

FOOD  
*Chef Conny*

TRADITIONS  
*Reconnecting with roots*

CULTURE  
*Old Institutions in the New Century*

NORDIC REACH

# NEXT STOP: NORTH POLE



A Quarterly of Scandinavia

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### Tasting Menu

3-Plate Tasting Menu" features three dishes. Pick the three you like. Available from 5 to 7PM daily. [morgas.com](http://morgas.com) for menu choices.

## Finnish through osmosis

*"My earliest childhood memory is of my father taping pieces of yellow trace-paper to the wall showing multiple variations of building elevations and asking me 'Which do you like best?' I took this task very seriously and in return he took my response very seriously; asking me why I preferred one over the other."*

Tia Salmela Keobounpheng, daughter of well-known Finnish-American architect David Salmela, makes jewelry that is at once sensibly Scandinavian and youthfully American. There are big red hoop earrings in acrylic that are irresistibly like candy, but there are also more formal grown-up earrings and necklaces in wood that are elegant and effortless. The apple doesn't fall far from the tree, and growing up Salmela Keobounpheng was constantly exposed to her father's paintings, sculptures, and furniture.

"My parents created a world that was safe and controlled but also limitless when it came to trying new things and dreaming big," she reflects back. "They exposed me and my siblings to spaces and buildings and objects that my friends certainly weren't exposed to, and I absorbed my everyday life like any child does."

One might say Salmela Keobounpheng received her Finnish roots as well as her aptitude for design through osmosis. Although she says her father never intentionally taught or steered her into architecture and design, he certainly gave her the tools and outlook just by being there.

Salmela Keobounpheng always felt proud of her Finnish heritage.

"We grew up taking saunas several times a week, and using Finnish words for select every-day items of foods," she says.

Later she added to her heritage by spending a year in Finland as an exchange student.

"I grew a life in Finland," she explains. "I arrived knowing nobody and nothing and left feeling like I was leaving my home. I developed a love and an understanding for the country as it is, and somewhere that melds with the idealistic perceptions of the 'Old Country' that two generations before me had passed down to me in my childhood."

Today she says she has been influenced by Finnish and Scandinavian design, through her father, through that year in Finland, and through working at IKEA for three years, but that she doesn't see a clear origin or even formal evidence of Scandinavia in her work.

"I think there are influences that reflect a Nordic sensibility in my work that I cannot seem to escape. I am a huge fan of Finnish products like Iittala, and I am in awe of their everyday presence in Finland."

Tia Salmela Keobounpheng is currently working for Salmela Architect and Silvercocoon. She shows at the Walker Art Center and the design shop Roam. Her work can also be found online at [www.silvercocoon.etsy.com](http://www.silvercocoon.etsy.com)

**Favorite material:** "Cherry wood because of its natural warmth."

**Listens to:** "Predominately alternative and folk music. I adore The Innocence Mission, Martin Sexton, and Red House Painters. When it comes to classical music, my favorite is 'Finlandia' by Sibelius... it creates goose-bumps every time!"

**Favorite place in Minneapolis:** "The Theodore Wirth Parkway section of the Grand Round parkway system. I take a run or walk along its paths every day."

**Current read:** "Chi Running by Danny Dreyer with Kathy Dreyer."

WRITTEN BY EVA STENSKÄR  
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*Tia Salmela Keobounpheng photographed for Nordic Reach in summer 2008 at the Spoonbridge and Cherry sculpture by Claes Oldenburg. The Cherry and the Spoon, in aluminum and steel, was created by the Swedish-American artist in collaboration with his wife, Coosje van Bruggen, between 1985-1988. The 7,000 pound sculpture is located in the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden at the Walker Art Center in downtown Minneapolis.*

