

Soul Daddy: America's next great restaurant opens at Mall of America

Written by Al McFarlane & B.P. Ford
Friday, 06 May 2011 13:27



Self-employed caterer/cook Jamawn J. Woods and his Soul Daddy concept last Sunday, May 1, reigned supreme as winner of NBC Television's alternative series "America's Next Great Restaurant."

As part of his prize, Woods' concept made its grand opening Monday, May 2, at Mall of America, and simultaneously at two additional locations in New York and Hollywood.

Iron Chef Bobby Flay, with investors Curtis Stone, Steve Ells and Lorena Garcia, said Soul Daddy had the greatest potential to succeed in the competitive restaurant market and invited people to see for themselves at the roll out of the three eateries.

We visited the MOA Soul Daddy mid week, and decidedly agree that this is a concept whose time has come, and an excellent strategy for introducing the masses to high quality, healthy, affordable, soul-food inspired home cooking.

We ordered the rib dinner and pulled-pork dinner. We got greens and cold black-eyed peas salad (the side reminded us of Texas Caviar) as sides, and waffle corn bread and the biscuit for our breads. We ordered an extra side of a chicken breast to round out our tasting experience.

And what a delightful experience it was. The food was good. The staff smilingly courteous and helpful. They actually seemed to appreciate our patronage. The place was easy to navigate with a serving line, check out cashier and drink filling station.

Woods' dream started by serving wings and waffles out of his home and has now evolved into a full-service, soul-inspired restaurant.

"A passion for food, a solid work ethic, good business sense and delicious meals are what the investors were searching for on this series and Jamawn embodies all of those traits and more.

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He is truly the heart and soul of "Soul Daddy," said Bobby Flay, distinguished restaurateur, investor and host of "America's Next Great Restaurant."

"The investors are thrilled to introduce soul food to America through these restaurants and we are confident they will savor every flavor," said Flay.

"At the core, this series followed the contestants' pursuit of the American dream and Jamawn was presented with the opportunity of a lifetime. He came in with a concept and a dream and over the course of the show he worked hard to develop it into a business," said Paul Telegdy, Executive Vice President, Alternative Programming, NBC and Universal Media Studios. "The investors couldn't have picked a more deserving person to have this dream fully realized than Jamawn and his "Soul Daddy" concept. We look forward to following his success in the restaurant business now that America finally can taste the delicious offerings he served up all season long."

Specific information regarding hours and location information for "Soul Daddy" is available at www.souldaddyrestaurant.com