

L24 | INDULGELUXURY | JUNE 2008

ALACARTE

A smorgasbord of tidbits and news

BY NEDA KESSLER AND JUNE NAYLOR

Openings

The Vault Jean-Michel Sakouhi has finally opened the doors to The Vault, the fine-dining addition to the Tower in downtown Fort Worth. The menu is full of Mediterranean dishes, heavy on fish, such as arctic char, courtesy of chef Gabe Ochoa, formerly of Kalamatas in the Worthington. Beef eaters will enjoy the bone-in filet. The large dining room is designed around the concrete pillars that are both a design curse and blessing in the former bank building. Don't miss the downstairs bar that's cozy, cool and dark, and features a working fireplace; residents of the Tower have a private entrance. Sakouhi looks great after a bout with cancer last year and says he's ready to take on the rigors of day-to-day restaurant work. They're rolling out slowly (lunch will be served at some point) as they're still grappling with a liquor license issue, but expect a Saturday and Sunday brunch in the future. 500 Throckmorton St., Fort Worth. 817-348-9828, www.thevaultdfw.com.

The Wine Loft Southlake gets a cozy wine bar within walking distance of the brownstones near Southlake Town Square. Prep school buddies Rickey Dudley and Michael Peck opted to buy into this Baton Rouge-based franchise — this is the first in Texas — after closing out their respective athletic careers (Dudley as an NFL player; Peck as a collegiate and pro basketball coach). The space is inviting, with an intimate upstairs lounge and arbor-covered patio with ceiling fans. The menu is courtesy of chef Joanne Irizarry and features a selection ranging from a charcuterie board to pumpkin ravioli. Wine selections include more than 70 by-the-glass options and 200-plus bottles. Half-price Tuesdays features select vintages; Wednesdays offer complimentary wine tastings. Expect to see Dudley and/or Peck on a nightly basis (both live in the area), as they hope to roll out six more franchises in North Texas. 1532 E. Southlake Blvd., in the Southlake Town Square. 817-442-9257.

The Chicken Ranch, Chicken Scratch Bistro and Coffee Shop The Ranch, located in Fort Worth's Stockyards, offers a tempting menu, big patio, live music and, of course, fried chicken. You'll also find Kobe burgers, along with late-night breakfast on the weekend. The Chicken Scratch Bistro and Coffee Shop is a new addition to Weatherford's Parker County Courthouse square. Expect scones and muffins, espresso drinks; green, herbal and black teas, as well as homemade lemon-meringue; hefty sandwiches and salads.

Chicken Ranch, 301 W. Exchange Ave. 817-378-0818. Chicken Scratch, 105 College Ave. 817-594-6226, www.chickenscratchbistro.com.

Screen Door The scene spot in Dallas right now. Within shouting distance of the Meyerson Symphony Center in Dallas, this elegant Southern-accented spot reminds us of the more contemporary offerings in New Orleans, such as Herbsaint. The signature cocktail is a fruit-infused mint julep, served ice-cold in gorgeous silver cups. Executive chef Fitzgerald Dodd offers a menu of goodies such as pheasant and dumplings; meat-

loaf with bits of foie gras; and fried chicken and waffles with maple-brandy syrup. 1722 Routh St., Dallas. 214-720-9111, www.screen.doordallas.com.

Z Market The fresh-food-to-go concept opened this month in D/FW's Terminal B (it's near Gate 30), featuring specialties from Fort Worth chef Tim Love. Other Z Markets have featured offerings from Wolfgang Puck.

Works in progress

Demolition is under way on the space for Adam Jones' new restaurant, Grace, slated to open late this year on the ground floor of the Carter-Burgess Building at Seventh and Main streets in downtown Fort Worth. Jones is becoming an expert on the challenges found in creating a 400-seat restaurant in a space that has never been a food-service operation. He recently met with his leading chef candidate for the sixth time, but he's talking to a few others. And he's going to Houston soon to talk to a master sommelier. Altogether, his staff will consist of 60 to 70. Know anyone looking for a good job?

Winslow's Wine Cafe at the corner of Clover Lane and Camp Bowie Boulevard missed its hoped-for Colonial opening, but it to be up and running toward the end of June. A Seattle chef is relocating to help fine-tune the select menu of wood-fired pizzas, sandwiches and salads. Wine selections are getting the once over by Central Market's inimitable J.R. Clark, and wine and beer will be available, along with food, for takeout. The space is intimate with 50 inside plus 25 more



The Wine Loft in Southlake is located within easy walking distance of the brownstones of Southlake Town Square.



