

FOOD & WINE

MARCH 2008

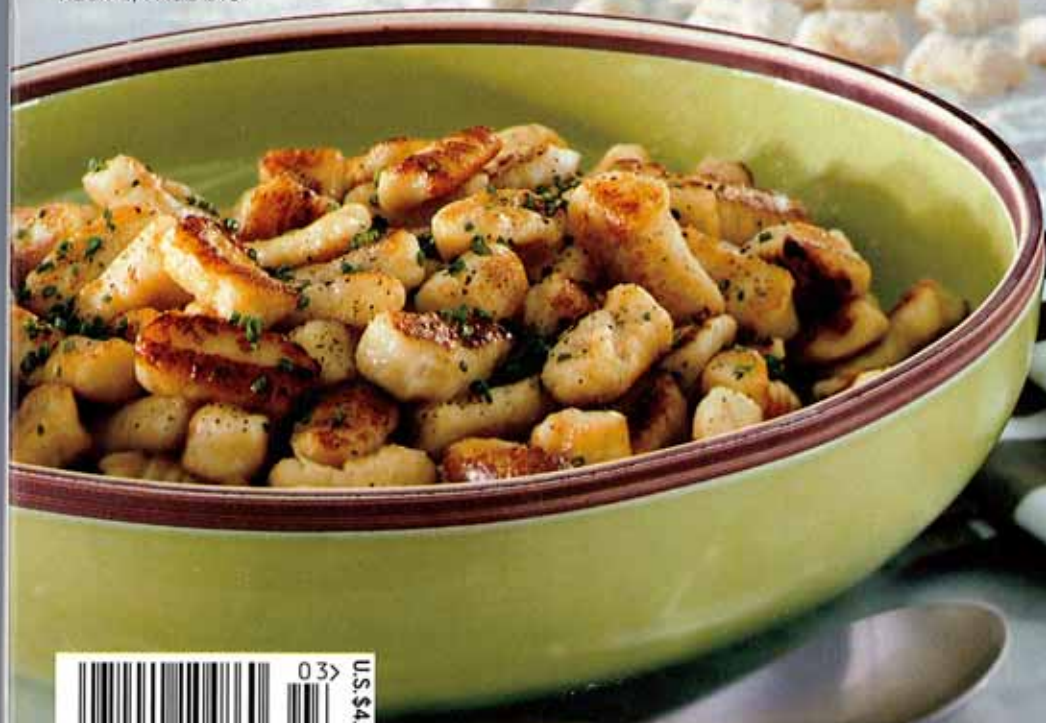
special kitchen issue

27 best small appliances
new ovens & dishwashers
easy & elegant family feast

Perfect Italian pairing

*Pan-seared Meyer lemon gnocchi
with a crisp Italian white wine*

RECIPE, PAGE 148



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20 great washington state wines

WHERE TO GO NEXT

chicago



At Sepia, inventive new American dishes are served in a renovated 1890s print shop.

Ambitious first-time chefs run some of Chicago's best new restaurants, and several of America's star cooks plan to open new places soon. **by heather shouse**

Sepia Last summer, this much anticipated spot opened around the corner from Avec and Blackbird, in a space with vintage steel doors and modern chandeliers. Chef Kendal Duque (formerly of NoMI) offers new American dishes like veal-cheek terrine with quince and blue cheese bison burgers. Owner Emmanuel Nony tends to the wine list, stocking small producers and lesser-known varietals. 123 N. Jefferson St.; 312-441-1920.

Brasserie Ruhlmann The latest project from the successful team behind Japonais is a brasserie whose look evokes the work of Emile-Jacques Ruhlmann, France's legendary Art Deco designer. Veteran chef Christian Delouvrier created and oversees the classic French menu, which includes fluffy cheese soufflé, rich and earthy lamb *navarin* and an impeccable caramelized-apple tart. 500 W. Superior St.; 312-494-1900.

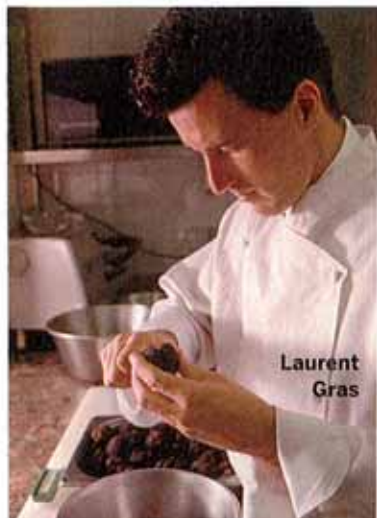
Cafe 103 Chicago's Beverly neighborhood is best known for its houses designed by Frank Lloyd Wright's most famous protégé, Walter Burley Griffin. Now the 'hood has a destination restaurant, thanks to this white-tablecloth BYOB. Chef Thomas Eckert is adept with South Asian flavors: He serves pheasant with *methi* (fenugreek) risotto and hen-of-the-woods mushrooms mixed with masala. 1909 W. 103rd St.; 773-238-5115.

