



*Featuring*

Food Network's  
own retro rad diva,

**Emily  
Ellyn**

**COOK LIKE A CHEF**

Sharpen your skills  
in the kitchen with  
some delicious recipes.

**WHERE SHOULD WE EAT?**

*Style* readers sound  
off on their favorite  
local restaurants.

January 2014

LAKE\*SUMMIT

*The*

**FOOD**

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# Style CONT

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## Featuring

### MIXING IT UP WITH EMILY ELLYN

Emily Ellyn is the home economics teacher you wish you had in school. She may be known as a finalist on Season 8 of Food Network's "Food Network Star" but she's been blazing her own trail in the culinary world. Talking about everything from her retro rad style to her skills as chef, Ellyn sat down with *Style* to dish about her life, her food, and her future.

**STORY:** SHEMIR WILES

### COOK LIKE A CHEF

Everyone has a dish that's near and dear. Five local "chefs" hit the kitchen to prepare and share favorite recipes that may soon find their way into your personal recipe book.

**STORY:** SHEMIR WILES

### WHERE SHOULD WE EAT?

Instead of telling you about the hottest places to dine in Lake and Sumter counties, we turned the tables and allowed you, our readers, to be the authorities to tell us your favorites.

**LADY LAKE:**

### TOWN OF LAKES AND SUNSHINE

From a stagecoach stop to the birthplace of The Villages, Lady Lake has weathered many changes. Keeping its own identity hasn't always been easy, but it still retains its small town charm. And no history of Lady Lake can be complete without mentioning The Villages.

**STORY:** MARY ANN DESANTIS

#### LAKE & SUMTER EDITION

*On the cover*

**MODEL:** EMILY ELLYN

**DIRECTION:** JAMIE EZRA MARK

**PHOTOGRAPHY:** FRED LOPEZ

**PHOTOSHOP:** JOSH CLARK



#### VILLAGES EDITION

*On the cover*

**MODEL:** DR. KIM IRELAND

**DIRECTION:** JAMIE EZRA MARK

**PHOTOGRAPHY:** FRED LOPEZ

**PHOTOSHOP:** JOSH CLARK

**HAIR:** BRIANNE CONNELLY, CAL'S BARBER AND BEAUTY, SPANISH SPRINGS SQUARE

**MAKEUP:** MARY MACMILLAN, ESTEE LAUDER AT BELK'S, LEESBURG

MIXING IT UP WITH

# EMILY ELLYN

With her infectious personality and unique style, it's no wonder Emily Ellyn captured the hearts of viewers when she appeared as a finalist on season eight of Food Network's "Food Network Star." Since that time, she continues to use her platform as a way to share her love for taking traditional dishes and remixing them — Retro Rad style.

Between events, Emily made the haul over from Orlando and talked with *Style* about her life, her food, and her plans for the future.

**STORY:** SHEMIR WILES **PHOTOS:** FRED LOPEZ+PROVIDED







**Lake & Sumter Style:** Emily, thank you so much for participating in our food issue. We consider it an honor.

**Emily Ellyn:** It's no problem. I'm happy to be a part of it.

**Style:** A lot of people may know you from Food Network's "Food Network Star," but many might not know much about you as a person. Tell me a little about where you grew up.

**Emily:** I grew up on a Christmas tree farm in the small town of Mantua, Ohio. Along with my sister (and constant childhood companion), we explored and experimented our way through our country childhood — raising chickens, turkeys, pigs, cows, donkeys, and horses.

We also learned to plant, pick, process, and pickle at an early age. Each year we hoped to beat the previous years' preserving records, and in fact, last year was a record year. My sister and I canned and froze more than 800 quarts of produce.

**Style:** Wow! That's impressive. I would imagine raising your own animals, planting your own produce, and making your own preserves as a child had a major influence on your love for cooking.

**Emily:** It did. My family grew and raised nearly everything we ate. We cooked nearly every meal and would sit down around the dinner table together to celebrate the food we grew and harvested. As a result, I know where things come from — I lived and breathed the process from seed to table!

As a toddler on the farm, I would follow the Christmas tree planter and stomp the soil around the baby tree saplings. I teathed on spring onions from the garden. I could kill and dress a chicken by the age of 5. I am what I



eat and understand food as being a fundamental part of life. I understand raw ingredients and how to prepare them so it is now more interesting for me to teach that part of the process and focus on some of the other elements like creatively remixing recipes.

**Style:** I also understand traveling with your family was also a major influence on your cooking.

**Emily:** My parents believed that traveling was an essential component of education and life. Therefore, every year, each member of my family would

pack up a carry-on suitcase and fly off to an unknown country. By the time I left home to attend the Culinary Institute of America, I had visited and eaten my way through 13 countries.

You are always trying something new to eat when you travel, so of course this had some influence on my cooking and taste.

