



FOODSERVICE**NEWS**
TOP 25 CHEFS
Nominated by their peers.

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Food & Wine magazine has it easy. That publication just reports the best new restaurant chefs. But here at Foodservice News, our loyal readers who peruse these pages know we cover THE ENTIRE INDUSTRY. And we know that there are many talented chefs out there—not only in restaurants—who deserve recognition.

Deciding how to deliver that recognition is no easy thing. So, this year, we decided to pass the responsibility to the industry itself. Yes. It was all on you, not us and a hastily assembled group of “experts” who arrive at a decision with some serious fretting. We sent out a series of e-mail blasts beginning in July to chefs, restaurant owners and selected industry types (and a few food journalists who were game to the rules) to pick who they thought deserved to be among a list of 25 top executive chefs in Minnesota. We also distributed the survey at our Restaurant Business Conference in September for attendees to fill out and return at the end of the day.

Here’s a summary of the survey:

- ♦ The chefs could be visionaries blazing new culinary trails, or those turning out great food day after day—both the well known and the unsung. The chefs could be in restaurants or country clubs, private schools or corporations.
- ♦ Each respondent could nominate four executive chefs, two of whom they thought are the top chefs working in Minnesota, and two they believed operate below the radar and deserve more recognition for their skills. These chefs could be working in restaurants, country clubs, hotels, a corporation or other settings.
- ♦ If the respondent was a chef, they could not nominate themselves, or anyone they employed. If the respondent was a restaurant owner or employee, they couldn’t nominate anyone on their staff. Respondents could submit any comments about the chefs.

So, that was it. And here are the results. The listings as they appear aren’t a ranking, just simply a listing. There are many of the usual suspects who populate any top chef list printed in consumer publications, but there are also many new names, including those who work out of the general public’s awareness. Many other chefs were right on the margin of being included on this list—what was most encouraging about the survey is how many chefs are being recognized by their peers for their hard work.

Thanks to all who participated in the survey, and to the nominated chefs who took the time to be interviewed and submit a recipe. Feedback is, of course, welcome. Contact me via e-mail at mmitchelson@foodservicenews.net.



—Mike Mitchelson, editor, Foodservice News

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Erick Harcey

NICOLLET ISLAND INN

When entrepreneur Larry Abdo bought the Nicollet Island Inn in 2005, it needed more than just a cosmetic updating; the kitchen needed some serious help. Enter Erick Harcey: young, ambitious and skilled. Since being featured in Foodservice News in 2006, Harcey has continued what he calls “heavy menu reformatting” to bring up the Inn’s standards, turning it into one of Minneapolis’ premier dining destinations.

“We realize what we have in our favor is this beautiful inn,” Harcey said. “Larry had recently been to

Paris, and he said we need to get this thing to be our version of a French chateau. For me, that’s great, that’s the strength to my (culinary) background, and throughout the last couple years I got to find my niche in food and what my strengths and passions are.”

Harcey brought back French classics such as duck confit, bouillabaise and steak frites with a twist unique to the Inn. “We also put the roast chicken on (the menu), we’ve still got the walleye and a shrimp cocktail—all the things everyone is comfortable with,” he said. But he also dove headlong into baking (“We’ve

got some really old starters we’re working with”) and charcuterie. “I’ve always loved the offal and guts and stuff, and I always put little dabbles (of it) in the menu, pretty simple things,” he said. “I felt, let’s push the envelope a bit.”

The charcuterie and other more adventurous fare succeeded on the menu, and helped put the Inn back on the map. “We put a lot of effort into making sure the servers understood it, portrayed it right, sold it right, and it’s taken off.”

—Mike Mitchelson



Minneapolis, 612-331-1800

RECIPE PAGE 16

Tanya Siebenaler

SAPOR CAFÉ AND BAR

Tanya Siebenaler worked in the kitchen at Lucia’s Restaurant & Wine Bar while the general manager there, Julie Steenerson, was cooking up a business plan for her own restaurant. Steenerson’s only missing ingredient was an executive chef. Siebenaler approached Steenerson for the position, and the two partnered to open Sapor.

To survive eight years in the evolving North Loop neighborhood in Minneapolis required adaptation, which has given the co-owners some experience to handle the current economic doldrums. One trick

Siebenaler recalled is a Japanese production system motto: “Just in time.” “We buy fresh food in small quantities right before we need it, that way we’re not dealing with a lot left over,” she said. She utilizes the farmers markets and her own garden in the summer months to cut costs, and occasionally drives her own car to pick up products instead of paying delivery costs.

Siebenaler says she “currently finds inspiration (for her menu) in the changes of the season and mood of the day, along with what’s available.” Her idea for Sapor, (the word is a Latin term for flavor or taste) was

to have a restaurant which combined international ingredients. “I like bold flavors that step out and grab you with different temperatures and colors,” she said.

—Danielle McFarland



Minneapolis, 612-375-1971

RECIPE PAGE 20

Lucia Watson

LUCIA'S RESTAURANT & WINE BAR

Minneapolis, 612-825-1572



Lucia Watson founded Lucia's Restaurant & Wine Bar in 1985, and along the way became the inspiration for a generation of local chefs and restaurateurs sourcing menus from area farmers and promoting sustainable agriculture. And the three James Beard Award-Best Chef Midwest nominations over the years say a thing or two about her skill as a chef. While Watson has always been a mentor to talent from her kitchen (Sapor's Tanya Siebenaler, also in this list, is a Lucia's graduate), she's increasing her role in that regard. "I'm still very involved in the menu plan-

ning, but in terms of cooking in the trenches, I really don't do a lot of that anymore," she said. "It's really a young person's job, just physically and energetically. My staff has taken on more responsibility, which I am very happy about. My job is to keep them motivated, keep them excited, keep the kitchen focused on food and farmers and things like that."

Watson also opened Lucia's Bakery & Take Home next door to the restaurant in 2005. The few seats in the space are always filled, but that's not how she's measuring its success. "I didn't put a lot of seating in there intentionally," she said. "It was really

designed for 'to-go' food, and both eating in and to-go are picking up, but I really want to focus on the to-go."

Beyond the two businesses, Watson's goals as an entrepreneur remain focused: "I just want to run my business, make customers and employees happy, and keep doing what I'm doing," she said.

RECIPE PAGE 22

Isaac Becker

112 EATERY

Minneapolis, 612-343-7696



Since opening in 2005, the 112 Eatery, owned by Chef Isaac Becker and his wife, Nancy St. Pierre, remains in top form, resoundingly praised for its fine-tuned approach to, well, anything Becker feels is appropriate for the menu.

Becker told FSN in 2005 (when he was named one of our Top Ten Chefs) that, "I feel like I've created a place that I want to eat at, and the menu I've created is what I'd want to eat." That attitude hasn't changed from what we can tell. Favorites thrive—the lamb sugo over Becker's hand-made, meaty stringozzi; the

duck and radicchio salad and country-style pork ribs—and Becker's skill with fish is second to none. And the specials? Still not to be missed. The restaurant remains true to its original format: easy on the wallet (if you want it to be), open late and it's still a place local chefs gather when the night at their restaurant ends. There have been a few changes, however: an expansion into the floor above, increased national attention, and Becker being nominated for a James Beard Award-Best Chef Midwest in 2008.

Becker's career began at Lowry's in Minneapolis, and then he moved

through the ranks at D'Amico & Partners and their various concepts, absorbing the lessons as did many top local chefs—including Tim McKee, and J.P. Samuelson—who "graduated" from that company, and developed his own workmanlike style. "I know there's guys out there that are creative and that are considered artists, but I'm not," Becker said to FSN in 2005. "And I'm not going to pretend to be. I guess that's where I'm at with my work."

—Mike Mitchelson

Filippo Caffari

OSTERIA I NONNI

Lilydale, 651-905-1081



Maintaining tradition while cooking meals that are fresh and innovative is a difficult balancing act, and one that Filippo Caffari conducts with every seasonal menu change at I Nonni. The restaurant is the vehicle for his rustic Roman fare, and his crew fuel for ideas. "Most of the time we sit down with my crew, with my chef de cuisine, my sous chef, and the rest of the guys, and I ask for an idea, and through conversation, we talk about some dish and come up with something," Caffari said. "The most important thing is, I'm no dictator in my kitchen, I want

everybody's input," Caffari said. "Of course, the last decision is mine, but everybody put ideas in it."

The result is that I Nonni has earned Best Italian Dining nods from Mpls./St. Paul magazine for seven straight years. Not being a dictator doesn't mean he isn't demanding. "The way I run my kitchen, I make everybody feel important," Caffari said. "But everybody has to give me 150 percent, or they don't fit in this kitchen. If you come to work here only for the paycheck, you are not welcome. You need to put passion in it, sweat, and ideas."

Those ideas maintain a seasonal

me n u that requires replacing Italian ingredients with what's available in Minnesota. But that's the heart of traditional Italian cooking, Caffari said—using what's available. "For example, what I really love in Rome is a very popular (produce) called puntarelle, I use something similar, and the result is very close. I try to put together items that go well with the recipe, and most of the time it works out."

Tim McKee

LA BELLE VIE

Minneapolis, 612-874-6440



It's no news that La Belle Vie is likely the state's most acclaimed fine-dining restaurant, earning both local and national praises. It's also no news that its co-owner, Tim McKee, is likely the state's most acclaimed chef, earning a closet full of awards, and that he and business partner Josh Thoma are also responsible for another top-rated restaurant, Solera.

