

# Crème de Cornell

FALL 2011





# SIMEON'S

on the COMMONS

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[cornellgourmet.wordpress.com](http://cornellgourmet.wordpress.com) for  
more recipes, photos,  
restaurant reviews, culinary  
experiments, and other tasty bites.*

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# Dear food lovers,

## *Crème de Cornell*

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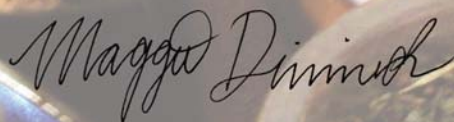
With economies in shambles, protests in the streets, Sandra Lee's Kwanzaa cakes, and the Farm Bill putting the future of America in question, there is a lot of excitement these days. As one of the few university campus gourmet publications out there, *Crème de Cornell* has to keep up with what's current. Thus, this issue explores exciting new territory for our publication with our writers diving into topics such as growing food, analyzing food, and expressing the food experience through poetry.

Marion Alberty's "Windowsill Recipes" goes beyond cooking and eating to teach us a few things about growing herbs and avocados in one's own dorm room or apartment. (I've started soaking a few avocado pits of my own now... no action yet). As I have been hoping for some time now, we now have our first piece of food poetry thanks to the fine words of writer Emma Catherine Perry. In addition, articles explore environmental and health issues behind food labels, report on the harvest dinner events on local farms, and look into the importance of heirloom varieties of seeds. Camy Dagum's extensive vegetarian entertaining guide provides a way to impress your food-loving friends with an enticing spread of dishes for the holidays. As for local dining in Ithaca, if you are ever looking for an indulgent and satisfying breakfast or lunch, then look no further than The Piggery. After thoroughly enjoying a hearty lunch at the newly-opened deli with writer Iona Machado, we were both hooked. I can't stop telling people about this place.

As a club in its 5th year of existence, the Cornell Gourmet Club is going strong. With a record number of foodies attending our creative potluck gatherings, tastings, and restaurant outings, we keep gourmet experiences flowing for our fellow student gourmands.

It's a lot of work and a lot of fun creating this magazine each semester, and I wish to especially thank our vice-president and magazine czar, Claire Cipriani. As a close friend and colleague, she has spent countless hours with me editing articles and most importantly designing the issue's beautiful layout. There would be no magazine without her, the SAFC funding, our advisor Professor Spies, or the hard work of our writers, photographers, and editors.

I invite you all to sit back and enjoy the flavors, experiences, and knowledge to be gained from this fall 2011 issue of *Crème de Cornell*, the Cornell Gourmet Club's best issue yet.



Maggie Dimmick  
Editor-in-Chief

*Crème de Cornell* is a magazine published by the Cornell Gourmet Club each semester.

Visit our blog at [www.cornellgourmet.wordpress.com](http://www.cornellgourmet.wordpress.com).

If you are interested in working on *Crème de Cornell* or wish to become a member of our club, please email [cornellgourmetclub@gmail.com](mailto:cornellgourmetclub@gmail.com) for more information.

# Windowsill

## Recipes

By MARION ALBERTY

*Growing herbs and avocados  
in even the humblest of apartments*

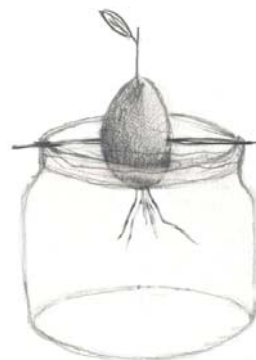
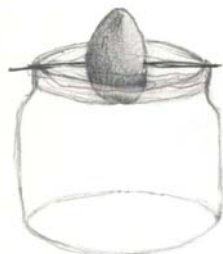
**A**DDING fresh ingredients is the best way to improve the quality of your cooking. Fresh herbs from the store can be pricey, and growing your own may seem impossible in a small crowded apartment. However, with a little knowledge, fresh pesto can be within reach. Rosemary, oregano, mint, and basil are hardy herbs that grow well indoors, and when fresh provide superior flavor and aroma compared to their dried versions. Add your fresh new basil or oregano to your favorite marinara sauce, rosemary to your roasts, and mint to falafel or a mojito. Expect to be pleased with the results!

### INGREDIENTS

small pots with holes to allow drainage  
potting soil  
seeds or young plants from a garden center  
a sunny southern facing window

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Fill pots two thirds of the way with loose potting soil.
2. Soak seeds overnight in water, then sow seeds by covering them with two to four times the seed's thickness of soil. If you purchase a young plant, transfer it to a pot by gently loosening the soil around roots and planting it in center of pot. Soil should come just below the base of the plant.
3. Keep soil moist, but not soggy while seeds sprout. If using a young plant, immediately water the herb, allowing excess water to drain off.
4. Keep soil damp for the first week.
5. After the first week, water herbs twice a week allowing excess water to drain off in order to prevent root rot.
6. Once plants begin to mature, allow 4 to 5 inches in growth before harvesting. Only choose leaves from the bottoms of stems to cut.



