

STARCHEFS

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RISING STARS

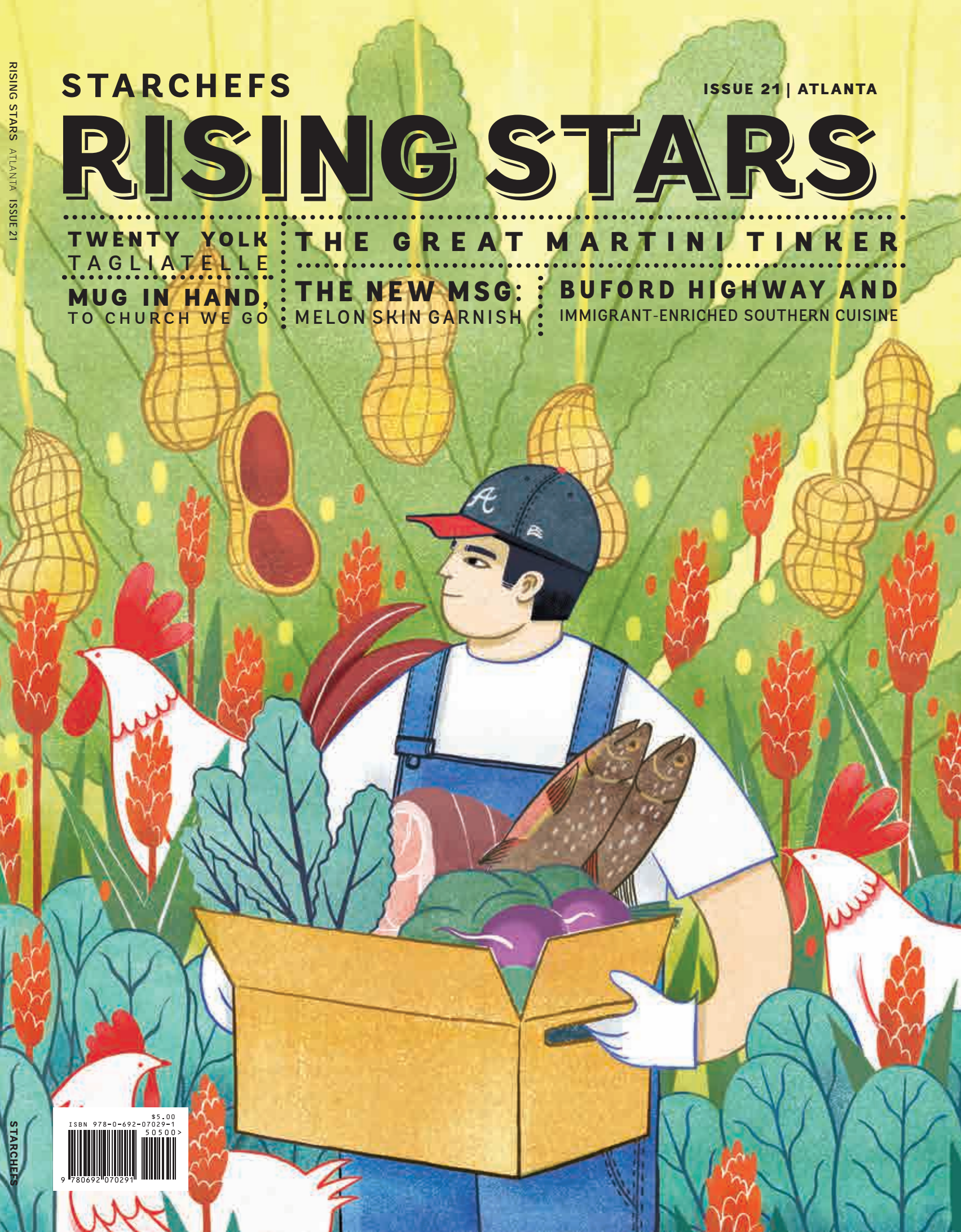
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MUG IN HAND, TO CHURCH WE GO

THE NEW MSG: MELON SKIN GARNISH

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On the cover: What's more Atlanta than a farmer at your restaurant doorstep? Perhaps this gear illustrated by Hannah Li, complete with a Braves cap and a subtle Buford Highway accent. Read about Buford Highway's influence on p. 43, and find more art from Li at hannahli.com.