The duo also opened two restaurants this year, Smalley's Caribbean Barbeque in Stillwater, and Barrio Tequila Bar in downtown Minneapolis. McKee is known best for his kitchen prowess, however, particu-

larly at La Belle Vie for his French Mediterranean cuisine, and he's earned James Beard Award-Best Chef Midwest nominations for the past two years. Being at the forefront of fine dining hasn't altered La Belle Vie's rather quiet methodology to be the best. "We're just constantly trying to improve, constantly trying to do new and interesting things, and stay current with the menus," McKee said.

Dining reconnaissance missions? "When we can, but there's not a lot of that," he said. "I went to Chicago recently and ate at Graham Elliot, which was a great experience. But

most ly I'm busy with the restaurants. I don't get an opportunity to do that as much. I read every new cookbook that comes out—that kind of thing."

Ideas also spring from the staff, including Chef de Cuisine Mike DeCamp and Sous Chef Jim Christiansen, McKee said. "At La Belle Vie, we have some of the most talented cooks in the Twin Cities, so it really helps me be able to do other things, and it helps us grow our reputation."

—Mike Mitchelson

John Occhiato

D'AMICO CUCINA

Minneapolis, 612-338-2401



We're just over here, plugging away," said John Occhiato, executive chef at D'Amico Cucina, possibly the most overlooked, upper-echelon fine dining restaurant in the state. The restaurant has been a talent farm: Tim McKee, J.P. Samuelson, and Seth Bixby Daugherty each took turns in the kitchen. Since Occhiato took over in 2002, the cuisine has earned perhaps its highest praises. Occhiato's goal then was to bring more authentic Italian cuisine to the menu. "Now, I'm trying to focus more attention to seasonal, sustainable (ingredients)," he said.

Which, for a classic fine-dining

experience, can be a tricky practice. "If I can't get good lettuce locally, my first responsibility is to the customer," Occhiato said. "If I can't get really good beets, then I just don't do the beet dish, or shop around. It's the same way Europeans have been shopping for years, you go to the market and see what there is, instead of trying to say what do I want to make. ...I wouldn't say the majority of the menu is like that, but it is a learning process to cook that way. It requires flexibility and diligence."

Italian cooking tradition allows flexibility, however. Occhiato cited a cedar-roasted salmon with a cucumber balsamic salad recipe from a Ma-

rio Batali cookbook:

"He makes the comment that that's what an Italian would cook if he lived in Seattle."

High-end dining requires innovative techniques a purist might say ignores tradition. But for Occhiato, it all fits. "It can mean different things," he said. "There's a lot of classic French technique (here), but by staying within that vernacular of ingredients, (it's Italian). ...Just because you have good balsamic vinaigrette, doesn't mean that it's Italian, but if you keep the list of ingredients simple, doesn't mean it can't be."

—Mike Mitchelson

RECIPE PAGE 21

Alexander Roberts

ALMA AND BRASA ROTISSERIE

Minneapolis, 612-379-4909



Alex Roberts opened Restaurant Alma in 1999 with business partner Jim Reininger. The concept was straightforward: fine dining sourced with seasonal, locally produced ingredients. Roberts' earthy dishes gained national attention, and earned him James Beard Award-Best Chef Midwest nominations the last two years.

Reininger retired within the last year, but Roberts continues to roll. He opened his second Minneapolis restaurant, Brasa Rotisserie, in 2007. It immediately became a hotspot for succulent Southern- (and South American-) influenced soul food. "I've always wanted to have a res-

taurant that brought everybody in," Roberts said. "It's been very successful. We see people driving up with luxury cars to beat up pick-up trucks. You name it—everybody. It's wonderful to do that."

Roberts' culinary experience began in his home kitchen. "My parents separated when I was seven, and I started helping my father in the kitchen," Roberts recalled. "He was very willing [to cook], but didn't have a lot of expertise. I'd show up with a recipe from my mom, and he'd say, 'Well, you gotta help me.'"

Fast forward to 1993: After working in restaurants (including Reininger's Lowry's in Minneapolis)

through college,

Roberts moved to New York City to enroll in the French Culinary Institute. After graduation, Roberts worked in the trenches at esteemed Manhattan restaurants Union Square and Bouley. He was then hired to open Gramercy Tavern as a saucier in 1994 by co-owner/executive chef, Tom Colicchio. "Both of those guys (Danny Meyer and Colicchio) were a great example of how to run a kitchen," Roberts said. I learned more about being organized, fairness, and how to execute a vision through delegation."

—Danielle McFarland

Steven Brown

PORTER & FRYE

Minneapolis, 612-353-3500



If Steven Brown is known locally for the scientific side of cooking, there's no hint given on the menu at Porter & Frye in the Hotel Ivy. But diners recognize that, while the Midwestern-themed menu is recognizable fare, there's something different. A meal is both visual art and a flavor bomb, and Brown feels there's no need to bulk up the menu with what happened in its preparation. "We keep the descriptions to a minimum, so if there's something funky or weird, we don't advertise what's going on, but we're truthful in what we say," he said. "I think there's a lot

of puffery that people want to put on their menus, fluffing their own feathers. What we decided is that as cooks we're leaving that to the diners to decide. If they enjoy having their food slow cooked, I just don't say anything about sous vide. We just say slow cooked."

In addition to the dining demands of Porter & Frye, Brown also manages the foodservice operations for the hotel. It's a new challenge for Brown, whose previous experience has been purely restaurants. "It's a lot of balls to juggle for sure, the 24-7, 365 thing," he said. "The way we're trying to do it is that we try to

keep the breakfast and lunch programs pretty solidly down the middle of the road, and then the dinner is the exploration."

There's also managing a much larger staff that has their own expectations about working in a high-end environment. "The biggest challenge is getting people to understand that what it's all about is making the guest happy," Brown said. "Having that 'heart of a servant' is what I like to call it, and trying to create a culture where people understand that."

—Mike Mitchelson

RECIPE PAGE 16

Vincent Francoual

VINCENT: A RESTAURANT

Minneapolis, 612-630-1189



Reflecting on the seven-year run of his namesake restaurant and his lengthier career, the Twin Cities most popular French-born chef, Vincent Francoual, sounded slightly dumbfounded. "Sometimes I wake up in the morning, and I'm amazed that I'm still motivated like the first day—just to improve," he said. "It can sometimes be hard, but it's what I do. ...It's like a journey having a restaurant, and you can sort of stagnate or see what you can do to keep being the best."

In addition to being known for his profession, Francoual is almost

equally known for his charitable efforts. He's taken his competitive desires to compete in marathons and triathlons and constructed fundraising opportunities—including Francoual's annual entrance in the LifeTime Fitness Triathlon to raise funds for Fraser, a local non-profit helping children and adults with special needs.

Wherever Francoual has pulled his motivation, it's worked. With his triathlon team, he's raised more than \$50,000 for Fraser. And Vincent: A Restaurant opened to critical and consumer acclaim in 2001 and has never faltered. There's no shortage

of ambitious cooks waiting to be tutored by Francoual—not only about being a successful chef, but a restaurateur, as well (former sous chef Don Saunders, owner of Fugaise, is also on this list).

Namely, it's not only a profession, but a lifestyle. "In order to motivate people, you need to be there (in the restaurant)," he said. "I wake up in the morning, I like to be under the pressure, it makes me feel like I'm more alive. It's what I do."

—Mike Mitchelson

RECIPE PAGE 18

Ferris Schiffer

MINIKAHDA CLUB

Minneapolis, www.minikahdaclub.org



Minikahda Club Executive Chef Ferris Schiffer could be called the best chef that the greater dining public has never heard about. And unless you have the bucks to pony up the membership dues for the exclusive private club (or are pals with someone who has), you'll never get the chance.

Or, maybe you could if you're pals with a local chef. See, most everyone in Twin Cities restaurant kitchens (and beyond, it seems) knows Schiffer. In the years since his arrival at the club 15 years ago, Schiffer, almost apparition-like, has visited upon the top toques and become a culinary sounding board, absorbing and spreading the latest and best ideas around to all who

welcome him, or to those who wish to visit him at the Club.

Speaking with the Oklahoma-born Schiffer, one is disarmed of pretense and sucked into conversation. He has high praise for the local talent, dropping their names and accomplishments whenever possible, and expresses glee at their collaborative nature. "Everybody grows at the same time if you're willing to take that step and learn," Schiffer said. "That's what's so wonderful. I think the best thing about American chefs is they're less defensive."

While notoriety might be achieved in a restaurant, Schiffer is content. A supportive club membership gives him everything he needs, he said, from technology like immersion

circulators and protein glues to challenging special dining requests. During one week, Schiffer created a multi-course dinner to pair with selections from a member's wine cellar, another meal built upon wild game hunted by another member—in addition to the standard dining room menu and banquets. "The membership is very food oriented and knowledgeable," Schiffer said. "It makes it much more challenging and rewarding to use my experiences from studying, traveling, working in other states and my education. It works out pretty well."

RECIPE PAGE 17

JD Fratzke

THE STRIP CLUB MEAT & FISH

St. Paul, 651-793-6247



JD Fratzke earned a reputation for using locally produced and seasonal ingredients at Mufuletta in St. Paul. It's a reputation he's enhanced at The Strip Club, of which he is also a partner. While the restaurant's name is weighted with double entendre, the food is definitely serious. Local and seasonal ingredients, from grass-fed beef to greens, are both artfully and powerfully presented. "We're definitely letting the market dictate our menu," Fratzke said. "It keeps us excited, and keeps the guests excited."

