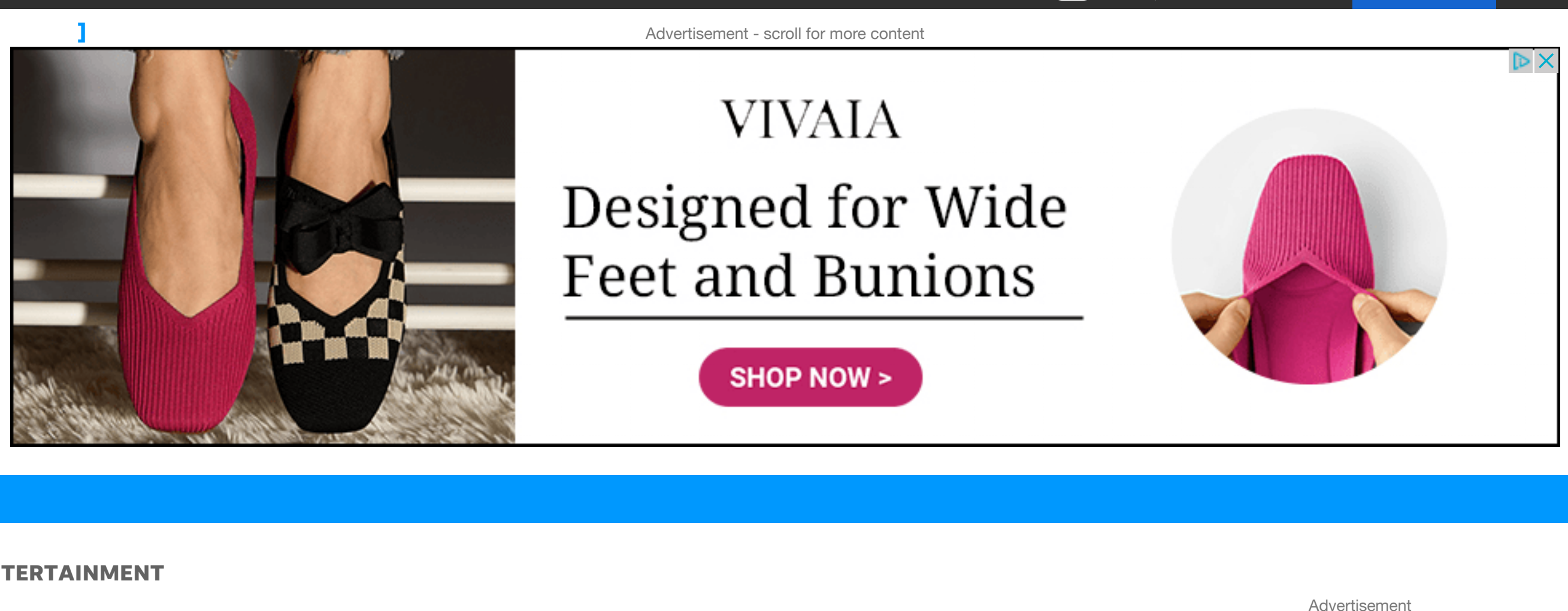


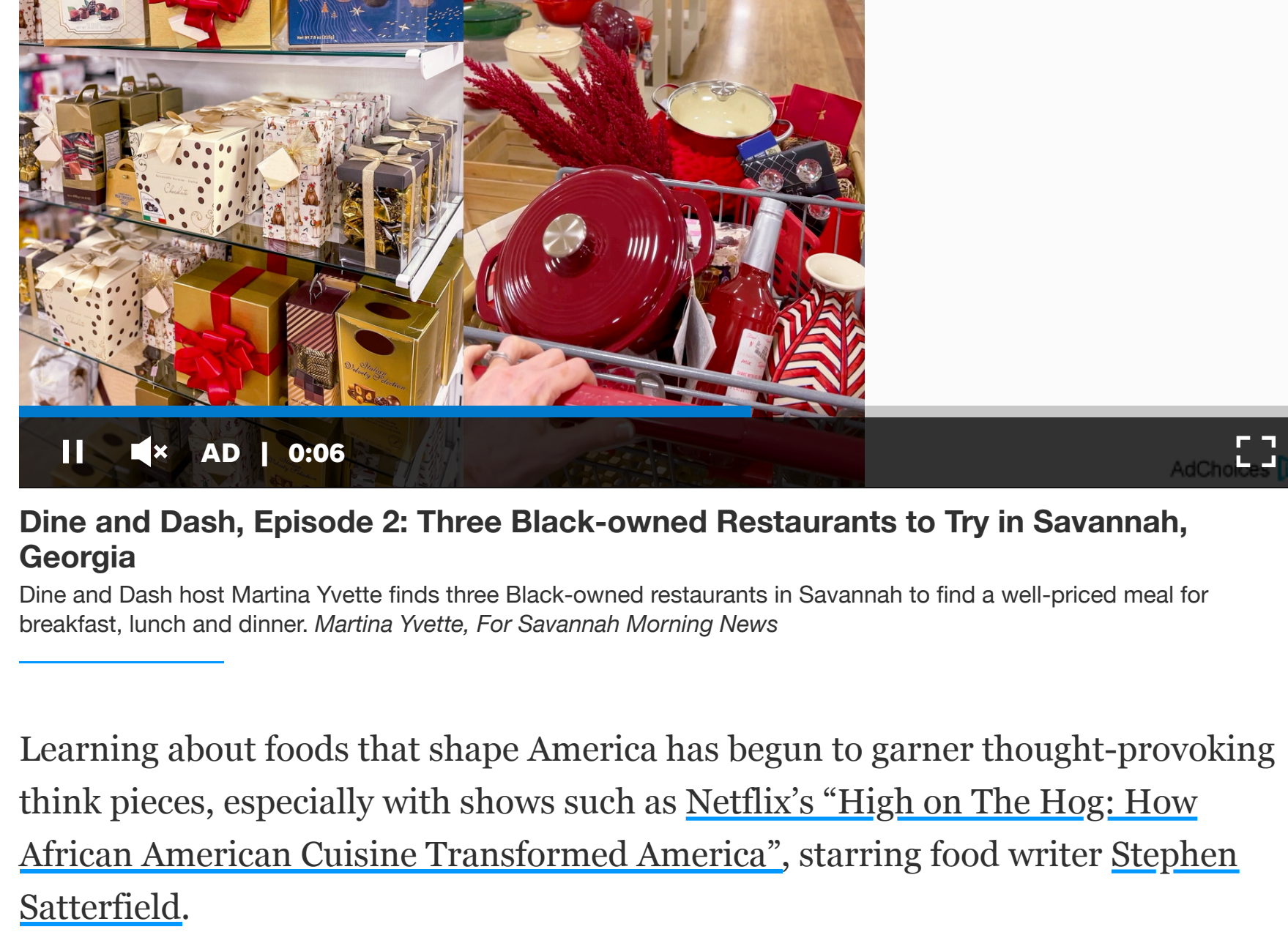
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ENTERTAINMENT

