


JUNE 2010

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Birth Announcements

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Cambridge, Massachusetts In April, **The Grafton Group** added **Russell House Tavern** (14 JFK Street) to its growing family of Harvard Square haunts, **Grafton Street Pub & Grill** and **Redline**. Russell House Tavern seats 220 in a multilevel space carved into six different areas, including a tavern (with a wood paneled ceiling) and supper club-ish dining room with black leather banquettes saddled up against brick walls. Executive chef **Michael Scelfo** heads up both Russell House Tavern and **Temple Bar** (another Grafton Group spot), and keeps the menu classically American with a nod to the contemporary.

APPS (\$5 to \$17): Redondo Black Serrano ham with house-pickled pig's ears and honey-torched Manchego; chilled lobster pot with crusted potato, chorizo aioli, and crunchy corn crumbs. **MAINS** (\$10 to \$28): lamb shank with stewed black lentils, house-smoked lamb breast, and mizuna; hearth-baked pasta with grilled ramps, sweet peas, and creamy fontina. **DESSERTS** (\$8): roasted pear clafoutis with brown sugar sauce and honey/lavender ice cream; carrot cake bread pudding with cream cheese swirl, toasted walnuts, and golden raisins.

New York City **Matthew Kenney**, partner and director of culinary arts at 105 Degrees Academy, a high-end raw food restaurant and culinary school in Oklahoma City, and partner in **FreeFoods** (New York City), is trying his hand with modern Peruvian cuisine with the April opening of **Bar Paya** at 65 Second Avenue. Partner **Raymond Azzi** owns **Winebar** next door. With 70 seats, the space is clean and bright, with natural woods, zinc tabletops and communal seating, and a pretty blue-tiled open kitchen. Kenney and **Meredith Baird** (a partner in his business **Matthew Kenney Cuisine**) developed the moderately priced menu, while chef de cuisine **Harris Mayer-Selinger**, a Winebar alum, runs the kitchen. **APPS** (\$4 to \$9): seiche diver scallops with creamy red pepper, coconut milk, and lime; *paya* (the Peruvian rendition of pizza) with lobster, chickpea puree, and caramelized fennel; oven-roasted corn nuts with Incan pink salt. **MAINS** (\$12 to \$14): slow-braised duck with red quinoa, maca root, and dark beer; shellfish with red chile sauce and fried rice. **DESSERTS** (\$8 to \$10): cacao tart with vanilla/maca root *crema*; Inca cola float with lemon verbena.



Russell House Tavern offers smart cocktails and artisanal fare in a historic building dating from 1635 in Harvard Square.

Philadelphia Stephen Starr and his Starr Restaurants opened its newest restaurant in April, **El Rey**, at 2013 Chestnut Street (formerly Midtown IV Diner), where home-style Mexican fare (tacos, tortas, and moles) meets more unusual dishes as interpreted by executive chef **Dionicio Jimenez**, formerly of **Xochitl**. Studio City-based Shawn Hausman Design (known for its work at **Chateau Marmont** in Los Angeles and Starr's **Parc** and **Butcher & Singer** in Philly) reimagined the 84 seat space as a colorful Mexican roadside diner, draping the tabletops with vinyl oilcloths and adorning the walls with an eclectic collection of flea market finds from

Southern California and Mexico. **APPS** (\$5 to \$12): quesadilla with zucchini blossoms, corn, and Oaxaca cheese; warm corn salad with habaero chile butter. **MAINS** (\$8 to \$25): braised goat with scallions, guacamole, and refried beans; roasted poblano peppers stuffed with ground beef, almonds, and dried fruit, topped with walnut sauce. **DESSERTS** include churros (three for \$6) with a *cajeta* dipping sauce or two scoops of ice cream (\$4) in flavors such as Mexican chocolate and strawberry *jamaica* (the dried flowers of a hibiscus plant).

