

Mike Lata

Chef/Owner, FIG & The Ordinary

Mike Lata is Chef/Partner of FIG Restaurant in Charleston, SC, which he opened in 2003 with Partner Adam Nemirow. In 2009, Mike took home the James Beard Foundation Award for Best Chef: Southeast. In 2015, his protégé Chef Jason Stanhope garnered the same award – a rare achievement for one restaurant to earn this prestigious prize twice. Additionally, FIG has been nominated in 2014, 2015 and 2016 for Outstanding Wine Program by the James Beard Foundation. Now a local institution, FIG is consistently voted by locals as the “Best Restaurant in Charleston” in Charleston City Paper.

In December 2012, Lata and Nemirow opened The Ordinary, a classic oyster bar and seafood hall in Charleston’s Upper King district, to much local and national acclaim. The James Beard Foundation nominated The Ordinary as Best New Restaurant in 2013, and *GQ*, *Esquire* and *Bon Appétit* named it in the top 20 best restaurants of the year.

A native New Englander, Mike started his culinary career at an early age, working in kitchens in Boston, New Orleans, Atlanta and France before landing in Charleston in 1998. He is a hands-on, self-taught chef who is relentless in his pursuit of the freshest products, which constantly inspire and define his work. Mike’s mission is to create bright, satisfying food that is both uncomplicated and elegant, all the while paying respect to the efforts and traditions of his family of purveyors. His longstanding and outspoken commitment to support these local farmers and fishermen has cemented his position as a notable champion for Charleston’s flourishing culinary renaissance.

Mike’s food, philosophy, and contributions to the Charleston community have earned him recognition on national platform, including coverage in *The Wall Street Journal*, *Food & Wine*, *Bon Appétit*, *Esquire*, *Garden & Gun*, *Southern Living*, *Travel + Leisure*, *USA Today*, *The New York Times* and many more. He has been featured in several television appearances, including *Food Network’s* “Iron Chef America,” *Bravo’s Top Chef*, *PBS’s Moveable Feast with Fine Cooking*, and *ABC’s* “Nightline Platelist,” which described his food as “so good it will buckle your knees.”

When he’s not in the kitchen, Mike can be found hitting the links, riding his prized Ducati motorcycles, or enjoying life with his son, Henry.