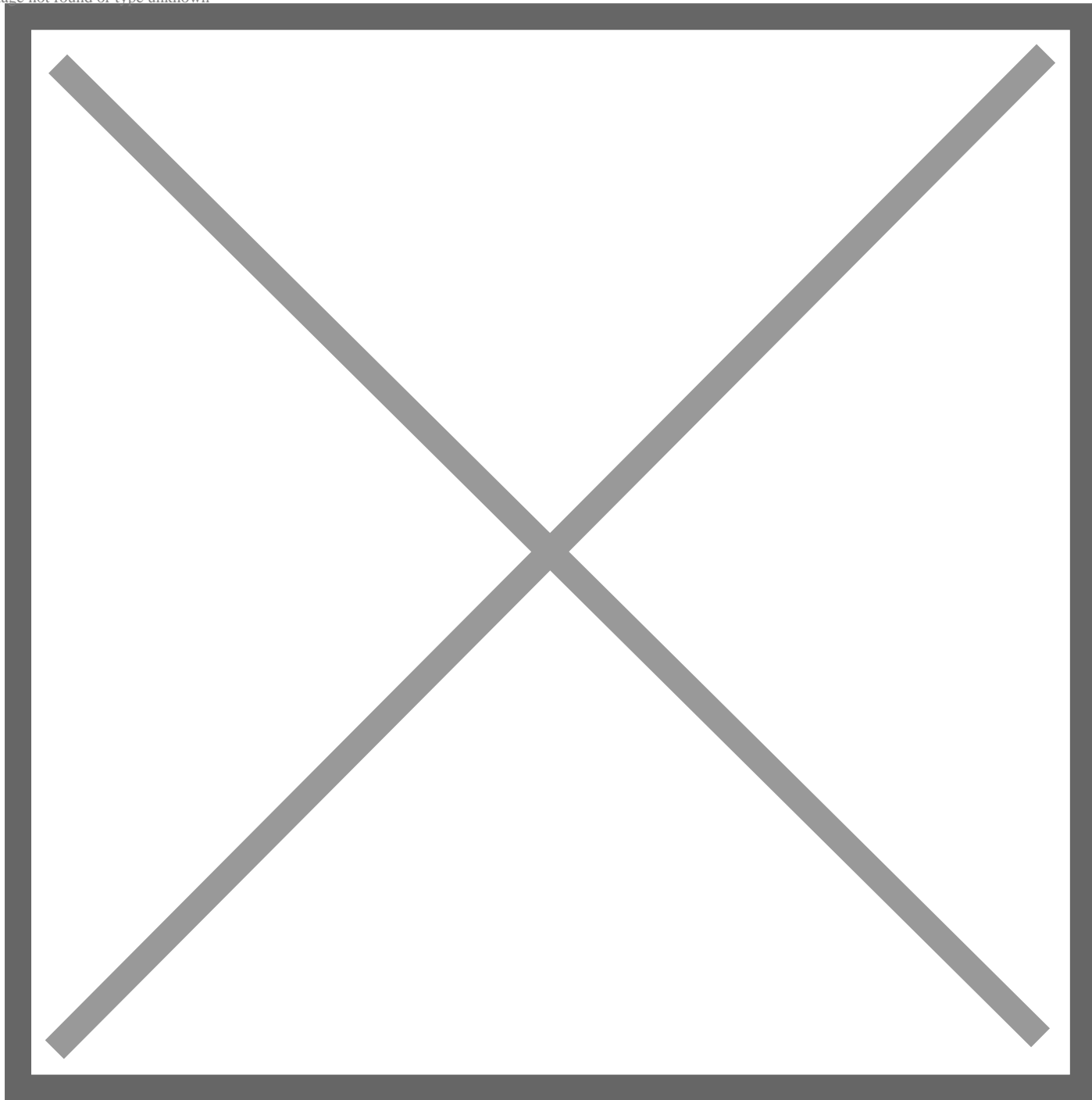


# Craft, Culture, and Southern Soul: Tiffany Derry Named Newest Lexus Culinary Master

January 20, 2026

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With Southern roots, global training, and a purpose-driven approach to hospitality, Tiffany Derry brings a fresh perspective to the Lexus Culinary Masters as she joins the program in January 2026. The program partners with distinguished chefs to create memorable culinary experiences at brand events, bringing Lexus' commitment to excellence and craftsmanship to life through food and hospitality. Her arrival adds a new voice to a collective of celebrated chefs – including [Jon Shook and Vinny Dotolo](#), [Stephanie Izard](#), [Kwame Onwuachi](#), and [Shota Nakajima](#) – who embody The Standard of Amazing that guides the Lexus brand.

