasons Resort Orlando at Disney World. In addition, Gerald worked at Wit & Wisdom — A Tavern by Michael Mina located in Baltimore, Maryland as well as The Four Seasons and The Westin in St. Louis. In 2016, Chef Sombright was selected to compete as a "Cheftestant" on Bravo's *Top Chef* Season 14.

For more information, visit jwmarriottmarcoisland.com

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