*With these instructions, you can be well on your way to an apartment herb-and-avocado garden of your own!*

*Now for those with some patience and a future in a warm climate, germinating avocado pits is for you. Unfortunately, not all avocado pits will sprout, so it is a good idea to start several seeds at once to ensure a resulting plant. Maturation and fruit growth may take two growing seasons, so patience is key!*

### INGREDIENTS

small pots with holes to allow drainage  
potting soil  
the pit from your store-bought avocado  
toothpicks  
a windowsill with good light

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. After making some delicious guacamole, wash leftover avocado seed in water.
2. Insert toothpicks around the center, half way up seed.
3. Suspend seed in a glass of water so that one quarter of seed is submerged under water. Throughout the process, ensure that the bottom quarter remains in water, and occasionally change the water in the container.
4. Place soaking seed in a windowsill.
5. Seed should crack within two to three weeks and a single root will appear from the base of seed three to four weeks later. Soon after roots begin to grow, seed should begin to sprout.
6. Once the stem is at least an inch tall, the seed can be planted in soil, however further growth in the glass is fine as well.
7. If planting, leave the top third of seed exposed in a 6" or larger pot with drainage holes in the bottom.
8. For the first week in the pot, soil should be kept fairly wet, but there after only water once or twice a week allowing water to drain out the bottom.
9. Keep plant at 60 to 80°F and mist leaves if the air in your home is dry.

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# Harvest Food for All

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BY CATHERINE KIM



IMAGINE a crisp early fall evening spent in a warm farm warehouse lit with Christmas lights strung across the ceiling and a jazz band playing in the loft overhead. The tables are in a comfortably compact arrangement with servers weaving between them pouring wine pairings for each of four courses. If this sounds like a fancy dining event, it is, but it's all for a great cause. This is the fifth of six fall harvest dinners at Stick and Stone Farm. These benefit galas run \$75 a person, and all proceeds go directly to the Healthy Food for All program, a partnership between local farms and the Cornell Cooperative Extension Tompkins County making fresh produce accessible to low income families.

Healthy Food for All was started by farmers in 2006 to build a local food association where all community members have access to nutritious and affordable food. The program has grown from providing 18 Community Supported Agriculture shares from three farms in 2006 to providing 106 shares from seven farms in 2011. We do not often think that our own communities could have food insecurities, so Healthy Food for

All aims to address this problem in a way that simultaneously supports local agriculture. Individual donations and harvest dinners are two sources of funding for the program.

Stick and Stone Farm hosted the October 2nd harvest dinner which featured the culinary mastery and wines of Red Newt Winery & Bistro. The rainfall that night did not manage to prevent an enjoyable evening of wining and dining. Executive Chef Brud Holland started off the meal with a potato chowder with house smoked salmon and chives served in a rustic cracked rye bread bowl. The second course was a whole wheat pumpkin ravioli with chard and roasted garlic cream. The salad course was served with bread cleverly molded into a stick and stone with local butter. A spicy mustard green beet salad tossed in a verjooz vinaigrette nested on a large parmesan crisp balanced out the course. (Verjooz is the juice from *Vinifera* grapes). Apple-stuffed pork tenderloin, collard greens, and a Red Newt Hellbender glaze comprised the main course. A dessert trio of mini cheesecake, chocolate pate, and pear tartlet made a pleasant finish to the meal. Winemaker David Whiting paired a Red



# Seeds for Thought

BY CAMY DAGUM



“HEIRLOOM VARIETY.” Its a term heard more and more lately; but what does it actually mean? “Antique” apples at the farmers market may be surprising at first. Are these apples seriously from the mid-19th century? Well, the seeds are at least, and it is this fact that makes these apples’ characteristics all the more unique and delicious.

A major problem with our contemporary agriculture system is the prevalence of monocultures. It is much easier to streamline the agribusiness if all of the corn, tomatoes, or lettuce is of the same variety. They ripen at the same time, can be picked at the same height, and can all receive the same exact treatment. Unfortunately, this begets a multitude of negative consequences such as depletion of the soil, over-application of pesticides, and the potential for one disease to be able to wipe out millions of acres of food. It wasn’t always this way, and the recent growth in cultivation of heirloom varieties is a response hearkening back to the agricultural practices of our forefathers.

Before the extreme corporatizing of food production, farmers planted dozens of varieties, if not more, of the plant they were growing. This was a safeguard against pests, for if a bug enjoyed munching on say, Cherokee purple tomatoes, it may leave all the other strains untouched. More than that, it preserved the incredible diversity of cultivars available in this fertile land. We don’t really think about fruits and vegetables going “extinct,” but the reality is sobering, to say the least. As recently as 1900, there were about 8000 named varieties of apples in the United States. The largest organization dedicated to preserving these plants today, the Seed Savers Exchange, has only found about 700 current varieties.

We may never get those older strains back, but we can prevent the number of varieties from depleting further. If you are thinking of planting a garden this spring, look to cultivating at least one heirloom variety—each additional heirloom that flowers is a preservation of our rich horticultural history. Spring for the heirloom variety next time you’re at the grocery store. It encourages commercial growers to devote more of their land to these archival seeds. America is a land blessed with fertile fields and rife with thousands of species of edible pants. Let’s keep her that way!