The term "seasonal" applies to items like fish, too. A sturgeon special swam through during the sum-

mer, and later some Lake Superior bluefin herring. There are, of course, popular items from beyond the Midwest, such as red snapper and scallops, but they are usually surrounded with ingredients any local would appreciate.

It's on the blending of idealism and reality that Fratzke remains focused. "I can be as creative as I want to, but at the end of the day I have to be a businessman first," he said. "If I'm not doing my job correctly, the staff doesn't get paid, the guests don't get their food and nobody's happy. It's been interesting to teach this very small kitchen staff the economics of running a kitchen, as well as the cre-

ative side. Everyone in the kitchen has to understand how important these ingredients are and how important it is to treat them well so we can keep the guests coming in the door."

Arriving on its one-year anniversary, Fratzke said The Strip Club kitchen continues to challenge itself. "We're bringing in deeper primal cuts (of meat) and learning how to do house made sausages, more in-house-cured meats of all kinds," he said, which includes a Fratzke family favorite, Braunschweiger.

—Mike Mitchelson

RECIPE PAGE 18

Richard Fisher

MYSTIC LAKE CASINO

Prior Lake, 952-445-9000



Richard Fisher plays his hand at the high-volume, high-quality challenge every day. With 14 food venues and a 250-person staff, it's all about the details. "My philosophy with food is fresh ingredients cooked with respect," he said. "With new roll outs, do your homework, respect tradition as it relates to food, then flex some creativity."

The casino's dining concepts range from fine dining to burgers and fries, plus numerous special events and banquets. "We'll do a banquet that's cuisines of the world one day, and then the next day I'm focused on a noodle bar," Fisher said. "We just booked (the play) Tony and

Tina's Wedding for six shows out here, which means I'll be doing Italian food for 300 people, six shows in a row."

He has 15,000 square feet of kitchen to manage, and on New Year's, the casino's venues will serve more than 12,000 meals in a 24-hour period. Then there's the 500-seat employee cafeteria he's opening that will feed 3,000 each day.

To staff the enterprise, Fisher seeks out specific talents and pairs them within a niche. "We have guys from several different countries—people who specialize in French, Asian, traditional skills and classical training in all those areas," he said. "I've got a great staff. I'm very fortu-

nate."

Fisher's culinary resume includes Thomas Keller's French Laundry in Napa Valley, Calif., and he's expanded his culinary repertoire in Hong Kong, Paris, Germany, and Austria, and is a European Certified Master Chef. In casinos, he's found his niche: He opened Soaring Eagle Casino in Michigan before arriving at Mystic Lake. "Financially, it's stable, and the environment and support mechanisms are all there to get things rolling," he said. "The greatest thing is we're always educating ourselves. We get requests to do African, Thai—we do anything."

RECIPE PAGE 19

Stephen Trojahn

COSMOS/GRAVES 601 HOTEL

Minneapolis, 612-312-1168



While Stephen Trojahn receives accolades as executive chef of Cosmos, the fine-dining restaurant housed in the Graves 601 Hotel, his responsibilities span beyond the Minneapolis luxury hotel—he is the corporate executive chef for Graves Hotels Resorts, which has development plans in Chicago, New York City, San Diego and Costa Rica. It's a broad culinary mindset that began developing in 1991 when the Ritz-Carlton hired Trojahn as an entry-level cook. During his eight-year tenure with the international organization, Trojahn held chef

positions in cities across the United States and in Puerto Rico and Jamaica. "The Ritz-Carlton is where I say I grew up as a leader and a manager," said Trojahn, "I had the great opportunity to work with a lot of talented chefs...very exposed to people around the world with culinary talents and passion."

Trojahn assembled his staff at Cosmos and the Graves 601 Hotel with that thought in mind. "I like to surround myself with people who have the same vision that I do," he said, and finds many of them by asking the right questions in an interview. "What are their goals? What

are their dreams?

What did they learn from their last jobs? You learn a lot from people and their outlook by the way they answer those questions."

Then it's a question of teaching. "I can grow and mold young talent to what needs to happen, and that makes my job that much easier," Trojahn said. "The work just seems to get done."

—Danielle McFarland

RECIPE PAGE 19

Virgil Emmert

OAK RIDGE HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER

Chaska, 952-944-2530



Virgil Emmert, the executive chef at Oak Ridge Hotel & Conference Center in Chaska, started his career when he walked in the door of the Hotel Sofitel in 1986 as he finished culinary school in Mankato. "I spoke with Chef Daniel, and he said, 'Can you be back here next Wednesday?' and I said, 'Sure.'"

Emmert's outwardly laid-back demeanor likely helped him rise to the top in a chaotic environment. Since the Sofitel, he's worked for Marriott, Sheraton and, prior to arriving at Oak Ridge, was the chef and food & beverage director at the Minneapolis Crown Plaza. "(With hotels), I like that there's more than

one thing going on at once," Emmert said.

There's plenty going on at Oak Ridge—more than 12,200 people were fed in October. Business meetings held at the center tread into unique territory. The facility, noted for its natural setting, also serves as a "team building" destination. Companies can try the outdoor ropes course to bond managers, or have Emmert design for them an "Iron Chef" competition. Recently the Chaine des Rotisseurs requested a Caribbean banquet, so Emmert roasted a curried goat on the patio, which was a hit. "Some shy away from (the unfamiliar), where I dig in: Let's research it, (find out) what do

they do over there," he said.

Last month, Emmert introduced a new a la carte menu at the facility's 275-seat Season's restaurant. "That's where we're stretching and starting to go into the molecular (gastronomy) end of it."

Emmert joined Oak Ridge six years ago, when the then-private, 18-year-old facility opened to the public. Dolce, its international parent company, is very supportive. "Everyday, I get a guideline, but really we can do whatever we want," Emmert said. "And that's beautiful."

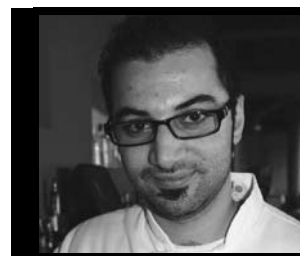
—Mike Mitchelson

RECIPE PAGE 20

Sameh Wadi

SAFFRON RESTAURANT & LOUNGE

Minneapolis, 612-746-5533



Sameh Wadi, owner and chef of Saffron Restaurant & Lounge, was born in Kuwait and lived the first part of his life with his family in Jordan. Wadi remembers his childhood family traditions pulsing with food. "My mother would wake up early in the morning and start cooking breakfast," he said. "Before we were finished with lunch, she would ask what we wanted for dinner."

While still in Jordan, Wadi's parents worked together collecting recipes for a Palestinian cookbook. "They spent a lot of time testing out recipes and having people over," Wadi said. "That caught my atten-

tion. I shadowed my mother in the kitchen while my friends were out playing soccer." (Now she shadows him: Wadi's mother can occasionally be spotted at Saffron overseeing preparations.)

Wadi's parents started a grocery business in the Twin Cities in the early 1990s, and he decided to finish high school in Minnesota. Driven by his passion for food and the confidence that he could make a living in the restaurant business, Wadi attended culinary school at Art Institutes International in Minneapolis. After graduation, Wadi searched out restaurants in which to develop his Mediterranean palate and hone

his skills.

He eventually opened Café Europa as executive chef and worked there for about two years before founding Saffron.

Saffron has been lauded for its ambition, and recognized as the only fine-dining Middle Eastern/Mediterranean restaurant in the Twin Cities. No task is too small for Wadi—the ground spice mixtures, sausages, and yogurts are all prepared in-house. That attention to detail earned Wadi a James Beard Award nomination for Rising Star Chef in 2008.

—Danielle McFarland

RECIPE PAGE 19

Koshiki Yonemura

TANPOPO NOODLE SHOP

St. Paul, 651-209-6527



Koshiki Yonemura arrived in the Twin Cities from Japan to attend high school (her mother was born here, and the family was adamant about her growing up in both cultures). Yonemura stayed to attend college at the University of Minnesota. And while her studies had nothing to do with restaurants, she realized there was an opportunity in the business: There were no restaurants in the Twin Cities that served “everyday” Japanese food—flavorful, healthful dishes with rice, noodles, vegetables and some meat. “Back then it was basically the sushi (or) teppanyaki places,” Yonemura said. “I moved here by myself, so I was craving home-style meals.”

Yes, sushi is eaten in Japan (and at Tanpopo), but not every day. “I tell people it would be like eating steak every day,” she said.

So, she researched, worked at local Japanese restaurants Origami and Kikugawa and, in her time off from school, returned to Japan to work at restaurants. In 2000, she opened Tanpopo Noodle Shop in a small storefront on Selby Avenue in St. Paul, and in 2004 moved to her current historic warehouse space in St. Paul’s Lowertown, near the Farmers Market. Her close proximity to the market is more than convenient—Yonemura’s cooking philosophy includes using fresh, locally-grown ingredients. The Market has many

Asian farmers growing native vegetables. “Twenty years ago it was really hard to find those ingredients,” Yonemura said. “There are ingredients we import from Japan, but we use local produce as much as we can.”

With well-traveled, curious and health-conscious diners, Tanpopo has built a loyal following. “We have customers who come in lunch and dinner and live off our meals, and I do the same,” Yonemura said. “You feel pretty good about where the food is coming from and what you’re eating.”