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PHOTO: SHANNON STURGE

Jonathan Kallini

BACCHANALIA

South Florida native Jonathan Kallini grew up making meals for his family and poring over cookbooks. After high school, he headed north to West Lafayette, Indiana, and Purdue University, where he graduated with a degree in hospitality and tourism management, while teaching undergraduate classes in food chemistry. During the last year of his studies, the university president's chef, Carl Behnke, took Kallini under his wing and introduced him to classic technique and the inner workings of a production kitchen.

Kallini continued his education at The Culinary Institute of America and completed his externship at Anne Quatrano's Bacchanalia in Atlanta. In 2010, after graduation, Kallini returned to Atlanta, and four days later, Quatrano named him pastry chef of Floataway

Café. Despite having relatively little pastry experience, he embraced the offer wholeheartedly. Kallini worked within the group to establish a pastry program at Abattoir, and eventually took on a joint savory-sweet sous chef role at Floataway.

Feeling restless, Kallini moved to Copenhagen to work at Noma, where he relished in the spirit of experimentation and excellence. Moving back to the States, he staged at The French Laundry for a brief period before returning to Atlanta in 2014. Quatrano welcomed him back into the family with the chef de cuisine role at Bacchanalia. In the summer of 2017, Kallini took over the kitchen as executive chef, and in addition to making exquisite, rooted tasting menus, he has worked to build a mentor-based environment to develop his team and support the Atlanta food community.

@jrkallini starprovisions

Favorite kitchen tool: Rubber spatula

Favorite cookbook: *The French Laundry*

Most important kitchen rules: Cut your tape at a right angle and no singing *The Black Eyed Peas*

Favorite off-the-beaten-path restaurant: Shoya Izakaya for their plum onigiri

Place you most want to visit for culinary travel: Japan

Advice to your younger self: Forget about failure and just go for it.



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Arrow squid, gizzard shad, and flounder fin nigiri sushi

Chef Jason Liang of *Brush Sushi Isahaya* | Decatur, GA
Adapted by StarChefs
Yield: 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

Gizzard Shad:
4 gizzard shad
Salt
Rice vinegar

Nikiri Shoyu:
3 tablespoons soy sauce
1 tablespoon low-sodium soy sauce
1 tablespoon sake
½ tablespoon mirin

Arrow Squid:
4 arrow squid

Flounder Fin:
1 flounder

Sushi Rice:
36 milliliters rice vinegar
10 grams sugar
5 grams salt
2 cups cooked sushi rice, hot

To Assemble and Serve:
Wasabi
Lemon juice
Sea salt

Soy sauce and rice vinegar provided by Kikkoman USA, Inc.

METHOD

For the Gizzard Shad:
Using a deba (Japanese fish boning knife) remove the back fin of the gizzard shad and cut off the head from behind the pectoral fin. Remove the belly right up to the anal fin. Using your thumb, eviscerate the fish. Chop off the tail. Insert the tip of the deba above the spine and slice toward the tail. Place the fish spine-side down, remove the spine and belly bone. Evenly sprinkle salt onto the base of a colander and arrange gizzard shad on top, skin side down. Evenly sprinkle salt onto the fillets. Rest 25 minutes, and then rinse off the salt. In a non-reactive container, cover fillets with vinegar until the flesh turns white. Rest overnight in a colander in the refrigerator.

For the Nikiri Shoyu:
In a saucepot, combine all ingredients and bring to a boil; cook until alcohol burns off. Remove from heat and rest overnight.

For the Arrow Squid:
Using your fingers, eviscerate the arrow squid, removing and discarding the gallbladder. With your thumb, separate the ear from the body. Peel skin, membrane, and cartilage off the body. Place a knife into the squid's opening and split open lengthwise. Trim ¼ inch from the top and bottom of the body. Peel off any remaining membrane. Rinse squid with water and dry with a clean towel.

