

A PASSION FOR THE PALATE

Douglas Murray's Other Pursuit In Life

Sharks fans know Douglas Murray has a love for good restaurants. Over the years, he's listed fine dining places such as The Plumed Horse in Saratoga, Bouchon in Yountville (near Napa in Northern California's Wine Country) and the Slanted Door in San Francisco's Ferry Building as his favorites.

Not only does Murray like to eat well, he's got a knack for the hospitality industry. Murray has a bachelor's in hotel management from Cornell University and co-invented a hands-free beer tap with several friends from Cornell.

So no one should be surprised that the 30-year-old defenseman enjoys spending time in the kitchen.

"When I have time," Murray, who doesn't have a lot during the hockey season, said.

Murray's culinary passion was cultivated while he was growing up in Sweden. "Food has always been with me," he said. "My mom and dad cooked. My younger brother (Charles) used to be a chef."

When Murray has time to cook and shop for produce and proteins, he tries to stay organic. "I go organic quite a bit, but I wouldn't say I'm religious to it," Murray said. Yet Murray understands the value of organically produced food. "I don't like having a lot of crap (pesticides, additives and chemicals)," he said, "put into my food."

With that in mind, Murray knows where to find good staples. These stores have what Murray needs. "Quality produce is what makes the food good," he said. "Better produce makes for a better end result."

As for his tools, Murray doesn't use any particular kind of pot or pan. A lot of top chefs like to use stainless steel, but Murray will even use non-stick cookware. "It used to be that chefs never used non-stick because you couldn't reduce sauces or do demi-glace," Murray said of the cooking methods known for thickening and concentrating flavors and for making brown sauce. "But now you can actually do that," he said. "Most real chefs don't use non-stick, but it does make it easier for clean-up."

Another taboo for chefs is using a microwave oven. Studies have shown that microwaving food destroys most of the nutrients and causes problems with the immune system. Murray said the only time he uses the microwave is to make popcorn.

While Murray doesn't use a certain kind of pot or pan, he does have a favorite knife manufacturer. "I like my Global knives," he said of the brand which was born in Japan in 1985 and is considered as one of the best in the world. "I have a knife set of theirs."

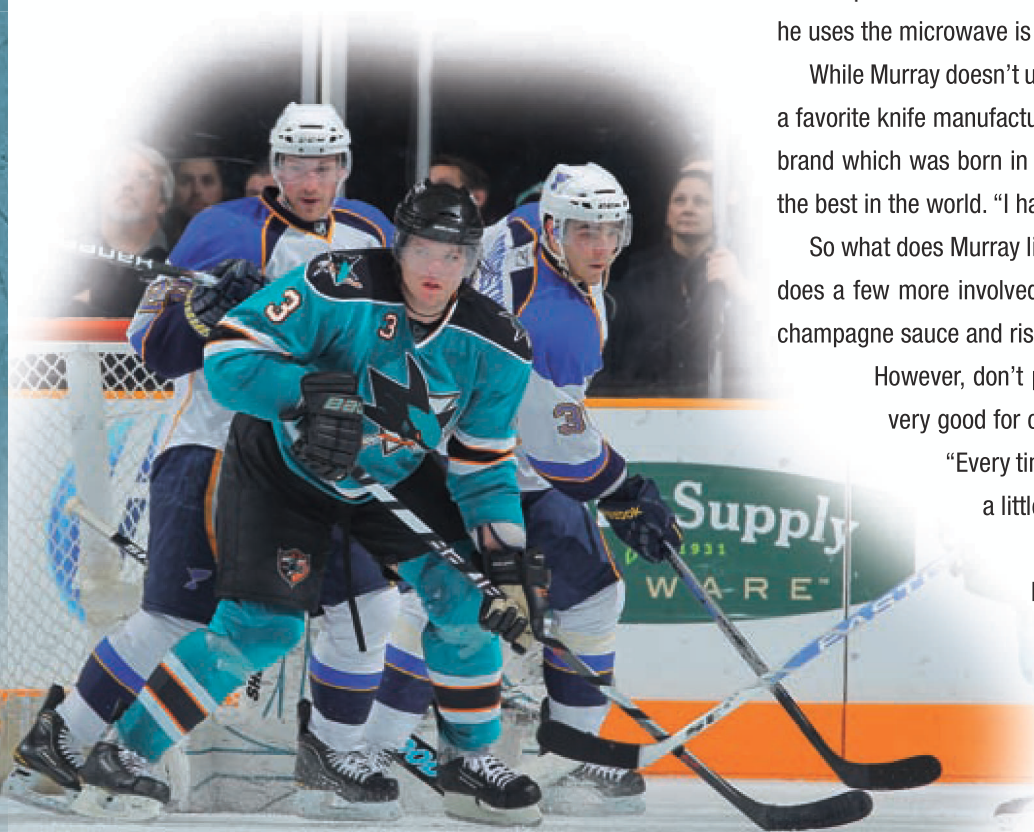
So what does Murray like to make? "I'd say steak," he said. But he does a few more involved items besides a steak. "Lobster tails with champagne sauce and risotto," he added.

However, don't pin him down for a specialty item. "I'm not very good for cooking anything in particular," Murray said.

"Every time I cook, I try something new. I like to know a little bit of everything."

"In order to be good at something," Murray said, "you have to cook it a hundred times."

Of course, Murray has cooked for his teammates. Those who've tasted his culinary offerings include Ryane Clowe, Joe Thornton and fellow Swede Niclas Wallin.





"He's cooked a bunch of stuff for me," Clowe said. "I've been over to his house many times. He's cooked steaks, seafood and stuff I don't even know the name of. Whenever I want to try something new, I'll go over to Dougie's. He puts a lot of hard work into it."

Like any good cook or fan of the culinary arts, Murray likes to watch the Food Network and the Cooking Channel. His favorite shows include "Ask Aida" and "FoodCrafters," which are hosted by Aida Mollenkamp, who, like Murray, went to Cornell University and studied hospitality management.

Besides those shows, Murray will watch "Top Chef" on Bravo and the Food Network's "Barefoot Contessa." Murray also said Jamie Oliver, who has shows on the Food Network and the Cooking Channel, "is really good."

When Murray is done with hockey, he'll be in the culinary industry. "You'll definitely see me being involved or owning a restaurant," he said.

But don't expect to see Murray in the kitchen or with his own television show. There will be no "Crankchef" or "Cooking with Sir" (takeoffs on his two nicknames).

"You won't see me as a chef," Murray said. "In order to be a good chef, you need to work for some of the great chefs. You need to spend at least 5-10 years with a really great chef. Once I'm done with hockey, I don't see myself putting in the work to get to that spot in my life. It's a lot of hard work."

Besides, Murray is working hard at his current assignment: bringing a Stanley Cup to San Jose. *This story originally appeared on sjsharks.com*

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