RECIPE PAGE 19

Michael Harper

WILDSIDE CATERERS

St. Paul, 651-726-8800



Michael Harper is the executive chef of Wildside Caterers, which, among its venues, services the Xcel Energy Center and the RiverCentre in St. Paul. Which means he was responsible for much of the food supplying the demands of the Republican National Convention, which ran the gamut from special-event multi-course wine dinners to grab-and-go snack bars for the tens of thousands who attended.

Then there’s the other venues: the Headwaters Bar & Restaurant, Café, Bistro and Express Carvery concepts within RiverCentre, the upscale 317 on Rice Park meeting

space and Roy Wilkins Auditorium. Wildside is owned by Morrissey Hospitality, which operates Pazzaluna, the St. Paul Hotel and Grill, Tria and the new Hotel Minneapolis. There are plenty of areas to contribute.

All the options obviously require a chef with great experience, and one who keeps up with dining trends. From those who voted for Harper, he has all that in abundance. His resume reads like an all-star: He’s the first American to graduate from the Westminster Technical College in London, England with a full European apprenticeship, and in 1975 was named one of the top 20 ap-

prentices in Great Britain. In 1983, he was named one of America’s top 10 young chefs in Nation’s Restaurant News. And yes, he has the French connection, too: He’s worked alongside chefs Gearing Vie and Alan Chapel. Yet, he keeps all that training in perspective. He told the Midwest Wine Connection recently that, “My training has been fairly extensive, but most people I talk to are more interested in learning basic principles than witnessing the advanced concepts I’ve picked up in Europe or the other places I’ve trained.”

—Mike Mitchelson

Stewart Woodman

HEIDI'S

Minneapolis, 612-354-3512



Stewart Woodman has been at the stove for some of the Twin Cities' most ambitious cooking, first at Restaurant Levain, then at the short-lived Five Restaurant & Lounge. His resume exudes high expectations: elite New York City experience and a Food & Wine Best New Chef award in 2006. After Five imploded, everyone in the local food scene asked, "What's next?"

The answer was Heidi's, named after Woodman's wife (who is also the restaurant's pastry chef), something that appeared quite opposite from Woodman's previous efforts. Located in the former (and tiny) Pan Vino

Dolce in Minneapolis, and offering bistro-type fare at decidedly bistro prices (no plate more than \$19), it appeared Woodman was reigning it in. But it's hardly the case. Woodman's exacting fine-dining standards still apply, and critics and fans alike have labeled the year-old restaurant as one of the Twin Cities' greatest bargains. "It's affordable fine dining in the sense that we took some of the formality out of the fine-dining experience," Woodman said. "You can get the quality of food and the preparation that you would expect at a high-end, fine-dining restaurant, but in a much more casual

atmosphere and a much more democratic price point."

And how is that high-quality cooking with the democratic price achieved? "Mainly by doing most of it myself," Woodman said, laughing. "I'm very hands on; I'm here six days a week, and Heidi is as well. Our front-of-the-house manager (Frank Thorpe) is also a partner in the business. It's a very hands-on operation."

—Mike Mitchelson

RECIPE PAGE 20

Scott Graden

NEW SCENIC CAFÉ

Duluth, 218-525-6274



North Shore native Scott Graden opened the New Scenic Café in Duluth in restaurant space that had endured several incarnations over the decades. None of them were what Graden had planned, however: fresh and locally sourced ingredients cooked to fine dining standards and served in a casual atmosphere. At the time, this idea was way ahead of local culinary endeavors. "Competition in 1999 was really low," Graden said. "A lot of people were doing a one degree of differentiation, 'Let's do better hamburgers.' The majority of their foot was on the same rock. Not to be self-proclaimed, but

we have pioneered healthier, more aware, and adventurous food for the Northland."

Almost a decade later, local competition with a similar style of food has grown, but Graden said confidently, "We're still doing well. We ended up being the benchmark and (we're) competing against our self."

Graden's industry experience is entirely hands-on—he worked his way up the restaurant ranks, and before his leap to entrepreneurship, he worked at Grandma's Saloon & Grill in Duluth where was responsible for budgeting, management, and menu development. Graden was consulting for restaurants when he

learned of the New Scenic Café location for sale.

Along the way, Graden developed his philosophy on how to treat everyone who enters the restaurant: "Welcome them (as if it were) your house," he said. "You can replace an oven a lot faster than you can replace a good employee or patron. Take care of the things you want around for a long time. Treat your knives well. Treat your coolers well. Treat your diners and your staff like they're more of an investment."

—Danielle McFarland

Don Saunders

FUGAISE

When Don Saunders was nominated one of FSN's Top Ten Chefs of 2004, he was the chef de cuisine at A Re-bours in downtown St. Paul; the restaurant was almost a year old and the talk of the Twin Cities for its French bistro cuisine. Saunders left in early 2005, and later that year opened his own restaurant, Fugaise, in Northeast Minneapolis. Saunders' classic French training thrives in the small space, and also his business savvy.

Since opening Fugaise, "we haven't changed much, still changing the menu pretty often, trying to cook real seasonally," Saunders said. He gave lunch a try when Fugaise opened to test the neighborhood's support, but

stopped it. "I knew we were more of a dinner place to begin with, and (lunch) ended up not being busy enough to justify it," he said.

His cooking has cultivated a loyal following, enough so that Fugaise often gets reserved for large parties wanting one of Saunders' tasting menus—the multi-course meals are a format that Saunders has also seen grow in the restaurant's regular menu. It could be part of an adventurous-eating trend, or the increased number of "special event" diners that target Fugaise for anniversaries or birthdays, he said.

As Saunders' regulars' demands have changed, he's adapted. Clients included wine aficionados who ask

for custom
m e n u s .

"They'll e-mail me the wines (they'll bring) and we'll try to pair things to it," Saunders said. "That's a fun thing."

E-mail has been key to cultivating that customer loyalty. From blasts notifying regulars of holiday specials ("It's always an easy way for a small restaurant like ours to fill up based on that e-mail," Saunders said) to answering questions, comments, recipe and ingredient information requests—it's all good. "It builds business and reputation to keep in contact with those people, and it's a nice thing to do."



Minneapolis, 612-436-0777

RECIPE PAGE 22

Scott Pampuch

CORNER TABLE

By visiting the Corner Table restaurant's Web site, one can see Chef/Owner Scott Pampuch's mission statement fade in: "Taste food that's farm driven, not chef driven." While Pampuch does his best to promote the local and sustainably produced ingredients on the restaurant's menu, that doesn't limit the outside influences in how they're prepared: empanadas, ravioli or a classic fish stew can grace the menu. And he's not against pulling in ingredients from beyond when necessary. "We have to go outside of our comfort zone at times for certain ingredients to balance the dish," he said. "I have al-

ways said, 'Yes, if I can get it here I'm going to buy it here.' But if I can't get it here, I'm not going to ruin a menu or recipe."

But the large portion of Pampuch's meals are from local sources, and he's taken his beliefs a step further, eliminating sodas from the drink list—not just for the high fructose syrup content, but the transportation costs. "If I'm sitting here preaching about local sustainable food and recycling, and yet I'm selling Coke over and over again, that doesn't make much sense," he said. "Same thing with bottled water. We dumped it, and we filter city water, and people are fine."

Philoso-
p h i e s

aside, it's his skill in the kitchen that earned Pampuch his praises. "I always try and keep in mind to not get in the way of the food; I don't want this to be about me," he said. "When (people) tell me they loved an ingredient, that to me is the biggest compliment—they can taste a single ingredient. ...If somebody goes out of their way and it's embedded in their head that they had Brussels sprouts at Corner Table and that sticks with them, then I've done my job."

—Mike Mitchelson



Minneapolis, 612-823-0011

RECIPE PAGE 22

Lenny Russo

HEARTLAND

For the last six years at his restaurant, Heartland, Lenny Russo has proved it's possible to succeed with a restaurant that uses only ingredients from local sources—as in all ingredients, not even a drop of olive oil. And not just succeed, but prove it's possible to create a fine dining experience from those seasonal ingredients that earn national praise.

Russo also talks volumes about using locally-produced ingredients, and brought attention to its high-volume possibilities by being the opening chef at the new Guthrie Theater for its foodservice operations, including the high-end restaurant Cue.

Russo's mantra is the possibilities of a local sourcing philosophy are limited only by creativity of a kitchen staff. "We're constantly out there pushing to find new local product," he said, adding that this year the restaurant began sourcing stone fruit and grapes from an area research farm. Russo also makes all charcuterie in-house, and said that he, The Craftsman's Mike Phillips and Corner Table's Scott Pampuch "are three guys that I know buy whole animals and use the whole thing—you have to figure out what you can do with every piece. That pushes you to develop those methods, techniques and recipes."

Charcuterie and other tech-

niques to preserve vegetables and fruit for year-round use is also sound business, something Russo the restaurateur watches closely. "The restaurant business, like most businesses, you have to manage it every day," he said. Operating against strong numbers from the last half of 2007, business at Heartland this year is up 15 percent. But in this tempestuous economy, Russo isn't coasting—he operates the business the same way he runs the kitchen: sustainably. "We have a business that's healthy," he said, "It's easier for us to weather a storm like that."

St. Paul, 651-699-3536



RECIPE PAGE 17

Hector Ruiz

EL MESON, CAFÉ ENA, INDIO

When Hector Ruiz and his wife Erin Ungerman purchased El Meson in 2003, a collective sigh was heard from legions of regulars who noticed the restaurant's slow slide. Ruiz brought the Spanish-Caribbean cuisine back up to snuff. In 2007, Ruiz and Ungerman opened Café Ena, and followed that in 2008 with Indio, both in Minneapolis. The three restaurants give Ruiz ample opportunity to flex his European training with different aspects of Latin cuisine. "At Ena, we implement a lot of French technique with Latino ingredients," Ruiz said, adding that the dishes are influenced

from Mexico to Brazil and Argentina. "Indio is just straight Mexican gourmet," Ruiz said. "We try to take Mexican ingredients and add a little bit of twist with some French techniques to create different sauces."