For the Flounder Fin:
Remove flounder scales with yanagiba (Japanese fish slicing knife). Use deba to cut off the head from behind the pectoral fin. From the tail, insert deba along the edge of the fin, follow the line on the skin to reach the spine, and slice between the flesh and the bone to get 4 fillets. Skin the fillet and separate the fin meat from the fillet. Set aside fillets for another purpose.

For the Sushi Rice:
In a small bowl, combine vinegar, sugar, and salt. Pour vinegar over rice, and stir to combine. Set aside at room temperature.

To Assemble and Serve:
Slice Arrow Squid into a 1-inch by 2-inch piece and score in a crosshatch pattern. Apply a tiny bit of wasabi to the squid. Form a small ball of Sushi Rice, and then form the Arrow Squid and rice into nigiri sushi. Season with a few drops of lemon juice and sea salt. Apply a tiny bit of wasabi to the Gizzard Shad. Form a small ball of Sushi Rice, and then form the Gizzard Shad and rice into nigiri sushi. Brush with a thin layer of Nikiri Shoyu. Score Flounder Fin and fold it into a 1-inch by 2-inch piece. Lightly sear with a torch, and apply tiny bit of wasabi to the fin. Form a small ball of Sushi Rice, and then form the Flounder Fin and rice into nigiri sushi. Brush with a thin layer of Nikiri Shoyu. Season with a few drops of lemon juice and sea salt. Serve sushi immediately.



Project Night Faux'spresso

By Caroline Hatchett

Every other Thursday at Gunshow, Rising Star Chef Joey Ward leads "project night," pairing cooks and bartenders in groups of two to three and unleashing them on a joint creative venture. They might have to taste foods blindfolded, conceptualize menu items with a cotton candy core, or tear down plating conventions by presenting a Sazerac as a soup, or a consommé as the classic New Orleans cocktail.

"I like providing an aha moment. More than something delicious, a dish has to have impact emotionally, wow factor," says Ward, whose ultimate goal is to teach while developing new menu items.

During one such session, Bartender Mercedes O'Brien and her partners were tasked with investigating chestnuts, and they found that when charred, ground, and brewed, they tasted a whole lot

like nutty, bitter coffee. That discovery led O'Brien down a creative path to an Espresso Martini—without any espresso.

"Espresso Martinis are outside my style. I've never had the privilege of serving them," says O'Brien, a four-year Gunshow vet who worked at former Atlanta cocktail institution H. Harper Station. "The challenge was to make the drink, but in a style that said Gunshow."

O'Brien tweaked her chestnut "faux'spresso" with the addition of candied, fried, and ground Chinese black beans, which lend a chocolate quality to the final brew (as a Brazilian coffee bean would in an espresso blend). She also uses the black beans to infuse the cocktail's vermouth element, Carpano Antica. Layering in more coffee notes, she makes a sous vide coffee liqueur with East Pole Coffee Co.'s Traffic cold brew, whole coffee beans, sugar, vanilla, and Grey Goose vodka. The finishing touches: beyond caramelized (aka burnt) rich simple syrup and an ounce of Grey Goose vodka that "fortifies and lengthens the drink—like a good pair of heels," says O'Brien. "Grey Goose also lends a beautiful, rich head to the cocktail."

For a flash of Gunshow theatre, and because O'Brien likes to give guests cocktail-adjacent nibbles, she serves black and white sesame seed tuiles on the side. She's a bartender using immersion circulators and silpats, working with chefs to better understand ingredients, and developing drinks that express the essence of a meal at Gunshow: over-the-top, unexpected, and fabulous.

Read the full recipe and techniques on p. 93.



PHOTOS: RYAN ELGINER



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Matt Weyandt Elaine Read



PHOTOS: SHERIDAN STUDIOS

XOCOLATL SMALL BATCH CHOCOLATE

Elaine Read and Matt Weyandt met in 2004 and knew they wanted to travel the world together. In time, they hunkered down, got married, and worked for mission-based causes—Read for the Peace Corps and Weyandt in Democratic politics—and started a family. Still with big dreams to accomplish, they quit their jobs and whisked their two children off to the jungles of Puerto Viejo, Costa Rica.