Newt Cellar wine with every course including Red Newt’s well known “Circle” Riesling.

This particular dinner was also in honor of Debra Whiting, Executive Chef and Co-owner of Red Newt Cellars Winery & Bistro. Chef Whiting was tragically killed in a car accident this summer in the midst of planning for this Harvest Dinner. In addition to dedicating the dinner in her memory, the Debra Whiting Foundation was also established to carry on her vision and commitment to wine, food, farms, families, and community.

The entire meal was made possible through generous donations from the farmers, chefs, and wineries in addition to the staff and volunteers who plan and work at the event. Harvest dinners run from around June to November every year and are a fun and delicious way to support the cause. Every four tickets sold allows one family access to a season of fresh local produce. What could be better? Great food, fantastic farms, and eating for a cause.



# Sockeye

BY EMMA CATHERINE PERRY

They arrive under the black eye of the frigid bay,  
first fish, miraculous and multiplying.

First fish bring with them scores of them  
to the cannery mouths, their lives lived  
in open sea until this rush, this spawning season.

The last time they were here,  
they were silvery smolts, skinny  
and glass-eyed, barely hook-nosed, uncatchable.

Their bodies, sleek and silver-bellied in the North Pacific,  
sparked small in an infinite dark. Again, the shelf  
of Bristol Bay rises to meet them.

They churn, hectic with closeness, boil bay water  
with ecstatic flipping. They tumult white caps  
on the frigid bay— seek delta or stream.

The water smells familiar, visceral, fresh. They nose up  
shallowing rivers, bodies warming, suddenly rosy.  
The cannery flips the furnace switch.

His lumped back surges red and black upstream.  
His belly shines greenly, his tail fin trails opaque  
excretions, desire. He hunches toward you

under the clear, rippling skin of the stream. Darling,  
your body is drawn in one looping stroke. You are the fish  
for fishermen: slope-backed, perfect roe-nesting tail.

Every scale on your rainbow body glistens a gift,  
every link in your pearl-strand spine. His body  
and your body will feed five thousand men

and possibly also women. Possibly children.  
Your heart-meat swelts hot-orange. The cannery  
at the mouth of the stream hums on the tidal flat.

He waits, eyes rolling in his fine-boned face.  
He wriggles against the current, stays in place,  
dorsal fins razored erect.

Imagine being laid upon with hands miraculous,  
imagine becoming suddenly more, imagine a multitude.  
Imagine the black eye of the frigid bay calmed.

Consummation will consume you. The cannery looms  
on the delta like a temple, coffers empty. The tax-takers lean  
over the right-hand side of their boats. Darling,

tilt back your head, reveal straight teeth, hard and white.  
Your tongue muscles forward and yields, delighted.  
Let us fish for coins in your beautiful mouth.



# Friendships are a Piece of Cake

BY PEARL SOMBOONSONG

## Chocolate Mud Cupcakes frosted with Raspberry Butter Cream

REMEMBERING is like a child promenading through a golden honey-crisp apple orchard. The memory is the apple she picks, the single item that she grasps in a field of many. Sweet, crunchy, and spewing juice all over, just like the vivid memory that it holds within. A scene with a familiar sound, then a smell that captures a fresh moment. The memory held in the apple holds onto the best moments, never to be lost... until hands become so sticky they must be rinsed off.

The apple I pick starts as a photograph. I am six years old, and my back is propped straight up against a high chair throne. A replica of Jasmine's gold and turquoise tiara adorning my forehead clashes with the Barbie sweatshirt hanging loosely from my shoulders. To my left is my friend Rachel, a tomboyish rascal

sporting wild hair and grass stains on her jeans. She is pulling my hand, convincing me to take off the pink and come play outside. And I do just that.

Rachel is curious about my princess desires to attend a midnight ball, and I am intrigued by her ingenious plans of escaping to far off places, questing through undiscovered backyards. Both feeding off of the excitement that radiates from our faces when we venture on newly crafted escapades. Hot pink plastics and grubby dirt stains embody the duality of our childhood. We spend time shifting roles in our divided world of fanciful tea parties and daily earth-driven adventures. We grow through each other, seeking to love what the other loves.