### **A Chef Guided by Heritage and Purpose**

Chef Derry's culinary journey began on her family's farm in Port Allen, Louisiana, where farm-to-table eating was part of daily life. Meals followed the seasons, fruits and vegetables were canned and preserved, and nothing was wasted. Her grandmother welcomed every guest into the kitchen with warmth and taught Derry that cooking is an expression of care, history, and community.

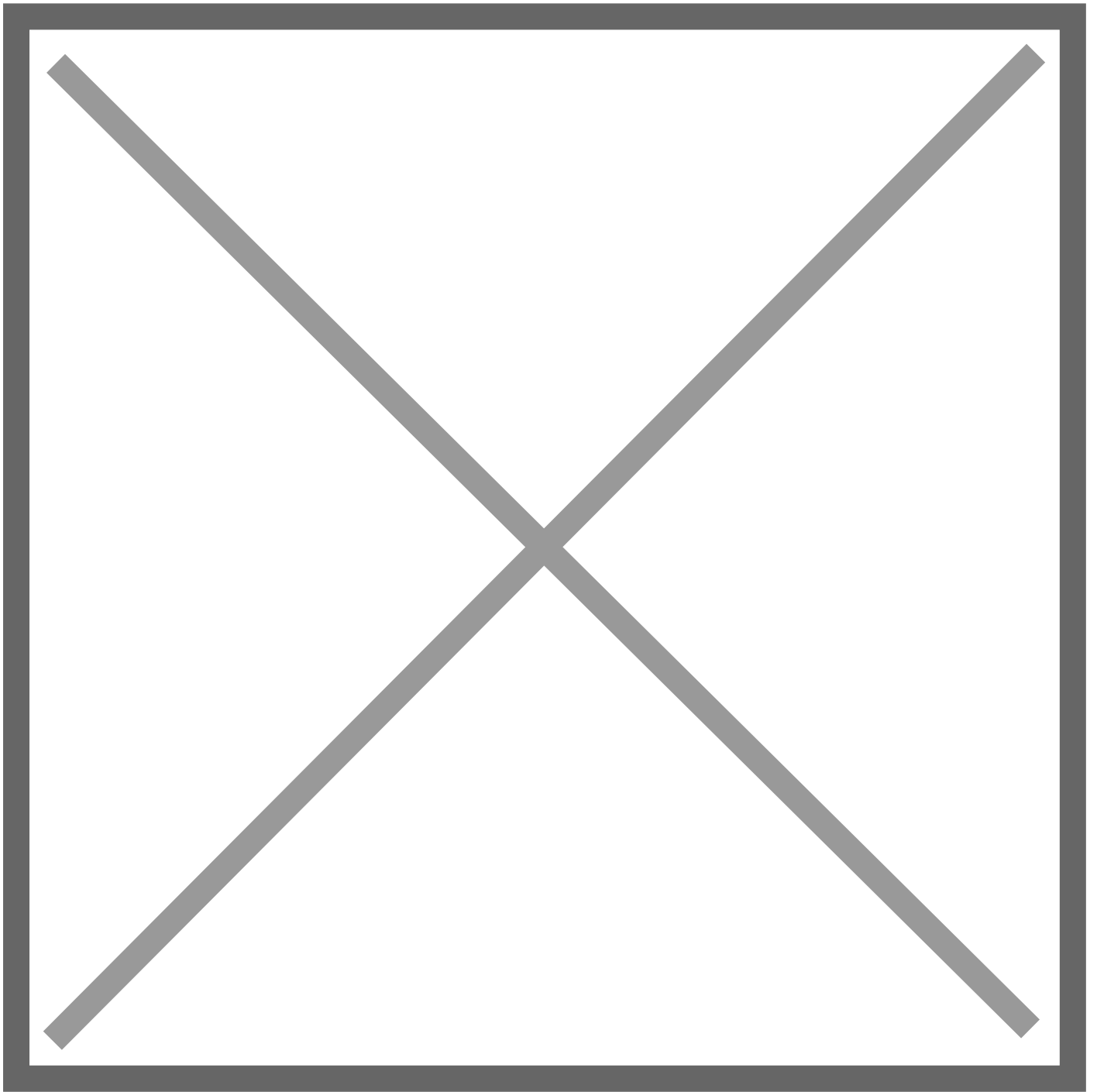
But her path to the kitchen wasn't straightforward. When Derry applied for her first cooking job at age 15, she was denied such opportunities because of her race and gender. However, while working as a server, she stepped in when the kitchen was short-staffed, proved herself, and ultimately became the restaurant's youngest kitchen manager.