Jean-Michel Sakouhi in the downstairs bar at The Vault in Fort Worth.

Updates

We're watching our calories, but it's hard to resist the new shakes and malts at Dutch's, which is now open Sunday nights. The new treats go with classic burgers, sliders and onion rings. 3009 S. University Drive, 817-927-5522, www.dutchshamburgers.com.

In the News

Texas Monthly's June issue announced its favorite 50 barbecue restaurants in Texas. Eagerly, we looked to see how our local places did, only to find that that usual suspects such as Railhead and Angelo's didn't make the cut. The often-overlooked Cousin's in Fort Worth did, however, get the nod for smoky brisket, rich ribs and tart sauce.

Tim Love's Stockyards hangout, the Love Shack, made Conde Nast Traveler's Hot List Tables 2008 for its laid-back patio and "perfect burger." By the way, the misting fans are out at the Shack.

Milestones

Tommy's Hard to believe it has been 25 years since we enjoyed our first of many gratifying, juicy burgers from a convenience store called Tommy's. That was at a little gas stop near Lake Worth, and although the original location is no longer part of the outfit, Tommy's still does a steady business at its other west-side Fort Worth shops. Kelly Smith, who now runs the business started by her dad, Tommy Smith, says that although "the competition is much tougher, we're lucky to have our loyal following." She says that of the three shops, the one on Seventh Street draws a great lunch crowd and that she expects even more traffic with the enormous growth ongoing in the Cultural District and Seventh Street Corridor. Smith

says to watch for a possible new store this year, and she hints of a roll-back to 1983 prices sometime this month at the 5228 Camp Bowie Blvd. store, too. Find a menu and all location information at www.tommyshamburgergrill.com.

Save the dates

The next class in Granbury's annual top chef cooking series continues in June 17 featuring Jon Bonnell, Bonnell's Fine Texas Cuisine in Fort Worth. Held at the new Inn on Lake Granbury, classes are 6-9 p.m. and cost \$75 each. Classes are offered by Tarleton State University and the Panhandle, Granbury's gourmet cook's nook. Reserve now and inquire about future classes at 817-279-1164 or 1-817-579-1518.

NorthPark Bridal hosts Let Them Eat Cake, described as a cakewalk and tablescape celebration, June 6-8, at the Dallas shopping center on Level One between Neiman Marcus and Oscar de la Renta. Events include the Cake Mixer, a gala party honoring the work of noted local pastry chefs and benefiting the Dallas chapter of Les Dames d'Escoffier, a group of women in culinary arts who raise money for scholarship endow-

ments. 6 - 9 p.m. on June 6. Throughout the weekend, NorthPark shoppers can buy a \$5 raffle ticket and vote for their favorite cake, with these proceeds also benefiting Les Dames D'Escoffier's Scholarship Endowments. Ticket holders will be entered into a drawing for the grand prize, a three-course dinner for two in the Chef's Room at the Rosewood Mansion on Turtle Creek. 8687 Northwest Highway at North Central Expressway in Dallas. Cake Mixer tickets are \$75 per person; buy them from Les Dames d'Escoffier member Renie Steves, 817-732-4758 or via e-mail at reniesteves@yahoo.com.

If you're an oenophile, you'll want to sign up for Oyster College 101, a class offered on four dates this summer at Oceanaire Seafood Room at the Dallas Galleria's Westin Hotel. Executive Chef Chad Kelley will spotlight 10 varieties on the half-shell, pulled from cold-water sources such as the Rhode Island Watch Hills and Virginia Rappahannock along with wine pairings. Classes are noon - 2 p.m. on June 21, July 12, July 26 and Aug. 2. It's \$40; reservations required. 13340 Dallas Parkway, Dallas; 972-759-2277; www.theoceanaire.com.

The Gaylord Texan's Summerfest 2008 runs through Aug. 31 with wine and cheese pairings Fridays in the Old Hickory Wine Bar, \$35 per person, and Taste of the Texan progressive tastings in the hotel atrium, free. The Junior Chef's Camp is held on Saturdays beginning June 14. From 9 a.m. - noon, kids will learn basic techniques and get a chance for hands-on experience working with the the Gaylord's executive chefs. \$90 per child. 817-778-2215 to reserve a spot. 1501 Gaylord Trail, Grapevine. For more information on these and upcoming events, go to www.gaylordhotels.com.

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