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RECIPE

Summer Fare

Saffron's Samah Wadi shares one of his favorite dishes

BY ALI BRADY

Two things you can expect when you walk into Saffron Restaurant & Lounge in downtown Minneapolis: the aroma of Middle Eastern and Mediterranean cuisine prepared by chef Sameh Wadi, and a gracious welcome by Sameh's brother, manager Saed Wadi. Since opening Saffron in 2007, the pair have earned a reputation for elegant food and unmatched hospitality. "I think the uniqueness of our food is appealing, but it's not only the food," explains Sameh. "We want our customers to feel like they are coming into our own home." For this month's recipe, Wadi shares one of Saffron's most popular summer dishes: goat-cheese croquettes with hazelnut romesco.

Goat-Cheese Croquettes

- 6 ounces goat cheese
- 1 egg yolk
- ²/₃ tablespoon parsley, chopped
- ²/₃ tablespoon chive, chopped
- ²/₃ tablespoon tarragon, chopped
- black pepper
- salt
- flour
- Egg wash: 1 egg beaten with 3 tablespoons milk
- Panko bread crumbs

Combine cheese, egg yolk, and herbs in a mixing bowl. Add salt and pepper to taste. Roll mixture into grape-sized balls and chill in a refrigerator for one hour. Remove and dredge balls in flour, then egg wash, then Panko. In a pan, heat 1½ inches of oil to 350 degrees and fry balls until golden brown. Remove balls from oil and place on paper towel; season with salt.

Hazelnut Romesco

- ¹/₂ cup hazelnuts, shelled and toasted
- ¹/₂ cup piquillo peppers, finely diced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 3 teaspoons sherry vinegar
- 4 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil
- salt, to taste

Chop hazelnuts finely in a food processor. Stir in remaining ingredients and then slowly drizzle in the olive oil. Serve as dipping sauce with croquettes.