These formative experiences shaped Derry's belief that food can create opportunity, connection, and belonging — a philosophy that has guided her career.

### **A Career Built on Craft**

Derry earned her culinary degree from the Art Institute of Houston and deepened her appreciation for various cuisines through study abroad programs in Costa Rica, Mexico, Italy, France, China, and Hawaii. After graduating, she cooked in acclaimed Texas kitchens before partnering with the Halstin Group to open Private|Social in Dallas, which earned her recognition as one of the "Best Chefs in DFW" by The Dallas Morning News.

Derry's national profile grew on Top Chef Season 7, where her quiet confidence and culinary expertise carried her to the top four, followed by a finalist appearance on Top Chef: All-Stars. Today, she serves as a judge on MasterChef and The Great American Recipe. This foundation shaped the distinctive culinary identity she brings to her restaurants today.



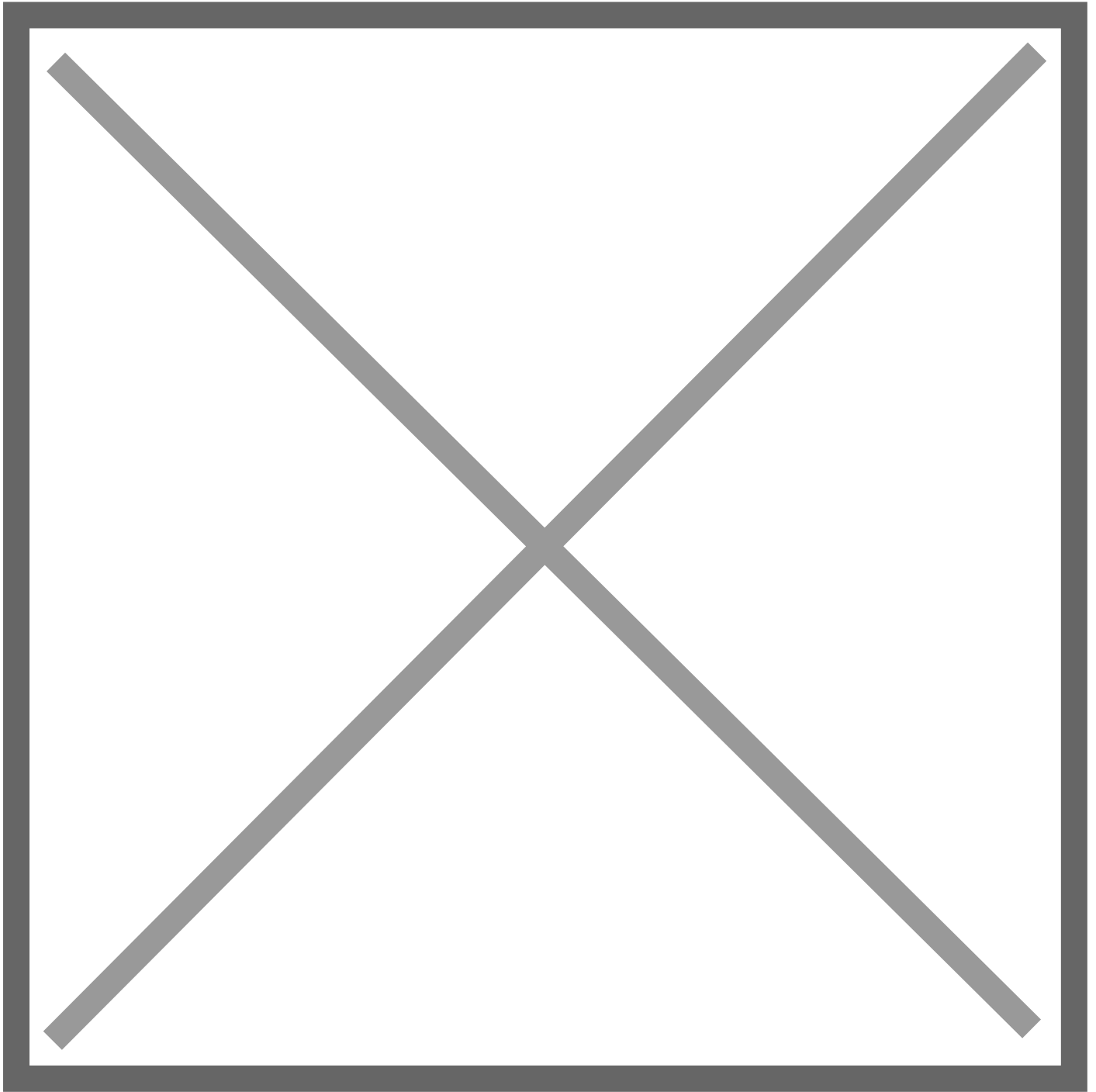
### **Rooted in Southern Heritage, Elevated by Global Influence**