Delray Beach, Florida **Allen Susser**, owner of **Chef Allen's Seafood Grill** (Aventura), is putting his unique New Florida spin on the trend du jour with the April launch of **Taste Gastropub** at 169 N.E. Second Avenue. Owner is **Robert Workens**, a seasoned Florida hotel/restaurant contractor. Implementing

consulting chef Susser's vision is executive chef **Jamie DeRosa**, who worked with Susser in the 1990s and is back from a stint cooking in Beijing. The 125 seat indoor/outdoor endeavor incorporates a variety of spaces, ranging from a backyard garden with a pebble-coated bar and waterfall to a breezy sidewalk cafe and an industrial slate-tiled interior. The restaurant's showstopper is a diet-be-damned Candy Bar stocked with retro homemade sweets (think chef-tooled Almond Joys and Peppermint Patties). **SMALL & MEDIUM PLATES** (\$5 to \$15): pressed pork belly with smoked salt gelée; Laughing Bird Caribbean white shrimp seiche with grapefruit, gin, and corn nuts. **LARGE PLATES** (\$16 to \$22): seared snapper with white bean puree, fava beans, and Tuscan *salsa verde*; stout-braised beef brisket. **DESSERTS** (\$3 to \$7): Key lime pie with brown sugar meringue; red velvet cupcake with cream cheese fantasy.

Milwaukee After more than 30 years' cooking throughout Wisconsin, including a stint as executive chef at Milwaukee's **Hotel Metro**, **Michael Engel** has opened his first solo venture. Unveiled in March, **Pastiche Bistro & Wine Bar** (3001 South Kinnickinnic Avenue) seats 50 in a space bathed in a warm Mediterranean yellow with dark mahogany accents. Antique French posters and black-and-white photographs round out the design. Sons **Andrew**, **Nicholas**, and **Robert** help out in the kitchen, where Engel hones in on bistro fare with strong Mediterranean underpinnings, highlighting the seasonally changing "patchwork" (for which the restaurant is named) of menu offerings from Southern France, Spain, and Italy. **APPS** (\$4 to \$11): pork rillettes with cornichons and French bread; caramelized onion tart with Gruyère and niçoise olives. **MAINS** (\$13 to \$23): pork osso bucco with slow-cooked vegetables, mushrooms, Marsala sauce, and mashed potatoes; seared local duck breast with chorizo, oranges, and Pedro Ximénez Sherry. **DESSERTS** (\$5 to \$7): baked apple tart Tatin with vanilla ice cream and caramel sauce; savarin cake with brandied cherries.

San Francisco In May **Jeff Hollinger** and **Jonny Raglin**, owners of **Absinthe Brasserie & Bar**, opened **Comstock Saloon** at 155 Columbus Avenue. Located in an historic building dating from 1907 and named after Henry Comstock and the Comstock Lode, which brought mining fortunes to San Francisco, the 80 seater honors turn of the 20th century saloon fare in a nostalgic setting. Period details, such as the building's original 20-foot-long mahogany bar, a 1916 Pukka Walla fan, and a vintage spittoon are matched with gilded silver ball and claw bar stools and late Victorian gaslight sconces to recall its colorful past as a Barbary Coast watering hole. Executive chef **Carlo Espina** (formerly of **Camino** in Oakland) offers a refined, pared-down menu to complement made-to-order classic cocktails. **APPS** (\$3 to \$12): egg salad toast and carrot sticks; fisherman's salad of asparagus, artichokes, and salted fish. **MAINS** (\$15 to \$18): grilled quail with oyster stuffing and greens; beef shank and bone marrow potpie. **DESSERTS** (\$6): salted caramel pudding and cookie; confections plate (sassafras candy, peanut brittle, chocolate fudge). ■

The advertisement shows five McCormick For Chefs products lined up against a black background. From left to right: a jar of Smoked Paprika, a box of Old Bay Seasoning, a box of Zatarain's Jambalaya Mix, a bottle of Thai Kitchen Sweet Red Chili, and a container of Lawry's Seasoned Salt. The products are brightly lit, making them stand out against the dark background.

INSPIRATION TIMES FIVE

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