Two Savannah chefs pay homage to the African food experience with new dinner series

Martina Yvette For Savannah Morning News
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Dine and Dash, Episode 2: Three Black-owned Restaurants to Try in Savannah, Georgia
Dine and Dash host Martina Yvette finds three Black-owned restaurants in Savannah to find a well-priced meal for breakfast, lunch and dinner. *Martina Yvette, For Savannah Morning News*

Learning about foods that shape America has begun to garner thought-provoking think pieces, especially with shows such as [Netflix's "High on The Hog: How African American Cuisine Transformed America"](#), starring food writer [Stephen Satterfield](#).

The history of African foods placing its mark in the makeup of American cuisine starts with a single grain of rice. Rice often served as more than just a starch for a meal, but as a GPS tracking of various separated families throughout the diaspora and an ode to how that journey would shape the flavor profile of each region of the Americas and the Caribbean. Customarily, meals that combine staple produce and grains like rice, tomatoes, corn and sweet potato play a significant role in telling the history of Black food.

At [The Garage at Victory North](#), Chef [Todd Harris](#) and Chef [Bernard Bennet](#) of [Okán Bluffton](#) are set to create an homage to the African experience by serving as griots of a culinary presentation with their dinner series, "From Africa to Afros."

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"From Africa to Afros" is a developed concept from the two chefs who researched a need and desire to showcase African flavor profiles to a community that does not have a variety of traditional African-owned or operated restaurants.

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Okán Bluffton is one of the few menu hubs that are featured on the Loki Bus line, offering West African food with Caribbean profiles introduced by Chef Bernard Bennet. In correlation with Chef Todd Harris, who is the executive chef and operating partner of The Garage at Victory North, which offers elevated fare bites with cultural African and immersive influences.

From left to right, Chef Todd Harris of The Garage at Victory North and Chef Bernard Bennet of Okán Bluffton. Courtesy Of The Garage at Victory North

Harris said that "we really want to bust that concept that our food (referring to Black-made food) has to be cheap." Black eats are typically associated with a to-go pick of three combinations that includes protein and vegetables or a grain accompanied by a drink, bread, and usually a price under \$20.

Harris' hope is that communities will move past the concept that Black food cannot be elevated and given a price tag in comparison, adding that this dinner series creates a socially responsible introduction to African dishes that are mostly inspired by Ghana and Senegal.

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The chefs, who both have ties to the Chicago culinary scene, have bonded their skill sets in a research frenzy that has encouraged them to explore the regions of West Africa and create menu items that are native to the region. Some of the menu items for the highly anticipated event are roti, cornbread with hibiscus butter, fish stew, and Carolina gold rice with stewed okra. In total, there are ten food items with optional beverage pairings including a hibiscus tea and Uncle Nearest cocktail as well as a dessert course.

Patrons can expect brief presentations that explain the history of certain items during their dining experience and an eclectic vibe that feels adjacent to Black feel-good events. Harris associated this type of cooking with the sentiments of comfort that you feel from eating during a repast or fixing a plate with music that makes you dance like during a cookout.

The chefs hope that this dinner series becomes a staple that is showcased every four months at the restaurant to complete a full story of foods of the diaspora and an opportunity to create dishes from various parts of the continent of Africa.

Pork chop and allspice barbecue prepared at The Garage at Victory North. Courtesy Of The Garage At Victory North

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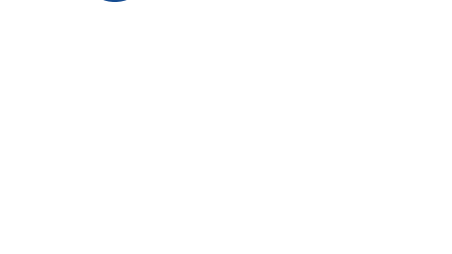
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Some of the dishes available for the event will also transfer to the regular menu at The Garage in the future. Harris mentioned that with the weather changing, the fish stew may become a part of the menu and Bennet already offers roti as a part of the Okán Bluffton menu.

You can find additional information via The Garage at Victory North ([instagram.com/thegarageatvictorynorth](#)) and Okán Bluffton's ([instagram.com/okanbluffton](#)) Instagram pages.

Ratatouille prepared at The Garage at Victory North. Courtesy Of The Garage At Victory North



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