*This is one of my mother's recipes that embodied the two of us friends. The melted chocolate core is just as wild and messy as my friend, Rachel, which is topped off with my sweet princess pink icing that I lived by. Goods friends can always be described by a cupcake. A friendship is simply the perfect combination between cake and icing. Plus it is a treat we'll always agree on.*

## RACHEL'S CHOCOLATE MUD CUPCAKES

(MAKES 12)

**3 ounces bittersweet chocolate, finely chopped**  
**1/3 cup cocoa powder**  
**3/4 cup hot, strong-brewed coffee**  
**3/4 cup bread flour**  
**3/4 cup granulated sugar**  
**1/2 teaspoon table salt**  
**1/2 teaspoon baking soda**  
**6 tablespoons vegetable oil**  
**2 large eggs**  
**2 teaspoons white vinegar**  
**1 teaspoon vanilla extract**

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F and line cupcake tray with liners.
2. Place chocolate and cocoa in a medium bowl and pour hot coffee over the mixture. Mix until smooth and leave mixture to cool in the refrigerator for approximately 25 minutes.
3. Mix flour, sugar, salt, and baking soda together in a bowl and set this dry flour mixture aside.
4. Mix oil, eggs, vinegar, and vanilla into the cooled chocolate mixture. Add dry flour mixture and mix until batter is smooth. Pour batter into cupcake pan so that each cupcake liner is 3/4 filled. Place 1 teaspoon of ganache filling on top of the center of each cupcake.
5. Bake for approximately 18 minutes or until cupcakes are set and firm to the touch. Allow to cool completely before frosting.

## WILD & MESSY CHOCOLATE GANACHE FILLING

(MAKES 1 1/2 CUPS)

**3/4 cup heavy cream**  
**1 tablespoon butter**  
**1 tablespoon granulated sugar**  
**1 1/2 cups semisweet chocolate chips**

1. Bring heavy cream, butter, and sugar to a boil and stir until sugar is dissolved.
2. Place semisweet chocolate chips in a bowl and pour the cream mixture over chocolate chips. Leave for 5 minutes.
3. Stir until smooth and let stand for 20 minutes (or longer) until the filling reaches the desired thick ganache consistency. The filling will thicken the longer it is left out to cool.

## MY SWEET PINK RASPBERRY BUTTER CREAM

**1/2 cup butter, softened**  
**1/2 cup fresh raspberries, patted dry**  
**1 teaspoon vanilla extract**  
**1/8 teaspoon salt**  
**1 (16-oz.) package powdered sugar**

1. Beat butter, raspberries, vanilla, and salt with an electric mixer at medium speed until smooth and creamy.
2. Gradually add the powdered sugar to butter mixture, beating at a low speed until well blended.
3. Frost the cooled cupcakes and enjoy!

# Deliberate Before You Dine

*navigating the world of local, organic, and beyond*

BY ARIELLE RAY

WHEN STEPPING INTO a supermarket, we are bombarded with packages of food bearing labels that try to help us decide which product to buy. Many of us fall back on the reliable brands that we know and like, but when it comes to meat and produce, it's a whole different ballgame. Many words are thrown around these days such as *organic*, *local*, *free range* and *grass-fed*, but what do they actually mean? How are the terms regulated? Don't we all want cows to live pleasant lives grazing in lush green fields before they land on our plates? And of course we all want vegetables that aren't coated in pesticides. So, how can we decide which labels are important and which are merely advertising ploys?

## Organic Produce

*Organic* food is defined by the USDA as food that is grown in an "ecological production management system that promotes and enhances biodiversity, biological cycles, and soil biological activity. It is based on minimal use of off-farm inputs and on management practices that restore, maintain, and enhance ecological harmony." It goes on to state that "organic agriculture practices cannot ensure that products are completely free of residues; however, methods are used to minimize pollution from air, soil and water." Not only does the organic label not guarantee that produce is completely free of chemical residues; it has very little, if anything, to do with the health of the consumer. Although there have been several studies on this subject, they are few and far between, and they generally do not necessarily present positive results.

When I asked Joe Zerby, a local organic farmer at the Ithaca Farmers Market, about the health benefits of organic produce, he stressed the importance of soil fertility. He



highlighted the value of trace minerals, pointing out that the thin crust of soil in which they are found is vital to our health. "People tend to think it's about marketing. Processed food is processed food, so organic processed food isn't necessarily healthier, except that the ingredients that go into it come from a healthier way of farming, soil building."

If it's so much better for the environment, why doesn't everyone sell and buy organic produce? Comparing prices of conventional and organic produce, it is obvious that buying exclusively organic produce can take quite a bite out of your budget. Trever Sherman, another local organic farmer, spoke to me about the high cost of buying compost or manure to substitute for fertilizer. He also cited an increased need for labor as a result of a more intensive weeding process. In addition, organically grown produce yields less per acre than conventional produce. The high cost of producing organic produce on a given amount of land inevitably bumps up the cost for the consumer.

## Local Produce

There are several advantages to buying *local*. Which pesticides or fertilizers being used in the growing process of imported produce is unknown, but when buying produce from a local farmer, you can ask them personally how they grow and treat their produce. We can thus decide which farmer to buy from based on their

production methods. Buying local produce is also a great way to boost the local economy and support small farmers in your area. Most people overlook the negative environmental effect of transporting food from different parts of the U.S. or other countries. Carbon emissions from trucks detract from the positive environmental aspects of organic farming and arguably negates the organic advantage altogether. Of course, there is still the problem of cost for consumers. Local organic produce is expensive because small organic farms are expensive to run and are more limited by seasonality. Living in an area with a farmers market nearby is not a reality for most Americans, especially for those who live in urban areas.