Having three restaurants firmly places Ruiz in the realm of entrepreneur, and to succeed requires a loyal staff. At Ena, Ruiz said he has Steven Beachy in the kitchen, a chef he met eight years ago when Ruiz was the chef at Prima in Minneapolis. Jose Alarcon, who has been with Ruiz for about five years, mans the kitchen at El Meson. And Nery Fernandez, who started with Ruiz at El Meson, is "the wild card," Ruiz said,

laughing. "So when my chefs go on vacation I split him in half."

Ruiz himself spends most of his time at upscale Indio, working with sous chef Silverio Sanchez. Ruiz credits much of his influence to experience gained in France with a chef who pushed boundaries of traditional French with world influences. "I like the regular straight French cuisine, however, you make it more interesting when you get out of that part, and try bringing in different ingredients," Ruiz said.

—Mike Mitchelson

Minneapolis, (Indio) 612-821-9451



RECIPE PAGE 20

Mark Hanson

MARX WINE BAR & GRILL

Stillwater, 651-439-8333



Seeing the colorful and upbeat Marx Wine Bar & Grill in Stillwater, it's hard to imagine chef and owner Mark Hanson's previous restaurant, Harvest, a quaint, three bedroom B&B in a 150 year-old house that served classic fine-dining meals in a 35-seat, white tablecloth dining room. But Hanson always had his sights on downtown Stillwater, and when the opportunity arose to open Marx in 2002, he took it. The restaurant quickly became a local favorite for innovative cuisine in a casual, contemporary atmosphere. Hanson expanded the restaurant into an adjacent space,

doubling its size, in 2005.

A St. Paul native, Hanson moved to New York to attend the CIA in 1981, then worked in Manhattan at various French restaurants before traveling overseas, and landed in the Caribbean for four years. "I was a chef at a couple different restaurants, one was regional French, the other was Italian, but we did a lot of Caribbean influence on the fish," he said.

Those varied influences appear on the Marx menu. "I bill it now as more of a fusion cuisine," Hanson said. "The pastas are rooted in Italian, but the fish and a lot of the

steaks are definitely

French influenced, and the fish we also do a lot of Asian influence on it. It sort of runs the gamut."

Throw in the seasonal aspect and you have one of the most unique bistro menus around. "I don't serve bland food," Hanson said. "I try to make it pretty memorable, and on the plate, it's a wide variety of tastes and textures. ...If it's just OK, I failed. I want it to be really good. That's what I shoot for."

—Mike Mitchelson

RECIPE PAGE 22

STEVEN BROWN

Pork loin & belly

—with sweet potato, gingerbread, pearl onions and prosciutto

This is a braised and grilled dish. The tenderloins are cleaned, then rolled with acti-va, set, and portioned to 5 ounces. The belly is brined, bagged, cooked at 64 degrees Celsius for 48 hours, pressed, and then portioned to 3 ounces. It is served with a savory gingerbread, a sweet potato puree, pickled pearl onions, and crispy prosciutto.

Gingerbread:

- 1 ½ cups butter
- 1 1/3 cups brown sugar
- 1 1/3 cups molasses
- 2/3 cups corn syrup
- 6 cups AP flour
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 2 teaspoons allspice
- 2 Tablespoons ginger juice
- 4 eggs
- ½ cup milk
- 1 1/3 cups water

Sift dry ingredients together. Add wet to dry. Mix gently and lightly. Bake 30-45 minutes at 325 degrees Fahrenheit.

Sweet potato puree:

Cut 12 yams in half lengthwise and roast in oven until they are soft. Blend in vita-prep with about ½ cup of maple syrup and only enough water to get the puree to move (if it needs it). Season to taste. Use a mixture of butter and cream to heat it up to order.

Pickled pearl onions:

- 400 milliliters white wine vinegar
- 400 milliliters water
- 400 grams sugar
- Sachet of mustard seeds, coriander, and black pepper (50 grams each)

Pork belly brine:

- 175 grams sugar
- 50 grams pink salt
- 500 grams kosher salt
- 5 liters water

After the bellies are brined (24 hours), rinse, dry, and bag with black peppercorns and rosemary. Cook at 64 degrees Celsius for 48 hours. Pull from bath and press with something weighted. Chill for at least a few hours. Cook the pork belly skin side down with a weight on it in a Teflon pan until the belly is hot and the skin is crispy.

Crispy prosciutto:

Slice prosciutto thinly on meat slicer. Cook under press pan with silpat for 10 minutes at 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Turn pan and cook for 10 more minutes.

ERICK HARCEY

Raised pork pie

Hot water crust:

- 7 Tablespoons diced lard
- 7 Tablespoons diced butter
- Scant 1 cup water
- 4¼ cups AP Flour
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- 2 medium eggs beaten

Heat water, butter, and lard—DO NOT BOIL. Pour flour and salt in a mixing bowl. Make a hollow center and add the beaten eggs. Pour over the warm liquid and make into dough. DO NOT OVERMIX. Chill for 1 hour. Once chilled, roll out into tin. Save some for the top.

Filling:

- 2 pounds pork shoulder (cut into 2 inch cubes)
- 8 ounces pork belly (ground)

8 ounces salt pork, pancetta or bacon (finely chopped)
 12 sage leaves (chopped)
 2 good sprigs of thyme (cleaned)
 1 teaspoon salt
 1 teaspoon pepper
 1 teaspoon white pepper
 ½ teaspoon mace
 Pinch of smoked paprika
 1 bay leaf
 1-4 cups good pork stock that will set to jelly

Mix all ingredients except the bay leaves together thoroughly. Fill crust with the mix. Place bay leaf on the top of the mix so it can be retrieved later. Lay the remaining crust over the top and crimp the edges. Leave a hole next to the bay leaf and insert a paper "tube" to let the steam leave. Put the pie in the oven at 350 for 30 minutes and then reduce the heat to 325 for another 75 minutes. Brush with eggs wash and bake another 15 minutes. It will shrink in the oven leaving a cavity that you can fill with the pork stock. Let cool completely and serve with mustard or sauce gribiche.

TIM MCKEE

Lobster and pumpkin cappelletti—with coral sabayon and black truffles (serves 8)

For the pumpkin-leek mixture:

1 ounce unsalted butter
 1 leek (¼ inch dice)
 6 ounces pumpkin (¼ inch dice)
 1 ½ teaspoons Kosher salt

For the lobster:

1 1½ to 1¾ pound live Maine lobster
 1 cup white wine (Riesling or Gewürztraminer)
 ½ gallon water
 5 sprigs fresh thyme
 10 black peppercorns
 1 leek
 2 ribs celery
 1 carrot

For the pasta:

6 ounces "00" durum flour
 3 ounces semolina flour
 1 whole egg
 2 egg yolks
 ¼ cup white wine
 ½ teaspoon Kosher salt
 additional durum flour for dusting

For the herb butter:

2 ounces unsalted butter
 1 teaspoon each fresh thyme, sage and marjoram
 1 Tablespoon finely grated lemon zest
 2 teaspoons lemon juice

1 teaspoon Kosher salt

For the coral sabayon

1 tablespoon lobster roe
 6 ounces olive oil
 1 egg yolk
 2 Tablespoons lemon juice
 2 Tablespoons water
 1 teaspoon Kosher salt

For assembly:

6 quarts water
 4 Tablespoons Kosher salt
 1 black truffle

For the pumpkin-leek mixture:

Gently heat the butter with the leeks and salt over medium to low heat until the leeks are tender. Add the pumpkin and continue to cook until the pumpkin is soft, but not mushy. Cool and set aside.

For the lobster:

Remove the tail and the claws from the lobster, reserving the body. Bring all of the ingredients except the lobster to a boil. Allow to boil for 5 minutes. Turn the heat to the lowest setting and add the lobster claws. Cook for 3 minutes and add the tail. Cook the lobster for another 4 minutes and immediately strain and shock in ice water. Remove the lobster from the shells reserving eight nice pieces for garnish. Roughly chop the remaining lobster for the cappelletti filling.

For the pasta:

Mix the flours and the salt together. Place in a mound on a clean, dry work surface. Make a well in the center and pour the eggs and wine in the center. Bit by bit, mix the flour into the egg mixture until most of the flour is incorporated. Knead the dough for 10 minutes or until it becomes a consistent texture throughout. Knead 5 minutes more. Wrap in plastic wrap and allow to rest for at least a half an hour before using.

For the cappelletti:

Roll the pasta to the thinnest setting on a pasta machine and cut into 2' lengths. Cut each sheet of pasta into 3-inch squares. Place a ½ teaspoon of the pumpkin and leek mixture in the center of each square top with ¼ ounce of lobster and fold into a triangle. Join the two bottom corners together and pinch to hold them together. Place the cappelletti on a sheet pan with parchment paper and dust with flour, and cover with a slightly damp kitchen towel.

For the herb butter:

Finely chop all of the herbs and mix all of the ingredients together until well combined.

