

Dining Notes

By CELESTE MCCALL

Chesapeake Room Shines

We finally dined at the Chesapeake Room, Barracks Row's newest dining addition. We're happy to report that the food matches the classy decor. Walls are richly paneled, punctuated with nautically-themed paintings. But the first thing we noticed was the huge aquarium above the beautifully, burnished bar. Everything here – from sea and land – is local; fish comes from the Bay. I decided to try the bison tartare. Paired with roasted beets, the free-range American buffalo was delicious, with an almost silken texture. Another unusual appetizer was a plate of alderwood-smoked oysters. The bivalves had a wonderful smoky flavor, enhanced with pickled onions and herb mustard. Peter began with a pair of "petite" crabcakes, flavorful with virtually no breading. His entree was roasted rockfish, escorted by dainty asparagus spears and new potatoes. We did not make it to dessert. Next time. Open daily for lunch and dinner, 501 Eighth St. SE. Call 202-543-1445 or visit www.thechesapeake.com.

Coming Soon

The owners of Matchbox and Ted's Bulletin plan to unveil DC3, an upscale gourmet hot dog and sandwich shop in the old Firehouse Café, 423 Eighth St. SE. The (mainly) carryout should arrive in late summer or fall.

Exotic on H

We recently visited Ethiopic, 401 H Street NE in the Atlas District. Open since spring, the exotic eatery is the creation of Meseret Bekele and husband Samuel Ergete. Ensnared in a former drug rehab center, the modern interior is softened by basket tables and columns emblazoned with the Amharic alphabet.

Spicy dishes are served on in-



The chef and staff of the Chesapeake Room. Photo by Andrew Lightman.

jera—a spongy fermented pancake—which soaks up the flavors and is used to scoop up wat (stew). Since our group of four included a vegetarian, we ordered the veggie sampler: pureed lentils, collard greens, potatoes and carrots. When we weren't raiding Marilyn's plate, we carnivores devoured doro key wat (chicken leg and hard boiled egg in berbere sauce); awaze tibs (diced beef in berbere), and yebeg aletcha wat (lamb in a milder sauce).

We suspect Ethiopic's kitchen tames the spicing somewhat, but it was delicious nonetheless. Our server kept us supplied with additional injera, rolled up like napkins.

Cooling our palates was Ethiopian beer; they also serve wine, with a full bar in the works. Portions are generous, and the cuisine is rather filling, so we had no room for dessert. Ethiopic is open Tuesday-Thursday from 5 to 10 p.m.; Friday-Saturday from noon to 10 p.m. Closed Monday. Call 202-675-2066 or visit the snazzy website: www.ethiopicrestaurant.com.

We The Pizza

Up the "Avenue" at 305 Pennsylvania Ave. SE, We the Pizza is about to debut in the former Zack's Taverna space, next door to parent restaurant Good Stuff Eatery. Presiding over the kitchen are chefs/co-owners Spike Mendelsohn and Michael Colleti.

Sweet Green

Sweet Green—the sustainable salad/yogurt bar with several area locations—has opened at 221 Pennsylvania Ave. SE. You'd never guess it used to house Trover Books. Brick lined walls, and blond wood furnishings set the "green" theme. Plastic utensils are all recycled; carryout is packed in paper bags. Even the menu paper is lined with wildflower seeds, which should sprout when planted. We'll try it and give a report. Besides ready-made salads, customers may "make their own" for \$6. Choose greens (mesclun, baby spinach, romaine, etc.), then pile on roasted peppers, corn, chick peas, edamame, sprouts. Meats and cheeses are \$1 each. Organic frozen yogurt is topped with fruit and crunchies.

There's Honest Tea and a refreshing watermelon lemonade. Open daily from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Call 202-547-9338 or www.sweetgreen.com, twitter.com/sweetgreen or facebook.com/sweetgreen.

Hill's Home Soda

Escaping from the heat, I stopped in Hill's Kitchen, 713 D St. SE, to check out seltzer makers. Proprietor Leah Daniels was happy to offer a demo (and a sample) of her SodaStream machines: the \$199.99 Penguin (actually shaped like the flightless bird), and the smaller Pure (\$149.99). Advantage over bottled soda water? "You're not creating waste," Leah explained. "You don't have to send cans or bottles to be recycled. (Each year, 1.5 million barrels of oil are needed to manufacture plastic bottles.) SodaStream makers come with CO2 canisters (just add tap water), which customers may return to Hill's Kitchen for recycling. A replacement is \$15. Hill's Kitchen is closed Monday; call 202-543-1997.

Wine About It

HillBuzz enjoys discovering new wines, and Capitol Hill offers plenty of opportunities. Schneider's of Capitol Hill, 300 Massachusetts Ave. NE, hosts informal samplings Wednesdays from 5 to 8 p.m. and Saturdays noon to 3 p.m. Sipped in the store's small back room, the wines usually come from a specific country or region: California, Australia, France, Chile. Ask about Schneider's "Fine wine collection," which includes a Chateau Lafite 1900, tagged at \$4,500. Schneider's wine-oriented dinners resume in September. They have two each month, with one (on a Tuesday) at Toscana Café, 601 Second St. NE,

near Union Station. Others are held in various restaurants. Dinner prices range from \$50 per person to \$130 for a gala, multi-course repast. For more information call 202-543-9300.

On Barracks Row: Chat's Liquors, 503 Eighth St. SE, has tastings Saturdays from 3 to 6 p.m. A recent afternoon featured wines from six participating World Cup nations: France, New Zealand, Argentina, Australia, USA and host country South Africa. Most Chat's selections are moderately priced, but occasionally we get to sample a high end vintage. Call 202-544-4660 or www.chatsliquors.com

Asian Flair

The other day I was preparing for our neighborhood gourmet club's June dinner. The theme was Thailand, and I didn't have to go far for Japanese eggplant. Paik Produce, an Eastern Market fixture for 20 years, carries practically everything you need for an authentic Asian repast. Besides the selection of fresh produce, Paik Produce, operated by Joanne Jung, offers:

- * bulgogi (Korean spiced beef ready for grilling)
- * kimchee (made with cabbage or other vegetables)
- * won ton and spring roll wrappers
- * dried shrimp
- * Thai curry (red, green, yellow)
- * Sushi ingredients including rice, nori (seaweed), pickled ginger
- * soy milk

A frozen case holds shrimp and chicken gyoza (potstickers), surimi, vegetables, rice cakes, fish cakes, udon (buckwheat noodles), and banana leaves, often used in Southeast Asian cooking but hard to find around here. And you thought you had to drive to Virginia for Asian foodstuffs. Paik is closed Mondays. ★

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