

FOOD ARTS

AT THE RESTAURANT AND HOTEL FORE

SHOWTIME FOR SEAFOOD

Top Chefs' Spring/Summer Menu Previews



control is constant," he reports. "But we'll really see the difference in summer. The only thing that's lost, really, is the mystique...the seaport location, the history. And watching the sun come up over the Brooklyn Bridge. That was nice." —JULIE MAUTNER

Out of the frying pan Nashville—While some may travel here for the Grand Opry, others make a pilgrimage to Prince's, to many the holy grail of "hot chicken." Housed in what can only charitably be called a shack, owner André Prince, great-niece of Thornton Prince, aka "the inventor of hot chicken," goes through over 500 chickens a day, providing her clients, who regularly include Mayor Bill Purcell and singer Little Richard when he's in town, with a generous dose of endorphin-releasing capsaicin. Served "none," medium, hot, and very hot (hint: "none" is plenty hot; very hot could seriously imperil a normal person), this is not your fast-food Fryolator bird. Rather it is the ultimate slow food, either a good-size moist leg/thigh or breast/wing fried to order in a cast-iron skillet and served between two slices of grease-absorbing white bread with a few pickle slices on top. Service is simple: just a brown paper bag and a few napkins. It's best consumed at one of the well-worn oilcloth-covered tables. Note: the sign on the bathroom door wisely suggests washing before using the facilities—not after. —JAN GREENBERG

From Tobago to table New York City—The Dimin family's mid-1990s vacation to Tobago may have been cut short by son Daniel's burst appendix, but before flying home they got a taste of wonderful fish caught by local fishermen. Today, Dan's father, Michael, is back on the West Indian island supervising the family business, Tobago Wild, while Dan mans the New York City office, shipping fresh tuna, wahoo, mahi-mahi, snapper, and other local fish to New York within hours of its catch in Tobagonian coastal waters.

In the Dimin's brand-new processing plant in Charlotteville, a fishing village on the northern tip of the island, Tobago Wild receives fresh fish from more than 100 independent fishermen, mostly one-man operations trolling hand lines from small boats called pirogues. They dispense three tons of ice a day to help the fishermen deliver their catch in prime condition and to process the fish within hours into fillets ready for overnight shipment to New York restaurants and for direct retail sale.

While Tobago Wild is setting up to distribute more widely, its initial business has focused on New York restaurants. Because the selection varies from day to day, chefs like Scott Bryan (Veritas) cannot always feature Tobagonian fish on the regular menu, but Bryan likes to use their fish in daily specials like roasted or oil-poached wahoo.

Michael Dimin is proud of Tobago Wild's role in the local economy of Tobago. "Creating a market outside the island allows the fishermen to keep doing what they have done for years and lets us deliver a great product." By sticking to traditional fishing methods, he sees this as providing a sustainable future for both the fish and the fishermen. —JAY HARLOW

Doing pasta proud Barcelona, Spain—Mario Rummo, chairman of the European Association of Pasta Manufacturers, announced the creation of The International Pasta Organization at the World Pasta Congress in Barcelona last October. Rummo, who is also CEO of Rummo SpA Molino e Pastificio, noted that it would assist in the creation of an international network of scientists and experts on nutritional problems.

The World Pasta Congress, held every five years, is a forum for scientific confirmation of the health benefits of pasta in the traditional Mediterranean diet—a necessary defense against popular low-carb diets. The next congress will be in Brazil in 2010. —B.S.

lost its lease and closed. • In similar news, a kerfuffle over the lease forced cherished Second Avenue Deli to close in January. At press time, the owners were looking for another location. • Christos Christou, who grew up cooking in his parents' tiny restaurant, Kaliva, on Cyprus, then joined his brother in New York City and made his name at the Greek-themed Molyvos, Estiatorio Milos, Trata, and Avra, opened his own place, Ammos Estiatorio, at 52 Vanderbilt Ave. in December.

WASHINGTON, D.C.—NYC-based Laurent Tourondel and BLT Management have set their sights on the capital with plans to open their first outpost of BLT Steak at 1825 I St. N.W. in August. • The Westin Arlington Gateway and its Italianate steakhouse, Pinzimoni open

this month in Arlington. Exec chef Jeffrey Haight previously worked at Kinkead's and Colvin Run Tavern. • Ashok Bajaj, who owns Bombay Club, 701, The Oval Room, Ardeo Restaurant, and Bardeo Wine Bar, unveiled his latest venture, Rasika ("flavor" in Sanskrit), at 633 D St. N.W. in December. Look for updated Indian fare supported by an ambitious wine list. Exec chef Vikram Sunderam moved from London, where he helmed The Bombay Brasserie. • In January Nathan Beauchamp, formerly of Eve (Alexandria), took over as top toque at 1789 Restaurant. He replaces Ris Lacoste who, after 10 years, left to open her own place.

FLORIDA—Next month Christian Delouvrier will join forces with noted restaurateur Jean Denoyer (La

Goulue and Orsay in NYC and L'Escale in Greenwich, CT, among others) and partners to launch La Goulue Christian Delouvrier at the swanky Bel Harbour Shops (Bel Harbour) in the former home of Ella. This is Delouvrier's first time as chef/owner. The concept will be French bistro, a departure for Delouvrier, who created raffish fare at Lespinasse and Alain Ducasse at the Essex House. "Good food is good food," he explains of the stylistic shift. "You can get good food in an haute cuisine restaurant or in a bistro." Also in the works are plans to open 11 more of the same concept; the second La Goulue Christian Delouvrier is slated to open in Boca Raton this fall. • David Bouley's first foray outside of Manhattan is David Bouley Evolution, opening next