For the coral sabayon:

Mix the roe with the olive oil. Put the mixture in a non-stick pan and roast in a 350-degree oven for five minutes or until bright red and firm. Cool. In a blender combine the roe with the water and blend until smooth. Strain through a medium strainer to remove any larger pieces of roe. Set aside. Over a double boiler on medium heat, whisk the egg yolk, lemon and water until the egg is frothy. Slowly add the olive oil and coral and season with salt and additional lemon juice as necessary.

For assembly:

Bring the water to a boil and add the salt. Drop the cappelletti into the boiling water and cook two minutes, or until the pinched part of the pasta is tender. Remove the pasta from the water and drain. Gently warm the herb butter with the garnish lobster. Toss the pasta gently in the butter. Place a small pool of the sabayon in the center of a warmed plate. Place the cappelletti on the sabayon and garnish with the lobster. Shave the truffles very thinly over the pasta and serve.

LENNY RUSSO

Pickled crabapples

8 pounds crabapples, stem on and washed

6 cups apple cider vinegar

8 cups light brown sugar, packed

1 ea. cinnamon stick

1 Tablespoon fresh ginger, grated

½ teaspoon ground allspice

2 teaspoon whole cloves

1 teaspoon fine sea salt

1 ea. bay leaf

Bring the vinegar to boil in a nonreactive sauce pot. Reduce to a simmer over medium low heat, and add the remaining ingredients, except for the fruit. Simmer for five minutes or until the vinegar is reduced by half. Add the crabapples. Continue to simmer until the fruit is tender (about five to ten minutes depending upon the size and ripeness of the apples). Remove the apples, and pack them into sterilized canning jars. Pour the syrup over the apples and seal.

FERRIS SCHIFFER

Glazed tuna with sweet and sour broccolini, cashew-scallion fried rice with yuzu-soy sauce

Clean and portion #2 yellow fin tuna (5 ounce steaks)

Vegetable stock:

½ bunch celery

- 2 each carrots
- 2 each onions
- 1 whole head garlic, split
- 2 each parsnips
- 4 each bay leaf
- ½ bunch thyme
- ½ bunch parsley
- 1.5 gallons water

Blanch broccolini in vegetable stock. Shock and reserve.

Reduce 1 quart blanching stock to 1 cup. Add 2 ounces rice vinegar, 2 ounces sugar, 1 Tablespoon soy sauce and emulsify 4 oz. butter into sweet and sour.

Jasmine rice:

Rinse rice well to remove starch. Place rice in sauce pan (or hotel pan), cover with water one inch above rice. Bring to simmer, cover and place in steamer for eight to 10 minutes. Fluff, cool on food wrapped sheet pan. Reserve. Slice scallions on bias. Reserve.

Yuzu-soy sauce:

- ½ cup rice vinegar
- 1 teaspoon ginger, minced
- 1 Tablespoon sesame oil
- 2 Tablespoon sugar
- 3 ounces tamari soy sauce
- ¼ cup yuzu juice

Glaze:

- 4 cup water
- 2 cup mirin
- 2 cup tiparos fish sauce
- 1 ½ cup soy sauce
- 2 ½ cup plum wine, Fuki
- 2 cup sugar
- 1 pound flesh of white fish (halibut, fresh walleye etc.)

Combine and bring to simmer. Strain out fish flesh. Reduce to sauce consistency. Reserve.

Tuna marinade:

- ½ cup soy sauce
- 5 each scallions
- ¼ cup grapeseed oil
- 2 ounce rice vinegar
- 2 ounce ginger, minced
- 1 ounce sesame oil
- ¼ cup cilantro, chopped

For service:

Marinate tuna steaks for five minutes. Dip in glaze and then into sugar. Place on hot non-stick pan to sear. Sauté cashews (one Tablespoon), add rice to reheat. Season with pinch white pepper, sprinkle of soy

sauce and scallions. Place rice in bowl. Re-heat broccolini, season with gastrique. Place tuna on rice, broccolini on tuna, sprinkle few chopped cashews on broccolini. Serve yuzu-soy on side.

VINCENT FRANCOUAL

Vincent's mushroom risotto

Risotto:

- 1 pound of Arborio rice
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 3 quarts vegetable stock
- 4 ounces butter
- 1 sprigs thyme
- 1 sprig of rosemary
- 2 cloves of garlic
- ½ cup of white wine

Using cheesecloth make a bundle with the rosemary, thyme and garlic. Melt two ounces of butter, add the onion and cook for three minutes, then add the rice and cook and stir well for one minute. Pour the wine and keep stirring when the wine is reduced add a ladle of hot vegetable stock and stir again until the stock is absorbed. Repeat this operation until the rice is cooked al dente then add the rest of butter and stir. Place the risotto on a pan and let cool.

Garnish for risotto:

- ½ cup oven dried or sun dried tomato
- 1 cup of sauté medley of mushroom (oyster, shitake mushrooms, etc.)
- ½ cup diced butternut squash
- 1 cup grated parmesan cheese
- ½ cup mascarpone cheese

Warm up the risotto with vegetable stock or mushroom stock, add the mushroom, tomato and butternut squash and stir well, when hot add mascarpone cheese and parmesan cheese. The risotto need to be of a creamy consistency. Add more cheese if need be. Season with salt and pepper. You can drizzle a nice olive oil or walnut oil on the rice.

JD FRATZKE

Beef brisket "BLT"

Serves 8

- 3 pounds grass-fed beef brisket, deckle on
- 3 Tablespoons ground cumin
- 1 Tablespoons smoked hot paprika
- 3 Tablespoons sea salt
- 4 Tablespoons fresh cracked black pepper
- 1 Tablespoons fresh thyme leaves
- 1 Tablespoons fresh sage leaves, chopped
- 3 Tablespoons minced fresh garlic
- 1/4 cup canola oil
- 1 loaf wild rice batard (New French Bakery)
- 1/2 cup Hope creamery unsalted butter
- 1 1/2 quarts beef stock
- 8 ounces Italian canned tomatoes, peeled

and chopped (good quality, like San Marzano)

- 12 ounces hard cider
- 4 large heirloom tomatoes
- 4 ounces fresh watercress, rinsed well
- 4 Tablespoons fresh tarragon leaves
- 8 ounces mayonnaise
- 2 ounces extra virgin olive oil
- juice and zest of one lemon

1. In a small mixing bowl, combine sea salt, two Tablespoons fresh cracked black pepper, sage, thyme, cumin and paprika. Mix together with your fingers until well incorporated.

2. Remove brisket from packaging and pat dry with a towel. Rub approximately 1 1/2 Tablespoons minced garlic on either side of brisket. Then completely coat brisket in the dry rub spices and herbs. Wrap tightly in several layers of plastic wrap, place in glass vessel and chill in refrigerator for no less than eight hours.

3. Eight hours later, remove plastic from brisket, pre-heat oven to 325 degrees and place a Dutch oven or braising pan on range burner over medium heat. Pour two ounces canola oil and four Tablespoons Hope butter in Dutch oven. When oil begins to ripple and butter has melted and foamed, place brisket in Dutch oven and sauté for about five minutes, until spices have seared to a chocolate brown crust with wheat colored edges. Carefully flip brisket repeat sear on opposite side.

4. When both sides are seared, spoon out or pour out excess oil and replace Dutch oven with brisket over burner. De-glaze pan with six ounces of hard cider. Drink the remaining six ounces. When alcohol has cooked out of the cider (about three minutes), add the Italian tomatoes and the beef stock. Cover Dutch oven with foil and place lid on top. Transfer to pre-heated oven and simmer for six hours. Brisket is done when it can be pulled apart with a spoon.

5. Trim the ends from the wild rice batard and slice into 8 thick pieces. Slather on one side with remaining Hope butter and toast in oven for 8 minutes. Lay dinner plates side by side and begin plating, each piece of toasted bread in center of plate. Mix mayo, lemon zest and remaining cracked black pepper together in a small mixing bowl.

6. Top each piece of bread with two thick slices of heirloom tomato. Sprinkle each with sea salt and olive oil. In a separate stainless steel mixing bowl, toss watercress, tarragon, olive oil and lemon juice together until watercress is well coated.

7. Remove brisket from oven and braising jus. Slice brisket into four to six ounce portions. Place each portion atop the bread and tomatoes. Ladle about three ounces of the braising jus over each portion, then top with black pepper mayo and crown with about two ounces of the watercress salad.

RICHARD FISHER
Japanese bacon and quail eggs
Serves 6

Pork rub:

2 pound pork belly
2 Tablespoons Togarashi (Japanese Seven Spice)
2 Tablespoons five spice
2 teaspoons Kosher salt
2 teaspoons fresh ground black pepper
1 teaspoon wasabi powder

Sake ginger:

3 quarts sake
2 quarts water
2 ounces fresh ginger, sliced
5 each garlic cloves
3 cups dark soy
1 cup white soy

4 each poached quail eggs

Pork rub:

Dry pork belly well. Using a filet knife, cut off any silver skin that may exist on the meat side of the pork belly. Combine all spices, then thoroughly rub spices on the pork starting from the fat side then moving to the meat. Place pork skin side down in an oiled and pre-heated sauté pan over medium heat for 2 minutes or until golden brown. Flip and repeat.

Sake ginger:

Combine all ingredients into a heavy sauce pot.

Add the pork belly, top the sauce pot and bring to a full boil, then simmer for 1 to 1-1/2 hours. Pull pork belly out of the pot, and reduce liquid to a nice glaze. Replace pork in sauce, meat side down and ladle sauce over the skin. Leave the pork belly in the sauce for 2 minutes. Remove to cool.