Their new home was in a cacao forest, and they discovered bean-to-bar dark chocolate for the very first time. The couple met local chocolate makers and instantly fell in love with the intensity and character of their bars. Returning to Atlanta, Read and Weyandt trained with friends and local

chocolate makers before debuting Xocolatl Small Batch Chocolate in farmers markets. A retail and micro-factory followed in Krog Street Market, where their chocolate production perfumes the 30,000 square foot communal space. Xocolatl bars are made from ethically and sustainably sourced beans from the Americas and East Africa.

With production generating five to six tons of chocolate each year, Xocolatl is ripe for expansion. Read and Weyandt hope to open a larger facility and a cafe space that focuses on drinking chocolates, brownies, cookies, and truffles—all while continuing to make chocolates with the same sense of adventure from which Xocolatl was born.

[@mattweyandt_xocolatlchocolate](#)

Favorite chocolate making resource: Other craft chocolate makers! The craft chocolate industry is full of collaborative entrepreneurs who are generous with their time and insight.

Favorite chocolate making tool: Hands. Making chocolate from the cacao bean is a hands-on endeavor. When we get down to the tropical farms that grow the cacao, we stick our hands right into the fermentation boxes to feel if the beans are hitting the right temperatures for a good fermentation. When we're back in our factory, we hand-sort beans, pulling out any less-than-perfect bean. There are many steps along the way that couldn't be completed without deft hands, right up to hand-wrapping each chocolate bar.

Places you've traveled for chocolate: We first discovered bean-to-bar chocolate when we were living in the rainforest of eastern Costa Rica. Since then, we've traveled to central Nicaragua for cacao, but the place closest to our hearts is Peru, where we've traveled almost annually to meet with cacao farmers. To get to these farmers, you need to take a night bus across the Andes and then a series of motorized canoes down Amazonian tributaries.

Chocolate trend you'd most like to see: Continued identification and seed banking of different cacao varieties for the sake of preservation and conservation. As far as a food trend, I'd love to see the interest in chocolate and cacao as a beverage continue to grow. Drinking chocolate and brewed cacao are not the Swiss Miss from our collective childhoods!

Newest product you're working on: An almond milk dark chocolate bar with crunch.

CACAO WITH CLASSIC CANDY TERROIR

Step aside creepy claymation California raisins (Google it if you were born after 1990), Xocolatl Small Batch Chocolate has arrived. And among other origins, they're taming the wild flavors of Peruvian cacao—floral, grassy, bitter, bright, spicy, fruity, nutty, caramel-y, molasses-y, winy, and yes, raisin-y. Through their refinement of particle size (read: mouthfeel) and adjustments to roast profile, Chocolate Makers Elaine Read and Matt Weyandt have tweaked and balanced their 70 percent Peruvian chocolate, batch by batch. Some flavors have dissipated while others have stepped forward. The result is chocolate that tastes undeniably like Raisinets(!), only better and without actual raisins. A feat of artisanship and a nostalgic delight, this chocolate reminds us that after all the talk of terroir, chocolate is still candy.

"Peru has some of the highest levels of genetic diversity. Identifying and categorizing that cacao, along with seed-banking, are the first steps toward preserving bio-diversity so that we don't unwittingly lose heirloom and ancient varieties."

- Elaine & Matt



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Melissa Davis



PHOTO: ANTOINETTE BRUND

STAPLEHOUSE

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Current favorite wine regions: I've been focusing on the islands: Corsica, Canary Islands, Sicily, and the Greek Isles

Favorite wine resource: Guildsomm.com

Most underrated varietal: Gamay! Tintilla!

Most overrated varietal: I don't believe that any varietal is overrated. Every grape serves a specific purpose, and when grown properly in the right place, there's nothing more incredible.

Most important pairing rule: Think of the whole dish, not just the protein. The protein is a good starting point, but look around the plate and see what else is going on.

Wine region you'd most like to visit: It's one of my goals to travel the length of the Loire Valley during harvest. Hopefully, it will happen soon!

