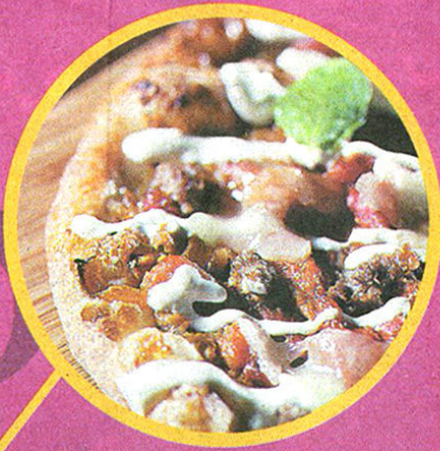


G
FOOD

RESTAURANT TRENDS

WHAT'S IN, OUT, AND UPCOMING

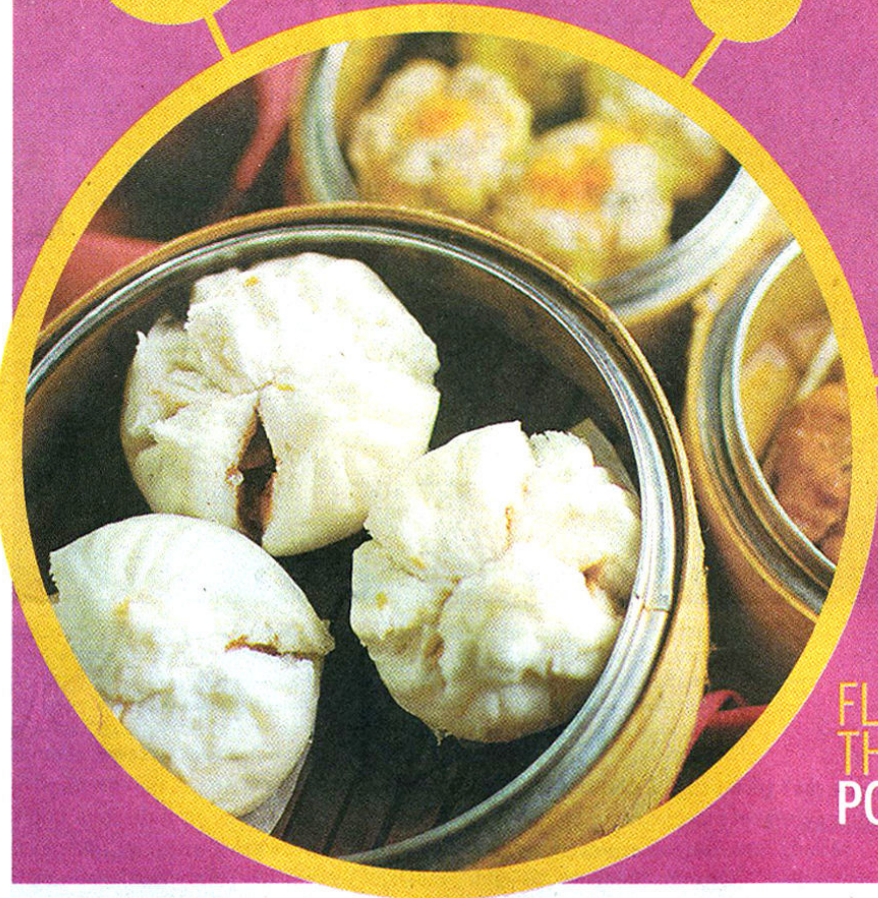
A SAMPLING OF CUTTING EDGE
DISHES AROUND TOWN
By Devra First



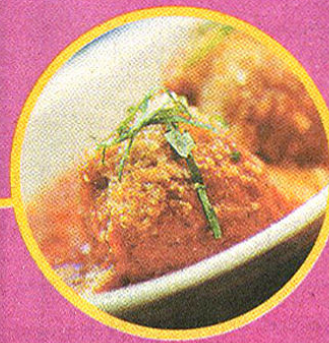
ON THE RISE
FLATBREAD

APPETIZERS

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FLAVOR OF
THE MONTH
PORK BUNS