Cut two quarter-inch slices of pork, steam for four minutes. Poach 1 egg and set aside. Heat one cup of pork liquid and pour over the pork. Place poached egg on top.

STEPHEN TROJAHN
Seared arctic char with turnip puree and pumpkin seed pesto

Pumpkin seed pesto:

2/3 cup grape seed oil
1/3 cup pumpkin seed oil
1/2 cup toasted pumpkin seeds
1/3 cup grated parmesan cheese
3 teaspoon lemon zest
1/2 cup Italian parsley
1/2 cup cilantro
2 cloves garlic
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon black pepper

Place all ingredients in food processor except grape seed oil and pumpkin seed oil, blend mixture until smooth. Pour in oils and blend for one minute (can be made ahead and stored in refrigerator in tightly sealed container for 1 week).

Turnips:

1 pound turnips (peeled and chopped)
1 cup whole milk
1 Tablespoon butter
1 teaspoon salt

Place turnips and remaining ingredients in sauce pot on medium heat, allow to slowly simmer till turnips are soft (25 minutes) remove turnips from liquid and place in blender with small amount of the remaining liquid; add more liquid until you reach a smooth consistency. Adjust seasoning to taste.

Fish:

6 ounces arctic char filet (skin on or off)
1 Tablespoon vegetable oil
Salt and pepper

Heat heavy bottom sauté pan on stove at medium heat, season char filet with salt and pepper. Place oil in pan, then fish filet skin side down, allow to cook for 3 to 4 minutes then turn over and allow to cook an additional 3 to 4 minutes.

SAMEH WADI
Lamb carpaccio with tabbouleh and hot peppers

Lamb carpaccio:

2 lamb loins cleaned of fat and silver skin
Salt
Ras el hanout (spice mixture)
1/4 cup fresh tarragon, chopped
Tabbouleh:
1 1/2 cups parsley, chopped

1/4 cup bulgur wheat, rinsed and reserved
1/4 cup tomatoes, finely chopped
2 green onions, finely chopped
2 Tablespoons mint, torn
Lemon juice, olive oil, salt and black pepper to taste

Hot pepper vin:

2 serrano chilies, fine dice
1 Fresno chili, fine dice
1/4 Tablespoon shallot, fine dice
Juice of 2 lemons
Extra virgin olive oil and salt to taste

For carpaccio:

Season loins with salt and ras el hanout, sear in a hot pan, remove from heat and roll in the tarragon, lay on plastic wrap and roll into cylinder. Freeze until firm. To plate remove from freezer and slice on meat slicer into very thin slices.

For tabbouleh:

Mix all ingredients together in a mixing bowl and adjust seasoning to your liking—should be slightly acidic.

For hot pepper vin:

Place everything except the oil in a bowl, whisk and slowly drizzle in the oil and reserve.

To plate:

Place carpaccio in the center of a plate, drizzle with the hot pepper vinaigrette and place a small amount of the tabbouleh on the plate.

KOSHIKI YONEMURA
Kabocha gohan—Japanese style dirty rice with winter squash
Serves 3

1/4 medium kabocha squash or buttercup squash
2 cups medium grain white rice (Kokuho Rose)
2 1/2 cups water
1 Tablespoon sake
1-2 inches kombu or dried kelp
1 pinch salt
1 Tablespoon light soy sauce
Add mushrooms and ginkgo nuts if available
Gomashio—optional
Cooking tool: Japanese traditional nabe, called donabe

Rice:

Wash rice according to directions on bag. Drain excess water and set aside. Kabocha (squash): Use a spoon to remove seeds in-

side kabocha, then peel the skin. Cut kabocha into cubes and set aside.

The dish:

Soak kelp in 2 ½ cups of water for at least one-half hour. In ceramic rice cooker (donabe) add the washed rice. Add remaining ingredients (except gomashio) to donabe. Place donabe with cover on stovetop over medium-high heat and cook until contents boils. Turn heat to low and cook until rice is cooked, about 15-20 minutes. Remove kelp and mix the rice. Serve in individual rice bowls or plates. Sprinkle gomashio if desired.

The dish is versatile, and served recently with pan-fried lake herring and green salad.

VIRGIL EMMERT *Watermelon pork ribs* Serves 6

3 each racks fresh baby back pork ribs

Rib rub:

1 ounce Kosher salt
1 ounce sugar
1 ounce brown sugar
1 ounce cumin
1 ounce chili powder
1 ounce cracked black pepper
1 pinch granulated garlic
1 pinch cayenne pepper
2 ounces paprika
1/4 teaspoon whole leaf thyme
1/4 teaspoon whole leaf oregano

Watermelon BBQ sauce:

2 quarts of your favorite BBQ sauce
2 Tablespoons rib rub
1 bulb garlic, minced
1/4 each white onion, minced
1/10 each watermelon, pureed
1 ounce balsamic vinegar
1 ounce olive oil
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

Combine all dry ingredients together. Place ribs on cutting board, rub the ribs with the spices. Reserve 2 tablespoons for the sauce. Place ribs in roasting container/pan, standing up. Fill container 3/4 full with water, cover, roast at 375° for 3 hours. Remove from oven, let cool (if don't cool, meat will fall off bone). Blend watermelon in blender, until smooth, strain out the seeds. Brown onions and garlic in olive oil add Worcestershire sauce and reduce, until almost all liquid is gone. Add barbecue sauce, simmer for 10 minutes. Add watermelon and spices. Sim-

mer for another 20 minutes. Season with salt and pepper if needed. Heat ribs on grill; brush with barbecue sauce. Enjoy.

HECTOR RUIZ *Huarache Azteca*

Masa for huarache:

2 cups of masa flour mix
¼ cup of all-purpose flour
1 cup of water

Slowly add water and knead by hand until masa dough is smooth and not lumpy then roll into medium size ball and flatten it by hand into oval shape then cook on flat top till slightly crispy on outside.

Huarche topping:

2 pounds petite beef tenderloin, grilled (salt & pepper)
2 julienned Anaheim peppers
¼ cup julienned red onion
¼ cup queso fresco
¼ cup pico de gallo*
2 tbsp sour cream
1 cup roasted tomato salsa*
*recipes follow

Sautee Julienned peppers and onions in oil until soft. Take Huarache tortilla and top with roasted tomato salsa then take grilled steak chop and put on tortilla, then add onions and peppers, sprinkle on queso fresco, drizzle on sour cream then top with pico de gallo.

Pico de gallo:

6 tomatoes, chopped
¼ cup chopped red onion
¼ cup chopped cilantro
2 limes, juiced
1 jalapeno, chopped
Salt and pepper to taste
1 Tablespoon olive oil

Mix all ingredients together in mixing bowl

Roasted tomato salsa:

6 each roma tomatoes, roasted
2 each jalapeno
Salt & pepper to taste

Blend in blender until it has a smooth texture.

TANYA SIEBENALER *Shiitake scallion crepes with soy braised vegetables*

Shiitake scallion crepes:

1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
1 ½ cups water
4 eggs
1 tablespoon salt
1 cup finely sliced scallions
1 cup finely sliced shiitake mushrooms

Mix together flour and salt. Separately whisk eggs and water together. Mix together flour and egg mixtures. Add scallions and shiitake mushrooms. Ladle crepe batter into a lightly oiled pan and cook on each side. Set cooked crepes aside.

Soy braised vegetables:

1 jalapeño minced
2 cloves garlic minced
1 cup shiitake mushrooms
1 eggplant cut into spears
2 cups tomatoes with juice
1 cup soy
½ cup brown sugar
1 inch grated ginger

Mix together tomato, soy, brown sugar, and ginger. Set aside. In braising pan, sweat garlic and chile. Add mushrooms and eggplant. Brown slightly. Add soy mixture, cover and braise slowly until eggplant is cooked through.

Assembly:

Put vegetables into crepes and drizzle with some of the juice.

STEWART WOODMAN *Poached lobster with carrot curry sauce and artichokes* Serves 4

4 lobsters, tail and claw meat removed*
Salt and pepper

*To remove the meat from the lobster: Bring large pot of salted water to a boil. Place the claws and knuckles in a large bowl, then top with tails. Pour boiling water over to cover. In exactly 30 seconds, remove the tails and shock in an ice bath. Allow the claws and knuckles to "cook" an extra 6 minutes 30 seconds for a total of 7 minutes. Remove and shock in ice bath. The meat can now be easily removed and is still "uncooked."

Butter poaching liquid:

1/4 cup garlic, chopped

1/2 cup shallots, chopped
 1/2 bottle white wine
 3 cups chicken stock
 2 pounds butter, cubed
 1/2 bunch thyme, chopped
 Salt and pepper

In a large saucepan over medium high heat, sauté garlic and shallots until fragrant and translucent, about two minutes. Deglaze pan with wine and allow to completely reduce. Add chicken stock and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and, while using an immersion blender, add butter slowly while blending to form an emulsion. Taste and season with salt and pepper. Finish with fresh thyme.

In a medium saucepan bring the butter poaching liquid to exactly 120 degrees. Add the lobster and poach for 15 to 20 minutes.

Carrot curry sauce:

1/4 cup dry white wine
 1 tablespoon of curry powder
 1 large shallot, minced
 1 teaspoon curry powder
 ¼ cup carrot juice
 Juice of ½ lime
 7 Tablespoons butter

Make sauce:

Combine first five ingredients in medium saucepan until liquid is reduced by 3/4 cup, about 20 minutes. Strain sauce into small saucepan. Bring to simmer. Gradually add seven tablespoons butter, whisking just until melted. Squeeze in lime, season with salt and pepper.