Choosing your produce comes down to balance and flexibility: if you have the budget for organic produce, try and buy it from a local farmer. If local organic produce isn't something you can afford on a regular basis, weigh the pros and cons before you reach for the imported organic produce offered in your supermarket; it may not be worth the extra dollars.

## Organic Meat

According to the USDA, "*organic meat*, poultry, eggs, and dairy products come from animals that are given no antibiotics or growth hormones." In order to be labeled *organic*, livestock must consume 100% organic feed and must have access to the outdoors. These rules and regulations,

like those regarding organic produce, are theoretically better for the environment and the health of the animals, but also present the same challenges as organic produce: a higher cost, and a negative environmental impact if the meat is not from a local farm.

## Grass-Fed Meat

According to Michael Thonney, a professor in the Animal Science Department of Cornell University, *grass-fed meat* is generally considered healthier for the consumer than meat from animals that are fed concentrates (a mixture of corn, barley, and other ingredients). Grass-fed meat contains more CLAs (conjugated linoleic acid), which supposedly can lower cholesterol. There is also a higher level of Omega 3 fatty acids, which reduce

inflammation and may help lower the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, and arthritis.

## Free Range Meat

Although the labels of *free range* or *free roaming* sound appealing, the only USDA requirement to put this label on meat is that producers must demonstrate to the Agency that the poultry or livestock has been allowed access "to the outside." There are no specifications as to the length or nature of this access to the outdoors. The only way to know for sure what kind of treatment the animals receive prior to slaughter is to actually talk to a local farmer about their methods of feeding and treatment.

Ultimately, it comes down to personal judgment, budget, and convenience. If

your priority is health, *grass-fed* meat may be the right answer for you; alternatively, if the environment is also high on your agenda, buying grass-fed meat from the supermarket is probably not the best option. If your budget doesn't allow for an exclusively *local organic* diet, just try to buy *local* whenever you're able to. Most importantly, know what you're buying. Understand the meaning behind the labels, and realize that just because chicken is labeled *free range* doesn't necessarily mean that it was raised in a lush green pasture. Likewise, just because produce is labeled *organic* doesn't necessarily mean that it's better for your health or the environment. Use this knowledge to purchase food that you feel good about buying. Your body, your community, and your planet will thank you.

# THE NEXT BIG THING?

Grant Achatz already reached the top of the Culinary world.

BY TIM REIHER

Now he's trying to turn it upside down.

WALKING INTO NEXT RESTAURANT in Chicago is like entering a time machine. On one visit, you might be whisked away to the streets of Paris in 1906. On another night, you return to your childhood with a wave of warm nostalgia. There's no magic here though, except for that in the mind of Next's creator, Grant Achatz. Although only 37 years old, Achatz has already faced the highest highs and lowest lows of his profession. As a chef he has won widespread acclaim; his flagship restaurant Alinea was named the best in North America by S. Pellegrino, and has kept its top rating of three Michelin stars since the travel guide debuted in Chicago.

This meteoric rise is only made more impressive by Achatz's recovery from tongue cancer in 2007. Upon diagnosis, he faced an impending loss of his sense of taste and an end to his culinary career. However, he made a miraculous full physical recovery. Aggressive chemotherapy saved Achatz's life, while his unshakable will saved his ability to cook. The grueling months of recovery, in which Achatz essentially taught himself to taste again while weakened by radiation, only intensified his ambitions. Suddenly harshly aware of his own mortality, Achatz decided there was no longer time to let his creative ambition simmer. As a part of this realization, the idea for Next Restaurant was born.

At a glance, Next might look like any number of upscale restaurants. The space is elegant, yet modern, and the food is as meticulously detailed in its presentation as in its preparation. Yet, you can come back three months later and be confused. Is this the right place? The food is delicious, sure, but you would swear that it was a Thai restaurant last time; why are these dishes Spanish? There's no need to worry; you've just witnessed the culinary wizardry of Chef Achatz. Nearly all restaurants change

their menus to stay current or to offer seasonal dishes with peak produce. Yet Next is doing something different; Achatz is opening one new show production after another for his diners.

Achatz is bucking conventional wisdom in a bold way. Instead of four slight menu upgrades per calendar cycle, the entire spread at Next changes every three months to reflect some combination of time, place, and theme. It has already been French, which required period cooking equipment from the turn of the 20th century and featured complex preparations not seen since then. For a childhood theme, the meal begins with a haute cuisine interpretation of the humble peanut butter and jelly sandwich served whimsically in a lunchbox. A stream of food memories follows, still recognizable even as they are reimagined by arguably America's most cutting-edge chef. There has been speculation that possible future concepts include the Orient Express in its heyday, Spain as it began its rise to the top of the culinary world, and Tokyo circa 2044. Each will, of course, need its own set of kitchen tools, cooking expertise, and plate design.

