



Rob McDaniel

General Manager and Executive Chef

Rob McDaniel is the General Manager and Executive Chef of SpringHouse, located in Russell Lands On Lake Martin, Alabama.

McDaniel's passion and respect for traditional Southern cuisine was first inspired by the foods his grandmothers prepared while he was growing up in Haleyville, Alabama. At Auburn University, McDaniel decided to pursue this passion as a career and graduated with a Bachelor's degree in hotel and restaurant management. After graduating, McDaniel headed north to Montpelier, Vermont where he studied at the New England Culinary Institute. During his time there, McDaniel honed his knowledge of and appreciation for sustainable cooking and became an advocate for supporting local farmers and preserving regional resources.

In his previous positions, McDaniel worked under prestigious chefs such as Johnny Earles at Criolla's in Grayton Beach, Florida, Chris Hastings at Hot & Hot Fish Club in Birmingham, Alabama, and Drew Robinson at Jim 'N Nick's BBQ in Birmingham, Alabama. During his time spent in these kitchens, McDaniel's passion for Southern foods, foraging, and sustainability evolved into the culinary style that he is known for today. His philosophy of respecting the land and using it as inspiration is showcased through his dedication to simple recipes enhanced by flavorful ingredients.

In 2009, McDaniel accepted the position of executive chef for the soon-to-debut SpringHouse restaurant. Here, McDaniel ensures the seasonally-based menu stays true to the region's local flavors and cuisine.

McDaniel has been a James Beard Foundation Best Chef South semifinalist in 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2016, and SpringHouse was included on *Southern Living's* 100 Best Restaurants in the South list in 2014. Chef Rob McDaniel was honored as Auburn University's 2012 Outstanding Hotel and Restaurant Management Program Alumnus. Only twice in the last 17 years has Auburn chosen as Outstanding Alumnus in the Hotel and Restaurant Management program.

When McDaniel isn't in the kitchen, you can find him spending time outdoors, whether it's on a boat with his wife or out in the woods hunting, fishing, or foraging.