**Style:** Out of the 13 countries you visited, which was your favorite?

**Emily:** I have to say I really enjoyed Taiwan. The street food is divine with fresh produce, interesting seafood, mile-high soft serve

ice creams, stinky tofu, fried chicken, and noodles. And the food stalls in the shopping centers are really interesting with shops specializing in teas, candies, noodles, dried meats and fish, and spices. I could seriously eat six meals a day and snack nonstop in between.

**Style:** So it seems like between your traveling and home life, working with food seemed to be your destiny.

**Emily:** From the time I could fire up the stove, I was cooking, planning parties, and taking care of the seemingly endless parade of people that trooped through our kitchen. Not surprisingly, this fueled the idea that I was destined to be in the hospitality industry from birth.

**Style:** You earned your bachelor's degree in restaurant management at the Culinary Institute of America (CIA) in New York. Then you went on to earn two master's degrees — one from the Academie Internationale de Management in Paris and one from University of Central Florida's Rosen College of Hospitality and Management in Orlando. Now I hear you're finishing your Ph.D. in food service education. What has been the biggest thing you've learned while in school?

**Emily:** What really resonated with me because I heard it so often was that

while I was a great student and chef, I should be out of the kitchen and in the "front of the house" where I would be working directly with the people. I was also continually encouraged to go into teaching.

**Style:** Do you think your experience as a teacher's aide at CIA also made you want to teach?

**Emily:** Totally! I really felt like I was good at it. I knew I was inspiring my students and it was easy and satisfying to share in my greatest passion. Plus, it was an extension of my natural desire to help people.

**Style:** Now let's switch gears and talk about appearing on "Food Network Star." How did that come about?

**Emily:** Well, I was working at Sublime Doughnuts in Atlanta at the time to help expand the doughnut shop into an international franchise. I walked into the shop at 4:30a.m. one morning and everyone was standing around with Cheshire cat grins on their faces. They handed me a packet of papers and said I was going to Washington, D.C. I quickly responded, "I'm not going to D.C. to deliver doughnuts. I'm a terrible driver and they won't make it there!" Then they all said, "You're not going to deliver doughnuts, you are going to D.C. to become the next Food Network star!"





## FROM SOUP TO NUTS

**FULL NAME:** Emily Ellyn

**SPECIAL NICKNAME:** My family calls me Emsey.

**FAVORITE SPICE:** Cardamom. I always have apples growing out of my ears, and I love that the slight citrus notes of cardamom enhance the apple, making them taste more intense.

**IF YOU WERE ON DEATH ROW, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR LAST MEAL:** Thanksgiving dinner with lots of fresh veggies from the garden.

**SIGNATURE DISH:** Short (cooked) ribs. For her recipe, visit [lakeandsummerstyle.com](http://lakeandsummerstyle.com).

**FAVORITE FOOD PERSONALITY AND WHY:** Julia Childs. She was the female pioneer for all of us. She made this opportunity possible for me. Plus, she was smart, beautiful, and composed while keeping a great sense of humor in tough, awkward, and stressful situations.

### THREE THINGS PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU:

1. I know how to play the tuba.
2. I always wanted to be an opera singer and took voice lessons.
3. I love giving gifts and I make the majority of my Christmas gifts. I usually start around August crocheting scarves, and then I bake and can goodies to give.

It was an open casting call. I walked in, put my name on the list, read over the paper work, and before I knew it, my name was called and I was sitting in front of one of the talent scouts. I was asked within five minutes to come back the next day with a cooked dish and demo. I did and they said I would be called back, which I was to interview with Food Network personality Alton Brown. And the rest is history.

**Style:** That must have been an amazing feeling to be picked for such a widely popular show. What was it like being on such a highly competitive show?

**Emily:** Fifteen adults living in tight quarters, not sleeping much, asked to do a lot of challenges that involved extreme circumstances with time limits, secret ingredients, and camera challenges... it was intense. However, it was also mentally stimulating, and I loved having my creativity challenged. I will say my favorite challenge was the New York Fashion Week episode where finalists were asked to makeover a dish. Since taking classics and updating them is my specialty, I took the tired ham steak, pineapple, and Maraschino cherry classic and gave it a makeover. I then made a fried ham, dried pineapple, and spicy pickled Maraschino cherry ham hat fascinator for my head and every plate. It was a hit with judges and viewers alike!

**Style:** I'm sure your quirkiness and likability is what helped you become that season's fan favorite. Now I know you didn't win "Food Network Star" but you did come back to Food Network to win "Cupcake Wars." Tell me a little bit about that experience.

**Emily:** "Cupcake Wars" was a neat experience. Hollis Wilder, owner of Sweets by Holly! in Orlando and Jacksonville, was already a two-time "Cupcake Wars" champion and was voted back to compete a third time on

the "Fan Favorite" episode featuring Lance Bass from 'N Sync. The cool twist was I joined with her to assist in her third-time win.