The payment system at Next shows that Achatz is fully aware of the theatrical nature of his brainchild. Reservations can't be made here. Instead, before each season, the restaurant's website releases a set number of tickets, each allowing its holder "admission" to dine at a certain night and time. The tickets sell out quickly and are nonreturnable, but buyers have found they can resell them for much higher than the original purchase price of about one hundred dollars, up to three thousand in extreme cases. The demand for Grant Achatz's latest grand scheme is clearly as great as the difficulty involved in pulling it off. The most exciting part of it all might be that only he knows where it will end up next.

# Some Pig

encountering indulgent eats at The Piggery

By IONA MACHADO

FOR THIS FARMERS-MARKET-STAND-TURNED-DELI, it is a surprise to step into a daffodil yellow, oak-floored establishment packed with customers along Route 13 in Ithaca. A colorfully chalked menu sign with mouth-watering menu options hangs above the counter. To the left, a black wall adorned with names of local farms tells where they sourced their meats, dairy, and produce. The neighboring hand-drawn map of a pig shows me exactly what a “hock” and a “butt” are (it’s not even close to the butt). Little pig ornaments pepper the counter top, from furry stuffed piglets to a piggy-handled whisk.

The bloody flanks I was expecting to find hanging from the ceiling are actually stored in a glass meat case in the back of the room. Amongst your typical charcuterie of sausages, beef patties, and shoulders are T-burg dogs, Boston butts, pâtés, lards, and even whole chickens. The Piggery will only offer what local farms can offer, so the selection of products available changes almost daily. Like the name of the restaurant, the dishes The Piggery have to offer are exactly what they say they are without much embellishment at all, but they defy expectations.

My friend and I quickly nab a table under the orange-tiled ceiling, armed with our coffee, hot cider, breakfast burrito, and “The Three Little Pigs” (a taco, hot dog, and slider). I start with the hot dog and go nuts with the condiments: ketchup with far more texture interest than the creepy smoothness of Heinz, Dijon mustard, sweet relish, and some amazing picked red onions with the perfect amount of vinegar. Yet, I quickly realize that there is absolutely no need to layer all of this stuff on; there is no artificial hot-doggy meatiness to cover up at all. On the contrary, if you can imagine what a *real* hot dog would taste like made from real quality pork, then this is it.

Next, the pulled pork slider. The pulled pork is moist and flavorful, spiced just enough to let the pork speak for itself. It is topped with cabbage slaw, which adds a beautiful purple color, crunch, and freshness to contrast the sumptuous meat. The mini-bun, with a nice egg shine on top, is simply the perfect carrier for these flavors and textures.

To complete “The Three Little Pigs” trilogy, there is the carnitas taco. Filled with pork, cabbage, carrots, and a delightfully tangy and zingy green sauce, this taco is the third standout in this meal. The simple yet delicious corn tortilla holds up perfectly beneath the mound of ingredients it carries. Think of your imaginary (or real) Mexican grandmother kneading together corn flour straight from the farm and water. Think of the heat from the burner as she toasts them, the authenticity of the whole process. That’s what this tasted like. And the best part? You can smell them on the pan as you wait in line.

Any breakfast burrito sold in the Ithaca area has some tough competition to live up to with famous competitors



such Solaz at the Farmer’s Market and Mexeo in Collegetown. The Piggery’s version is packed full to the brim with their signature pulled pork, local black beans, and egg. As someone who likes a lot of stuff in my burrito like veggies, salsa, and even a nice helping of guacamole, this burrito was lacking in the area of salsa, but nevertheless it is quite an enjoyable burrito to wake up to in the morning.

I would like to argue that The Piggery is serving up some of the best cider in the world. Unlike that dark brown whipped cream-covered stuff popular these days, Indian Creek Farm’s cider is a light golden colored drink that tastes exactly like fresh apples. Refreshing, tart, and spiced ever so slightly, this is probably the best cider of my life.

The cooks at The Piggery prove their ability to let the best of ingredients just be themselves, pairing high quality meats cooked to perfection with simple yet creative complements. As a college student too cheap to buy her own meat and too afraid to over or underdo it, The Piggery is the perfect niche for my dose of delicious free-range protein. No frills, no fuss, reasonable prices, and environmentally-friendly without being pretentious, The Piggery is an indulgent change of pace.

# Entertaining

BY CAMY DAGUM

*The perfect holiday menu to create an enjoyable meal loved by vegetarians and non-vegetarian guests alike...*

## Vegetarians

### Beet Latkes with Yoghurt Dill Sauce

#### INGREDIENTS

##### For Yoghurt-Dill Sauce

6 ounces plain nonfat Greek yogurt  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill  
2 tablespoons lemon juice  
1 small clove garlic, chopped  
½ teaspoon salt  
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

##### For Beet Latkes

3 medium beets, trimmed and scrubbed  
2 medium carrots  
2 large cloves garlic, minced  
½ teaspoon salt  
1 large egg plus 2 large egg whites, beaten

#### PREPARATION

1. Whisk together yogurt, dill, lemon juice, garlic, salt, and pepper in small bowl. Refrigerate until ready to use, up to three days.
2. Preheat oven to 250°. Coat baking sheet with cooking spray and set aside. Shred beets and carrots in food processor fitted with grating blade, or grate with a box grater. Place beet-carrot mixture in a large bowl, and toss with garlic and salt. Add egg and egg whites and mix well.
3. Lightly spray large nonstick skillet with cooking spray and heat over medium-high heat. Drop ¼ cup beet mixture into skillet and flatten slightly to form 3-inch diameter pancakes. Repeat, forming 3 other pancakes in pan. Cook pancakes, flipping when side are golden brown. Respray pan and repeat process with remaining batter, keeping prepared pancakes warm in oven. Drizzle with Yoghurt-Dill Sauce, and serve immediately.