Derry's cooking reflects the flavors and traditions of the American South, paired with techniques developed around the world. Her restaurant portfolio includes:

- **Roots Southern Table**, recognized by *The New York Times* and *Esquire* as one of the nation's best new restaurants
- **Roots Chicken Shak**, known for duck fat fried chicken
- **Radici Wood Fired Grill**, inspired by Italian cooking traditions

Each of Derry’s menus is anchored in the farm-to-table lifestyle she grew up with, where nothing was wasted and every dish carried meaning.

“I cook the way I was taught growing up,” Derry says. “The South is in everything I make. My roots give me direction, and my travels help me grow.”



### **A Leader in Community, Craft, and Culture**

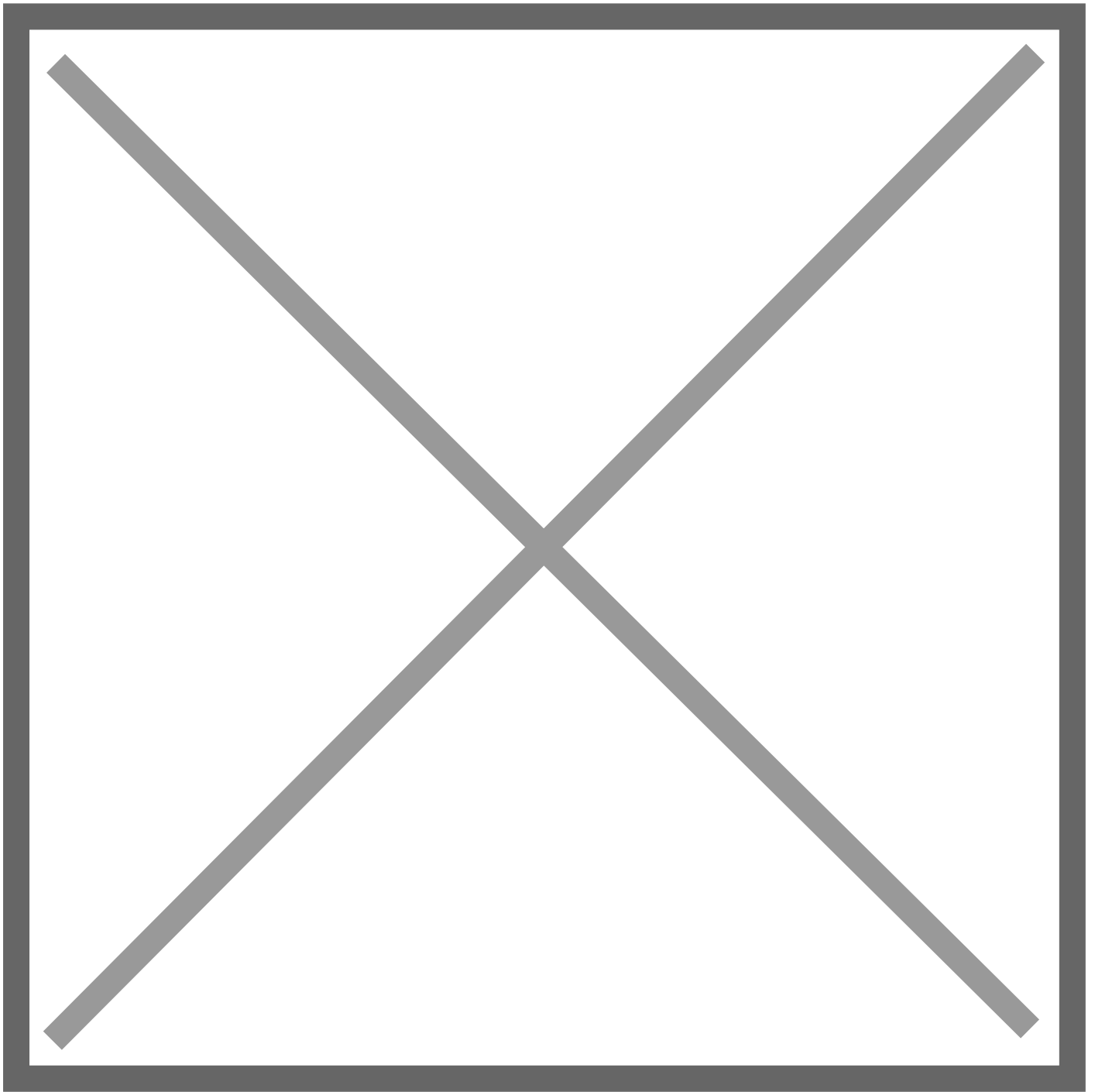
Derry’s commitment to equity and opportunity led her to co-found T2D Concepts, a Texas-based hospitality

group working to expand ownership and close racial and gender wealth gaps. A fierce advocate for food access and sustainability, she is a member of Les Dames d'Escoffier and a spokesperson for the James Beard Foundation's sustainability initiatives.

"Food has the power to change lives," Derry says. "It's not just about what's on the plate. It's about who gets a seat at the table and who has the opportunity to serve."

In November 2025, Derry brought these values to her collaboration with Lexus at the Food & Wine Classic in Charleston, South Carolina.

"Charleston reminded me why I love this city — the rhythm of good food, fine wine, and Southern soul," Derry said. "Being part of the Food & Wine Classic with Lexus gave me a chance to share dishes that carry meaning and to connect with people who appreciate the stories behind them."



### **Lexus Welcomes Chef Tiffany Derry**

Derry is a perfect fit for the Lexus Culinary Masters program, launched in 2011, as her culinary philosophy aligns with the three Japanese principles at the core of the brand:

- **Omotenashi:** A spirit of genuine care and hospitality
- **Takumi Craftsmanship:** Precision, mastery, and respect for detail
- **Kaizen:** A continual commitment to growth and improvement

“Tiffany represents the values at the heart of Lexus,” says Lisa McQueen, senior manager, Lexus marketing. “She greets guests with the warmth of Omotenashi, approaches her cooking with the precision of Takumi craftsmanship, and brings a Kaizen mindset to every collaboration.”

Beginning in January 2026, Derry brings The Standard of Amazing to life through national culinary events, immersive storytelling, and guest experiences.

“I want to create moments people remember,” she says. “Lexus feels the same way. Together, we can build real experiences that matter.”