5 MINUTES AGO
MEATBALLS



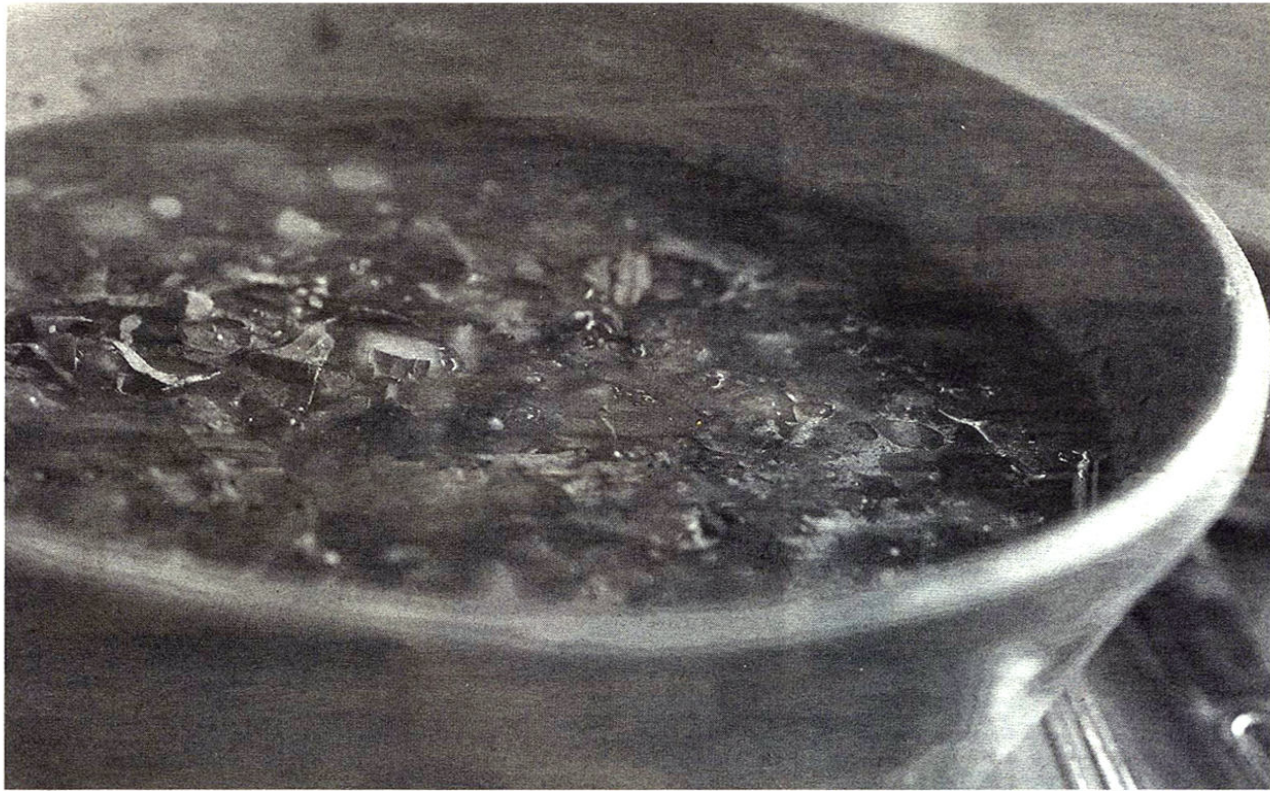
ASK AMY
POPULAR ADVICE
COLUMNIST MAKES
HER G DEBUT
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SUNDAY SUPPER PORK LOIN WITH PICKLES, CUBAN RED BEANS PAGE 7

DINING OUT WEST BRIDGE'S STRENGTHS START WITH AN EGG PAGE 14

AMATEUR POTTER CHEF SERVES DISHES ON HIS OWN PLATES PAGE 21

THEATER
**TWO ACTORS BRING
DEPTH OF FEELING
TO 'NORTH POOL'**
PAGE 3



PHOTOS BY SUZANNE KREITER/GLOBE STAFF

Watermelon gazpacho

Serves 6

For supper on a warm night or at the beach, this gazpacho gets a light mash in a bowl and a long chill, but it's otherwise effortless.

- ½ medium-size seedless watermelon, cut into ¼-inch cubes (enough to make 8 cups)
- 4 large tomatoes, chopped
- 1 small cucumber, seeded and cut into ¼-inch cubes
- 1 each red and yellow bell pepper, cored, seeded, and cut into ¼-inch cubes
- 1 medium red onion, finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro
- 1½ cups tomato juice
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- ½ cup quark (available in specialty stores) or ¼ cup sour cream mixed with ¼ cup Greek yogurt

1. In a large bowl, combine the watermelon, tomatoes, cucumber, red and yellow peppers, onion, garlic, cilantro, tomato and lemon juices, salt, and black pepper.
2. With a potato masher, mash just enough to extract some juice out of watermelon and tomatoes. Cover and refrigerate for at least 4 hours. Taste for seasoning and add salt and black pepper, if you like.
3. Ladle the soup into 6 large bowls and top with quark or the sour cream mixture.

Adapted from Sweet Basil

days you're more apt to find Becker in the front of the house than in the kitchen. "You don't have to be the Tom Brady all the time," says the chef. "Sometimes you're the Belichick, sometimes you're the Bob Kraft."

Sweet Basil, 942 Great Plain Ave., Needham, 781-444-9600, www.sweetbasilneedham.com.

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In summer, a refreshing watermelon gazpacho is on the menu, made with red and yellow bell peppers, cucumber, tomatoes, and tomato juice. He simply mashes everything in a bowl until the vegetables release their juices, refrigerates it to mellow the mixture, then ladles it into his own pottery.

He started working in restaurants on the North Shore when he was 11. Straight from high school, he did a stint cooking in Napa Valley, worked at Davio's on Newbury Street, and in Liguria, Italy, where he learned to make pasta. He opened Sweet Basil when he was 24.

After a dozen years, these



Chef-owner David Becker even makes his own dinnerware.

from tender handmade ravioli filled with ricotta and mascarpone in a lush tomato basil sauce; seafood fra diavolo over linguini; Bolognese with pappardelle. Many of these dishes are served on brown and light blue pottery. Look closely and you may notice that each dish is different, some even off center.

Becker is also an amateur potter and makes most of the dinnerware. "Each one has their own personality," says the chef. "I don't want it to look like a 4-year-old made them, but they're most interesting when they're asymmetrical."

Becker, 36, often veers from Italian cuisine for daily specials.

Watermelon gazpacho made at Sweet Basil restaurant in Needham.

Where the food — and the plates — are made by the chef

His personality comes through

By Ann Trieger Kurland
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

NEEDHAM — The chatty man with a big smile passing out small plates of risotto and fried calamari on the sidewalk in front of Sweet Basil is owner and chef David Becker. "Just because I don't have a table ready doesn't mean I'm not here to help you have a good time," he says.

It's a schmooze fest and Becker is the life of the party with the dinnertime crowd. There are no reservations, credit cards aren't accepted, and it's BYOB. Still, most nights people wait, sometimes an hour. The 50-seat eatery is often filled with regulars who have clamored for Becker's Italian favorites since he opened 12 years ago.

Inside, the aroma is garlic,