### Apple Slaw

#### INGREDIENTS

½ cup olive oil  
2 heaping teaspoons Dijon or other good-quality mustard  
2 tablespoon lemon juice  
2 tablespoon honey  
4 cups cored and shredded red cabbage (about 16 ounces)  
4 medium Granny Smith or other tart apples, cored and grated  
16 radishes, chopped  
2 red onions, chopped or grated  
sea salt & freshly ground black pepper  
1 cup chopped fresh parsley

#### PREPARATION

1. Put oil, mustard, lemon juice, and honey in a large bowl and whisk until well combined.
2. Add cabbage, apples, radishes, and onion and toss until thoroughly combined. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and refrigerate until ready to serve. (It's best to let the slaw rest for an hour or so to allow the flavors to mellow. Drain the slaw before continuing.)
3. Just before serving, toss with parsley. Adjust seasoning to taste.

# Coconut Butternut Squash Soup

## INGREDIENTS

1 large butternut squash (about 1 ½ lbs.)  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
1 medium apple, any variety, peeled and diced  
2 cups vegetable broth  
2 teaspoons good-quality curry powder  
2 teaspoons grated fresh ginger, or more to taste  
pinch of ground nutmeg or allspice  
1 14-ounce can light coconut milk  
sea salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

### FOR GARNISH:

2 medium red onions, quartered and thinly sliced  
1 good-size bunch kale (about 10 to 12 ounces)

## PREPARATION

1. Preheat oven to 375°. Cut squash in half and place halves cut side up in a foil-lined, shallow baking dish. Cover tightly with more foil. Bake for 30 to 50 minutes, until you can easily pierce the flesh with a knife. Scoop out flesh and set aside.
2. Heat half of the oil in a soup pot. Add onion and sauté over medium-low heat until golden, about 8 to 10 minutes.
3. Add apple, squash, broth, and spices. Bring to a steady simmer, then cover and simmer gently until apples are tender, about 10 minutes.
4. Transfer solids to a food processor with a slotted spoon and process until smoothly pureed, then transfer back to soup pot. Or better yet, simply insert an immersion blender into the pot and process until smoothly pureed.
5. Stir in coconut milk, and return the soup to a gentle simmer. Cook over low heat for 5 to 10 minutes until well heated through. Season with salt and pepper. If time allows, let the soup stand off the heat for an hour or two, then heat through as needed before serving.
6. Just before serving, heat remaining oil in a large skillet. Add red onions and sauté over low heat until onions are golden and soft.
7. Meanwhile, strip kale leaves off their stems and cut into thin shreds. Stir together with the onions in the skillet, adding just enough water to moisten the surface. Cover and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until kale is bright green and just tender, about 5 minutes.
8. To serve, ladle soup into each bowl, then place a small mound of kale and onion mixture in the center.



## Harvest Stuffed Portobello Mushrooms

## INGREDIENTS

1 large yellow onion, finely diced  
1 ⅓ cup cashews  
2 tablespoons plus 2 tsp olive oil, plus extra for brushing  
6 cloves garlic, minced  
1 ⅓ cup cooked brown rice (or grain of choice)  
1 ½ cans of lentils, drained and rinsed  
⅓ cup breadcrumbs  
⅔ cup vegetable broth  
1 ½ teaspoon dried basil  
1 ½ tablespoon fresh thyme leaves plus extra for garnish  
8 portobello mushrooms, stems and gills removed  
1 tomato, sliced in 8 thin rounds  
sea salt & freshly ground black pepper

## PREPARATION

1. Preheat oven to 350°. In large skillet, sauté onions and cashews with olive oil over medium high heat. Season with salt and pepper to taste, and sauté until onions are soft and lightly browned. Add garlic and let cook a few more minutes.
2. In a large bowl combine onion mixture, brown rice, lentils, breadcrumbs, vegetable broth, basil, and thyme. Mix together and season to taste with salt and pepper. (The stuffing can be made up to three days in advance and stored covered in the refrigerator.)
3. Brush both sides of mushroom caps with olive oil and place top-side-down on oiled sheet pan. Stuff mushrooms with ½ cup lentil cashew stuffing, then press one tomato slice on top of stuffing. (The mushrooms can be stuffed and assembled on a baking tray the day before you plan to bake and serve them.)
4. Bake for about 30 minutes, or until stuffing is browned and mushrooms begin to release juices. Garnish with extra fresh thyme leaves.