Coalfire Pizza At the terrific cocktail spot Matchbox, J. Spillane was known for his drinks. Now, he's earning a reputation as possibly the best pizza maker in town, personally tossing, stretching, topping and baking each pie in the 800-degree coal-fired oven. The thin-crust, lightly charred Margherita is excellent, as is the Fiorentino, topped with hot Calabrese salami and red peppers. 1321 W. Grand Ave.; 312-226-2625.



the drawing room

Outstanding chef Shawn McClain's new restaurant, located next to Le Passage nightclub, has a fun menu with twists on classics such as "fish and chips"—really, salt cod beignets with crisp potatoes (left)—and a "burger" that trades braised short ribs for patties and tomato jam for ketchup. Equally appealing is the drinks list, with choices from top local bartenders. 937 N. Rush St.; 312-266-2694.



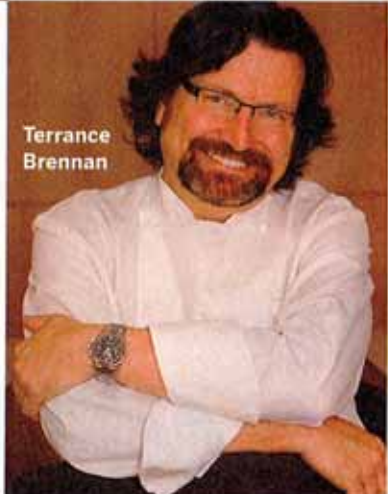
Laurent
Gras



Marcus Samuelsson



Takashi Yagihashi



Terrance
Brennan

chicago star chefs watch

December '07 After earning raves at Michigan's Tribute, **Takashi Yagihashi** has come to Chicago to open Takashi Restaurant (1952 N. Damen Ave.) in an adorable Bucktown A-frame. He combines French techniques with Japanese and American ingredients in dishes such as peekytoe crab with sea urchin and white soy-white truffle oil glaze.

March '08 At C-House (166 E. Superior St.), **Marcus Samuelsson** will launch a modern seafood spot with an extensive raw bar.

April '08 Lincoln Park's Ambria will reopen as L₂O (2300 N. Lincoln Park West), where **Laurent Gras** will offer upscale seafood dishes such as lightly smoked striped jack fish with apricot oil.

September '08 **Terrance Brennan's** Artisanal Bistro & Wine Bar, an outpost of his Manhattan flagship, will debut with cheese-and-wine pairings, plus bone marrow toasts and Burgundy snails.

Old Town Brasserie Chef Roland Liccioni is beloved in Chicago for Les Nomades and the legendary Le Francais. At his latest spot, this old-school brasserie, Liccioni is again expertly preparing classic French dishes such as garlicky escargots and luscious duck confit. But he's also adding accents from his native Vietnam, as in lobster ravioli with chile and fish-sauce foam. 1209 N. Wells St.; 312-943-3000.

Pasticceria Natalina Good artisanal bakeries are a dime a dozen in Chicago, but ones that specialize in Sicilian sweets are rare. Natalina Zarzour's modest little Andersonville shop is just about the only place in town to get Torta al Mandarino (sponge cake soaked in tangerine liquor) and cannoli with Sicilian sheep's-milk ricotta. 5406 N. Clark St.; 773-989-0662.

Sol de Mexico Clementina Flores has trained many of Chicago's better-known Mexican chefs, including her son Geno Bahena, the chef-proprietor of Tepatlulco. At Sol, where colorful Mexican folk art decorates the walls, Flores offers a half-dozen complex moles such as the classic Oaxacan version that adds smoky flavor to a three-finger-thick pork chop. 3018 N. Cicero Ave.; 773-282-4119.

Table Fifty-Two For his first restaurant, Oprah's personal chef, Art Smith, chose a space on Chicago's tony Gold Coast. He serves goat-cheese biscuits as an amuse bouche and his ultra-comfort-food menu includes fried green tomatoes with greens and bacon and red wine-braised lamb shanks. Some of the best seats in the house are at the chef's counter, with a front-row view of the wood-fired oven. 52 W. Elm St.; 312-573-4000.

Violet Hour This unmarked spot became Chicago's cocktail mecca the second it opened this past summer. Mixologist Toby Maloney uses house-made bitters and infused spirits in his stellar drinks (the Dark and Stormy, with spicy ginger syrup, is especially good). Justin Large, a line cook at Avec, designed the inspired bar-food menu: crisp deep-fried pickles and creamy chorizo-stuffed croquettes. 1520 N. Damen Ave.; 773-252-1500.

PHOTOS: FRANKEN/CORBIS (GRAS), BJ CAPAK/WIREIMAGE (SAMUELSSON), JEFFREY MATHIAS/WIREIMAGE (YAGIHASHI), JEFFREY MATHIAS/WIREIMAGE (BRENNAN)