On your sights off you drink: Edelzwicker, rarely

Wine lists you admire from afar: I always look to La Compagnie des Vins Surnaturels in New York City, Frasca in Boulder, and Canlis in Seattle. Pearl and Ash was one of my favorites, as well. I was sad to see it close.

Born and raised in Atlanta, Melissa Davis has worked in some facet of the beverage industry for more than a decade. She started in tea and coffee, and then took a formative job as a food runner and then bartender at Billy Allin's Cakes & Ale as she pursued a degree in literature. Writing and literature abandoned (professionally speaking, at least), Davis managed bar programs at The General Muir and Woodfire Grill before returning to Cakes & Ale as sommelier. During that time she also earned her level one wine certification through the Court of Master Sommeliers. Next up, she joined mega group Concentrics Restaurants as beverage director of One Midtown Kitchen.

In 2017, Davis took her hard-earned beverage knowledge and electric energy to direct the beverage program at Staplehouse, where she has built a list of 100-plus, off-the-beaten-path bottles and beers to pair with Chef Ryan Smith's provocative, fermentation-driven Southern cuisine. With an affinity for the Loire Valley, an extensive knowledge of French and Italian wine regions, and a zeal for expanding adventurous drinkers' horizons, Davis was named to Zagat's first-ever national "30 Under 30" list in 2017. She is an avid supporter of The Giving Kitchen, a nonprofit that helps the city's restaurant workers in times of crises.

Corned beef, Gruyère, sauerkraut, Russian dressing, house rye bread

Todd Groberg of *The General Moe* | Atlanta
Adapted by StarChefs
Yield: 18 servings

INGREDIENTS

Corned Beef
Salt
Pink curing salt #1
Sugar
Black peppercorns
Coriander seeds
Red pepper flakes
Clove
Garlic paste
Fresh bay leaves
One 12- to 14-pound beef brisket

To Assemble and Serve:

Melted butter
Rye bread, sliced
Russian dressing
Sauerkraut, warmed
Sliced Gruyère

METHOD

For the Corned Beef:

In a pot with water, combine salts, sugar, peppercorns, coriander, pepper flakes, clove, garlic, and bay leaves, bring to boil. When salts and sugar dissolve, remove from heat and chill brine. Depending on weight of brisket, brine meat 7 to 10 days. Transfer brined brisket to a pot of cold water over medium-low heat. Slowly bring to a simmer and cook brisket until fork tender, about 2 to 3 hours, skimming off scum as it rises to the surface. Drain brisket and keep warm.

To Assemble and Serve:

Heat flattop over medium-high flame. Butter one side of 2 slices of bread. Place slices buttered side down on flattop. When browned on the buttered side, transfer slices to a cutting board browned side down. Against the grain, slice 7 ounces of Corned Beef. Slather Russian dressing on both sides of bread; top 1 slice with Corned Beef and then sauerkraut. Cover with cheese, melt under broiler. Top with the other bread slice, cut sandwich in half, and serve.

Brisket provided by Meyer Natural Angus Beef



PHOTO: SHAN NON STUNGIS

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Juan Peña

AG AT THE RITZ-CARLTON, ATLANTA

Hailing from Puerto Rico, Juan Peña has always been surrounded by a passion for cuisine—from his grandmother preparing daily stews to his father grilling meats and growing vegetables for family meals. Influenced by these memories, Peña knew from an early age that a culinary career was in his future.

He studied at the Culinary Institute of Puerto Rico, and as a student, got hands on training at The Ritz-Carlton, San Juan. Moving to Fern Restaurant at the St. Regis Bahia Beach Resort, Peña was trained by Chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten himself during his time there.

After a five-year stint at Fern, Peña returned to The Ritz-Carlton family and moved to Atlanta in late 2017. He now leads the charge at the property's modern steakhouse, AG, where guests can look forward to his influence throughout the menu, as he elevates dishes to focus on new seasonal ingredients, innovative trends, and top-quality meats for which the restaurant is known.

chefjuanpena ritzcarlton

Favorite tool: A spoon is my ultimate do-all tool in the kitchen.