# Zucchini Boats with Ricotta Basil Mousse

## INGREDIENTS

6 small zucchini (about 1 ½ lbs.)  
cooking spray  
1 cup loosely packed fresh basil leaves, finely chopped  
1 cup (8 oz.) ricotta cheese  
½ cup loosely packed fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves, finely chopped  
¼ cup (1 oz.) grated fresh Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese  
2 tablespoons hot water  
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice  
¼ teaspoon each sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

## PREPARATION

1. Preheat oven to 450°. Cut each zucchini in half lengthwise. Scoop out pulp, leaving a ¼-inch-thick shell. Reserve pulp for another use. Arrange zucchini shells in a single layer in a 13x9 inch baking dish coated with cooking spray.
2. Combine basil and next 7 ingredients, stirring well with a whisk. Divide mixture evenly among shells, pressing gently. Bake at 450° for 20 minutes or until zucchini is tender. Garnish with parsley.

## RESTAURANT REVIEW: *MIA*

BY NATASHA BUNZL AND ADRIANA WONG

Mia, Ithaca's newest pan-Asian restaurant is run by a local restaurant entrepreneur and his Cornell professor wife. A swanky and sophisticated joint, Mia specializes in fusion South East Asian cuisine. Lex Chutintaranond and Flaminia Cervesi orchestrate a dining experience that feels indulgent but unpretentious. Located midway through the Commons, the restaurant follows in the footsteps of Thai Cuisine (named the best Thai restaurant in New York, including the city) Madeline's, Just a Taste, and ZaZa's, also started by the power couple. Chutintaranond can be found waltzing through Mia on a Friday or Saturday night, assuring that each customer's dining experience causes them to leave smiling. On a recent Friday night, we walked in without a reservation at 7:30, and even for a party of two, only seats at the bar were available.

The menu is a clever cross between small plates and larger portions. Before we had even decided on food, our bartender brought out a small shot-size bowl of piping hot sake-miso soup. Concentrated in flavor, its small size was the perfect amount to excite the senses and begin the meal. We proceeded to make our wine selection for the night with the bartender as our guide who patiently led us down the wine list. We ultimately chose an Argentinean Malbec which would accompany our spread of Asian cuisine well.

The day was gusty and cold, so we stayed away from the extensive and appealing raw bar and instead decided to start with three hot

# Pull-Apart Wheat Germ and Honey Dinner Rolls

## INGREDIENTS

1 ¼-oz. package active dry yeast  
2 ½ cups bread flour, plus more for rolling  
¼ cup toasted wheat germ  
¾ teaspoons salt  
3 tablespoons butter, softened, plus more for greasing bowl and brushing dough  
3 tablespoons honey or ¼ cup packed brown sugar

## PREPARATION

1. Stir yeast into ¼ cup warm (105°–115°F) water until dissolved. Let stand for 10 minutes. Combine flour, wheat germ, and salt in bowl of food processor or stand mixer. (Reserve 1/3 cup flour if kneading by hand.)
2. Stir butter and honey into ¾ cup warm water. Stir yeast and butter mixture into flour mixture. (If using food processor, add liquids through feed tube with processor running. If using stand mixer with dough hook, add liquids in steady stream with mixer on low speed.) Knead dough.
3. Place dough in buttered bowl and cover. Let rise in warm place for 45 minutes to 1 hour, or until doubled in volume.
4. Deflate dough and divide into quarters, then divide each quarter into 4 pieces. Roll dough into balls on floured surface. Place dough balls in 4 rows in a greased 9-inch baking pan.
5. Cover dough. Let rise for 45 minutes, or until doubled in size. Meanwhile, preheat oven to 375°F. Brush dough with melted butter and bake 15 to 20 minutes, or until tops of rolls are golden and edges are browned. Serve warm and enjoy.

appetizers. The crispy duck rolls with lettuce, mint, and Thai basil were essentially ordinary spring rolls, but the meat was incredibly tender, and the flavor was intense. Mia's barbecue pork buns came highly recommended by the bartender; "equal to if not better than the quality of Momofuku pork buns" was his claim. Now as a passionate Momofuku fan, this surely was a claim we had to test. Sure enough, the claim was spot on. The pork belly was flavorful and satisfying as a true pork lover would want, yet was balanced by vinegary daikon and a sweet hoisin sauce to cut the fat. This appetizer is a must for any diner. The pan-seared tandoori quail with cilantro mint raita was a delicious execution of strong flavors imparted unto a delicate bird.

Equally delightful, was our main course: prawns in roasted chili sauce. Named "Prig Pow Goong," this is a brilliantly refined take on a traditional Thai dish, which incorporates a generous amount of Thai basil. Chitintaranond intensely concentrates the flavors of his sauce so that each bite of the perfectly textured prawns is rich in sweetness and spiciness. The subtle flavors of peanut in the reduction, along with the slender slices of cooked lemons were lively additions to the rounded dish. Although the dessert menu offers dangerous temptations such as a bittersweet chocolate bomb and pistachio and cranberry tart, we were quite satisfied with our meal and were far too full to order anything else. After such an impressive dining experience, we are sure to return for more.



\$ 4.00