



## CRÈME OF THE CROP

*The winning Proud Gourmet recipe is the stuff of dreams.*

When Heidi May literally dreamed up her Caramel Apple Crème Brulee recipe four years ago, she could not have known she would be the winner of Orlando Home & Leisure's Proud Gourmet contest. This inaugural component of our annual Silver Spoon Awards invited readers to submit their most decadent and delicious dessert recipes.

After much deliberation, Ruth's Chris Steak House's executive chef chose May's delectable creation as the winner and the new featured dessert at all three of the restaurant's Central Florida loca-

tions between June 15-July 15. May also won a gourmet cooking experience at the Wolf-SubZero showroom for herself and seven others.

As a member of the Villa de Flora culinary team at Gaylord Palms Resort for the past five years, May is no stranger to fine pastries. In fact, she and another teammate were responsible for creating more than 2,000 desserts for Gaylord's Mother's Day festivities. Ever since she began culinary school 10 years ago, May often wakes up and immediately jots down pastry recipes concocted in her dreams. "They don't always work,"

she humbly submits. "But the Caramel Apple Crème Brulee worked on the first try," much to the delight of her longtime partner, Alfredo, for whom the dessert was created.

Although crème brulee can be a little intimidating to make, May is encouraging when offering tips to novice pastry chefs. "As long as you allow the mixture to cool before baking, it should be fine."

I think I'll head over to Ruth's Chris or wait for this South Chase dreamer to open her own pastry shop – another dream of May's that is sure to be a winner some day. – *Kristen Manieri*

PHOTO: KRISTEN MANIERI