We flew to Los Angeles and competed in a show that airs for one episode. Amazingly, they had us build a set, create specialty cupcakes using secret ingredients, and then for the final challenge we had to bake 1,000 cupcakes. I still have a little P.T.S.D. when I see a cupcake. We worked hard for that win!

**Style:** Sounds like it. Now Since your time on Food Network, you have been doing a lot of traveling attending trade shows, performing cooking demos, and hosting special events. You also have been promoting your Retro Rad brand. What got you interested in the 1950s/1960s era?

**Emily:** Oh, I started with Retro Rad at a very young age. My aunt made me a poodle skirt when I was in grade school and I wore it until the poodle ran off! I also would beg my mom to draw cat eyes on me with eyeliner.

At about age 10, my mom said it was time to learn about the entire era, not just the cool fashion pieces, so she bought us a matching pair of saddle shoes and took me to a real 1950s diner. I fell in love!

It resonates with me when I put on



*"From the time I could fire up the stove, I was cooking, planning parties, and taking care of the seemingly endless parade of people that trooped through our kitchen."*



my cat-eye glasses and vintage dresses. It transports me to times when things were easy and perfect, where perfect homes were effortless like “Leave It to Beaver.”

As a result, I have embraced this Retro Rad persona and encourage everyone to dig through their mom’s recipe box, dust off their pressure cookers and crockpots, and embrace the old in a new and rad way.

**Style:** So besides making the Retro Rad brand a household name, what other projects are you working on that our readers should watch for?

**Emily:** I am continually cooking up new projects like my new super cute Emily Ellyn apron line, which can be seen on my website [www.emilyellyn.com](http://www.emilyellyn.com). I am also working on completing a couple of book projects, and there are some television opportunities I’m looking into pursuing. Of course, my ultimate goal is having my own television show.

**Style:** Well Emily, thanks again for sitting down with us. To leave off on an inspirational note, what would you say to someone out there who is thinking of a culinary career?

**Emily:** I would say go for it!

Now, of course I would also ask the following questions: Are you ready to work hard, long hours with little money, not see your friends and family for weeks, and leave work when it is

last call and the only things open are tattoo parlors and bars? Are you ready to watch all of your peers’ marriages end and work in extreme conditions where you are burned, cut, and yelled at constantly? Do you want to experience all of that while creating amazing food and accomplishing unexplained instant gratification as you work a line cranking out hundreds of dishes a day? Do you want to create dining experiences for the masses, make the world’s special occasions memorable, and open new establishments that will foster these memories? Do you want to experience the closest friendships ever bound by the love of the craft, sweat, and tears?

If after all of that, you are still interested, I suggest trying it out first before making a lifetime commitment. Just see if you have what it takes. You may need to work a summer in a hot basement kitchen peeling 80,000 potatoes and washing pots and pans until your skin is scoured off before you really know.

Then if you still love it, do it! Work in it, fall deeply in love with the business, and then work your way through school. Get a degree so that when you can barely walk from standing on concrete floors and picking up heavy pots all day, and your hands are so arthritic you can barely grip your clever, you “retire” into management, teaching, or owning your own business.



*If you’re still feeling festive after New Year’s Eve, make these tasty treats and bring them in to share with the office to ring a ‘rad’ New Year.*

## Festive Champagne POP CUPCAKES

Recipe Courtesy of Emily Ellyn, Retro Rad Chef. More at [www.EmilyEllyn.com](http://www.EmilyEllyn.com)

**YIELD:** 24 MINI CUPCAKE

**INGREDIENTS:**

2 ½ cups cake flour  
¾ cup all-purpose flour  
1 tablespoon baking powder  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
¾ teaspoon salt  
1 stick of butter  
½ cup vegetable shortening  
1 ¾ cups sugar  
1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract  
1 large egg, room temperature  
1 ½ cup Champagne or sparkling wine, cold and flat  
3 large egg whites, room temperature

**DIRECTIONS:**

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
2. Line two two-dozen mini-cupcake or muffin

pans with paper liners and spray with oil.

3. Sift the flour, baking soda, baking powder, and salt into the bowl and set aside.
4. Using a mixer fitted with the paddle attachment beat the butter and shortening in a bowl on medium speed until creamy, three minutes. Add the sugar and vanilla and beat on medium until fluffy, three minutes.
5. Scrape down the bowl and add the egg and egg whites, and beat until incorporated.
6. Turn the mixer to low. Add the flour mixture, alternating with the cold flat Champagne, in three additions, beginning and ending with the flour mixture. Scrape down the bowl, and then mix on low.
7. Fill cupcake liners ¾-full with batter and bake for 30 minutes, or until baked through. Cool the cupcakes completely.

**RAD TIP:** If Champagne is not flat, simmer on stove until flat and then chill.

*To complete these cupcakes with Champagne pastry cream filling and Champagne frosting, see the recipes on [lakeandsunmterstyle.com](http://lakeandsunmterstyle.com)*