Artichokes:

6 large artichokes
 1 lemon, halved
 3/4 cup fresh lemon juice
 1/4 cup honey
 1/4 cup olive oil

Special equipment: a 6- to 8-quart heavy pot wide enough to hold artichokes in a single layer (about 11 inches in diameter)

Preparation:

Working with 1 artichoke at a time, turn artichokes. Cut off bottom ¼-inch stem keeping stem attached—peel stem. Snap off three rows of outer leaves until you can see where the heart ends and the leaves begin. With a big serrated knife, cut through the leaves leaving only the heart at the bottom (about 2/3 the way down artichoke). Rub artichoke with lemon to keep it from

turning brown. With a smaller knife cut around heart to remove any leaves and give it a circular shape, cut off top inch of artichoke and gently pull open center. Scoop out sharp leaves and fuzzy choke from center with a melon-ball cutter or a spoon. Put artichoke in a large bowl of cold water with a squeeze of fresh lemon juice. Turn all of the artichokes. Remove artichokes from water. In pot, combine 1 cup of water with the lemon juice, honey, olive oil and 1/2 teaspoon of salt. Snugly fit the artichokes in the pan. Cover and bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce the heat to low and cook until the artichokes are tender when pierced with a knife, about 15 minutes. Transfer the artichokes to a plate.

Presentation:

Stack artichokes in center of plate, place lobster tails atop, and drizzle the carrot-curry sauce around.

JOHN OCCHIATO *Agnolotti of veal braised alla Trieste, parmesan jus, rapini*

For the veal braise:

2 pounds veal shoulder
 2 cups white wine
 3 each anchovy filet
 3 each clove garlic
 1 each onion, minced
 Salt and pepper

For the filling:

Veal braise from above
 1/2 cup grated parmigiano reggiano

For the pasta:

1 1/2 pounds flour
 10 large eggs

For the parmesan jus:

1 small onion minced
 2 cloves garlic
 1 small can tomato
 8 ounces chicken stock
 6 ounces parmigiano reggiano

For the dish:

1 egg
 2 Tablespoons milk
 1/4 cup olive oil
 2 cloves garlic
 1 bunch rapini, blanched and shocked
 1/2 cups parmigiano reggiano

For the veal:

Heat oil in an oven-safe braising pan over medium heat. Season the veal generously and sear on all sides until caramelized.

Remove the veal and add the onion, garlic and anchovy. Sauté briefly then add the veal back to the pan. Pour wine over veal, place lid on top and put into a 325-degree (Fahrenheit) oven for 2 to 2 1/2 hours. When the veal can be pierced easily with a fork, it is done. Cool the meat in the braising liquid. Remove the meat from the liquid and chop finely. The liquid should be pureed in a food mill and thinned with water until it is the consistency of cream. Add the 1/2 cup of parmesan and 23 tablespoons of the braising liquid. Chill.

For the pasta:

Mound the flour on a clean work surface and create a well in the center twice as large as will hold the eggs. Place the eggs in the center and begin working flour into the eggs until you get a firm dough. Knead the dough for about 15 minutes until the surface is smooth and resilient. Let the dough rest for at least 15 minutes under a damp cloth. Using a pasta rolling machine, roll the dough to the second thinnest setting. Cut into 3-inch squares and cover to keep from drying out.

For the agnolotti:

Make an egg wash by scrambling the egg with the 2 tablespoons of milk. Lay out 6-8 pasta squares at a time and place 1 teaspoon veal filling in the center of each square. Brush all the edges of the pasta with egg wash and fold the pasta in half so you have a ravioli with three cut sides and one folded side. Move the ravioli to a floured cookie sheet. Fill the remaining squares. Freeze the agnolotti in a single layer. Once they are frozen, the agnolotti can be placed in freezer bags and frozen.

For the parm jus:

Sauté the onion and garlic in olive oil over medium low heat until the onions are translucent. Add the tomato and the chicken stock and reduce by a third. Add the parmesan and simmer over a low heat for 30 minutes stirring regularly. Strain and keep warm.

For the dish:

Sauté garlic cloves in olive oil until it browns lightly on both sides. Off the heat, add the parm jus and the rapini. In 6 quarts of boiling salted water, drop four agnolotti per person into the pot. Boil for three minutes and transfer the agnolotti to the parm jus. Serve in warmed bowls and top with parmesan.

DON SAUNDERS
*Herb-crusted halibut with
 Burgundy snail butter*
 Serves 4

2 pounds halibut filet

Crust:

1 cup Panko breadcrumbs

Flour (for dusting)

2 eggs (lightly beaten)

Salt and pepper

½ cup finely chopped herbs (parsley, tarragon, basil, chives, dill)

Sauce:

1 cup canned "Burgundy snails" or escargot

3 cloves garlic (finely chopped)

1 shallot (finely chopped)

2/3 bottle of red wine (preferably red Burgundy or any pinot noir)

10 ounces unsalted butter

2 Tablespoons parsley (finely chopped)

Season halibut portions with salt and pepper. Combine chopped herbs with Panko breadcrumbs. On one side of the halibut, in order, dust with flour, dip in eggs and finally dip in breadcrumb mixture. Reserve in refrigerator.

For sauce, sauté garlic and shallots for a few minutes on low heat. Add red wine, turn up heat and reduce until the wine is almost gone (one cup left) and has a syrupy consistency. Add snails and turn heat down to low. Whisk in butter a few knobs at a time until all is emulsified. Add parsley and season with salt and pepper. Keep warm but not hot.

To cook the fish, get a sauté pan with a few tablespoons of canola oil warm but not smoking. Place fish, crust side down in the pan. The crust should be bubbling a little in the oil but not too much or the crumbs will burn. Immediately place the pan with the fish in a 350-degree Fahrenheit oven for about four to six minutes or until the fish is barely cooked through.

Serve fish with some haricot vert and grape tomatoes sautéed with garlic. Spoon the snail sauce around the fish. Enjoy!

MARK HANSON
*Walleye, sweet potato and
 habanero dumplings*

3 cups medium-diced walleye

2 eggs

1 cup cooked medium-diced sweet potato

1/3 cup Flour

1 ½ habanero peppers minced

2 ounces melted butter

2 ounces chopped cilantro

2 teaspoons smoked paprika

1/3 cup diced onion

1 Tablespoon minced garlic

1 Tablespoon baking powder

1 Tablespoon salt

1/2 teaspoon black pepper

1. Mix all ingredients in bowl. Fill Cuisinart half full with mix.

2. Pulse until uniformly chopped and combined, and keep filling Cuisinart bowl half full.

3. Fry dumplings by pinching thumb-size portions with fingers and frying in 350-degree Fahrenheit vegetable oil for two to three minutes until golden brown.

SCOTT PAMPUCH
*Braised Thousand Hills
 grass fed beef, parsnip puree
 and brussels sprouts*

4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

4 (12-ounce) chuck roast

1 medium onion, finely chopped

1 medium carrot, finely chopped

1/2 celery rib, finely chopped

2 cups red wine (preferably a Burgundy or Chianti)

1 1/2 teaspoons salt

1 teaspoon black pepper

2 cups beef stock

1 cup flour (just enough to coat all sides of meat)

Rosemary sprigs, bay leaf, thyme

Method

1. Heat two tablespoons oil in an ovenproof, six-quart wide heavy pot over moderately high heat until hot but not smoking. While oil is heating, pat beef dry and season with salt, pepper, and dust with flour. Brown beef, without crowding, on all sides, about 20 minutes total, and transfer with tongs to a bowl. Pour off fat from pot, then add remaining two tablespoons oil and cook onion, carrot, and celery over moderately low heat, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 10 minutes.

2. Preheat oven to 275°F.

3. Stir vegetables, then add wine and scrape up any brown bits. Increase heat to high and boil until liquid is reduced by half,

about 10 minutes.

4. Return beef (with any juices) to pot, add fresh herbs and the two cups beef stock. Bring to a simmer, then braise, covered, in middle of oven until very tender, about three to four hours.

LUCIA WATSON
*Two recipes: pasta with tomatoes,
 sweet corn and basil; and a sweet
 corn coulis*

Pasta with tomatoes, sweet corn and basil:

1 pound bite-size pasta

Salt

1/4 cup olive oil

1 Tablespoon butter

1-2 heirloom tomatoes, cut into chunks

1 small onion, diced

2-3 ears sweet corn, de-cobbed,

Fresh basil

Cheese of your choice, I like either a soft goat cheese or a hard grated parmesan cheese

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil, add the pasta and cook according to directions until al dente. Drain the pasta. In the same kettle, add the butter and olive oil and cook over medium heat until the butter is melted. Add the onion and stir for about two minutes. Add the tomatoes and corn. Cook just until hot, stirring. Add the pasta back to the pot, give a quick stir to heat through, the place in bowls. Garnish with ripped up basil and the cheese of your choice. Serves 4-6

Sweet corn coulis:

1-2 tablespoons olive oil

1 small onion, diced

2 cups de-cobbed sweet corn

1/2 cup cream

1 bay leaf and thyme sprig

splash white wine

In a heavy bottom pan, heat the olive oil. Add the onion and cook until soft. Add the corn and stir cooking for about 1-2 minutes. Add the cream, wine and herbs. Bring to a boil, turn down and simmer for about 5 minutes. Remove the herbs and put the mixture in a blender. Blend until smooth. Use this simple sauce on grilled fish, meats or vegetable sauté with rice.

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