Tool you wish you had: I would love to work with a OCOO, which combines pressure cooking and temperature control. It cooks food at low temperatures but with extreme precision.

Favorite cookbook: *Larousse Gastronomique* by Prosper Montagné

Most important kitchen rule: I always preach consistency in the kitchen. Practice makes perfect, and that leads to consistent quality and performance.

Favorite dish you've ever made: Pan-seared foie gras, prime beef tenderloin, and honey-coffee glaze. I won the first round of Master Chef Latino in Puerto Rico with this presentation.

Where you most want to go for culinary travel: I want to explore Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, and the rest of Southeast Asia. There are so many different and fascinating ingredients that are unique to this region that I have yet to work with.

Champagne-compressed watermelon, foie gras, seabass skin, Sturia caviar, micro wasabi

Chef Juan Peña of AG at The Ritz-Carlton, Atlanta | Atlanta

Adapted by StarChef

Yield: 10 hors d'oeuvres



PHOTO: BILLY G. SMITH/STYLING

INGREDIENTS

Watermelon:
10 pieces medium diced watermelon
1 cup extra brut Champagne
1 teaspoon salt

Foie Gras Mousse:
Neutral oil
2 ounces thinly sliced shallot
6 ounces cleaned foie gras
¼ cup dry white wine
¾ cup heavy cream
¼ tablespoon salt

Crispy Black Seabass Skin:
Skin of 1 black seabass
Salt
Epelette pepper

To Assemble and Serve:
Sunset geranium leaf
Ossetra caviar
Micro wasabi

METHOD

For the Watermelon:
In a vacuum bag, combine all ingredients, compress and seal, and refrigerate 24 hours.

For the Foie Gras Mousse:
In a hot sauté pan with oil, sweat shallots until translucent, add foie gras, and cook 4 minutes. Add wine and cook 4 minutes more. Add cream and salt and cook 4 additional minutes. Transfer to a Vitamix blender and liquify. Transfer liquid to siphon and charge twice. Refrigerate.

For the Crispy Black Seabass Skin:
Heat oven to 415°F. On a sheet tray lined with wax paper, season skin with salt and pepper. Cover with wax paper and two sheet trays. Cook 20 minutes, until crisp. Cool. Break into bite-size pieces.

To Assemble and Serve:
Lay sunset geranium leaves out flat. Place 1 cube Watermelon on top. Dispense a little Foie Gras Mousse atop each cube, followed by a small dollop caviar and a piece of Crispy Black Seabass Skin. Finish with micro wasabi.

Champagne provided by Nicolas Feuillatte

Caviar provided by Sturia USA

Sunset geranium leaf provided by Fresh Origins

Spread the love:

♥ Pimento Cheese + Pinot



By Lisa Elbert
Illustrated by Beth Moeur

In Atlanta, pimento cheese, oh the spreadable delight, is as common as sweet tea and streets named Peachtree. But not all pimento cheese is created equal, as proven by Chef Nick Anderson's "pot of gold" at City Winery. He incorporates Peppadew peppers, Dijon, cumin, and Pinot Noir fluid gel (bless his heart!) in with his cheddar. The result is a spicy, herbal, update on the Southern classic, which Anderson serves with "country club" saltines that are dipped in clarified butter and toasted.

Sommelier Mani Gonzalez (who recently departed City Winery) welcomes the challenges of pairing traditional South-of-the-Mason-Dixon foods with wine. "Southern cuisine is an awesome genre to play around with wine pairings. There's so much going on on the plate," says Gonzalez. The lush, boozy Pinot Noir is made on premises at City Winery with grapes grown in Sonoma's Shokrian Vineyards, and it performs a fruit-forward, high-acid balancing act with Anderson's spicy, creamy cheddar spread. "It's a warm climate Pinot with ripe red fruits, a touch of earth, and a

bit of weight on the mid-palate," she says. "It finishes really bright and clean, just like it starts, so it's a great palate cleanser." Anderson uses the same Pinot Noir for his fluid gel, but that wasn't the impetus behind Gonzalez's pairing. "The [Pinot Noir] has this tertiary hint of dried green herbs which really brings out the flavor of the Peppadews."

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