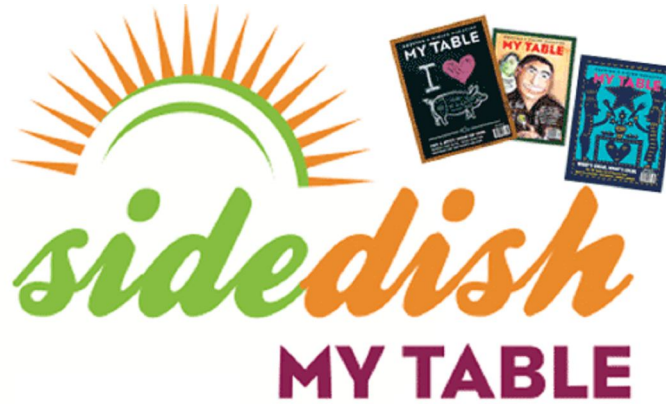


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FRIDAY AUGUST 27, 2010

We Hear You

The other night, *My Table's* editor and I were invited to have dinner at **Voice** inside **Hotel Icon**. Last time we dined at Voice, perhaps a year ago, it was under the direction of chef **Michael Kramer**, so we were interested in knowing what format Voice had decided to follow under new chef **Greg Lowry**. Lowry has a history with the Texas food scene: He worked as a pastry chef for **Tony Vallone**, opened **Max's Wine Dive** in Austin and was at **the Rockwood Room** on Woodway before it imploded several weeks ago.

Lowry recommended that we try the tasting menu, as he felt sure it would be our best opportunity to sample the kitchen's new concepts. Our first course was tuna tartare with what the menu called "compressed watermelon." If I hadn't eaten it so fast, there would be a very cool photo here to show you. Lowry actually compressed the watermelon and rid it of much of its juice, then compacted it into a rectangular prism. The idea was to shape and form the watermelon into looking just like a piece of perfect, pink tuna. On top of the watermelon was a thin slice of cucumber and some diced pink tuna that had been mixed with black seeds so as to look like watermelon. To make this summery dish even more playful, Lowry added some goat cheese yogurt and kalamata "dust" to the plate.

Next arrival was a plate with a large blackberry "X" swiped on it, with what must have been a pastry brush. The spot was marked for a circular piece for French toast topped with savory duck confit and a five-minute egg. I don't always care for duck — sometimes it's too chewy — but this was more of a pulled-pork style duck and incredibly tender. Married with the French toast, it was again a balancing act between savory and sweet, just like the watermelon and tuna. This was probably my favorite dish of the night because I am a fan of

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The tasting continued with five more courses, each creative and fun and fresh. We were full at the end of our menu, but not sinfully so. Also, I shouldn't forget to mention that the team at Voice paired each of the seven courses with wine (or, in the case of the pork belly with smoked Granny Smith puree, a Lambic beer) and the pairings were some of the best we've tried. I get a little confused when the wine overpowers the meal, instead of dancing with it.

Lowry let us know that they are probably going to change the tasting menu each week, so be sure to stop by and see what they have up their sleeves next week. In all, it seems like the kitchen team (**Greg Lowry**, **Rachel Carlson** and **Audrey Sam**) are having a damn good time at Voice. The kitchen is using color and architectural molds to make desserts, as well as Southern flavors (chorizo, cream corn puree) and other elements that remind us food shouldn't be taken too seriously. We caught Lowry complimenting his kitchen staff to the people seated next to us ... that isn't something we witness every day.

VOICE is inside Hotel Icon, 220 Main
832-667-4470

— Taylor Byrne-Ray

Keep Winners Local

With all the voting going around (including our own [Houston Culinary Awards](#)), we wanted to make sure this was on your radar: **The People's Platelist**, which is an online contest of chefs, as held by Nightline on ABC, has two great Houston-area contestants. **Sara Brook**, owner of [Dessert Gallery](#), and **Bud Royer**, the patriarch behind [Royers' Round Top Cafe](#) are both contending for the top spot. Click [here](#) to vote.

We've got to let you in on this winning meal: Earlier this week, we sat down to re-visit [Beavers](#), and chef **Jonathan Jones** sent out a sample of some



really great pozole. We just heard from Jonathan that he'll be serving up pozole for brunch this weekend from "whatever the rancher gives him."

fresh take on dining in Houston. [Request](#) a free sample. See what you've been missing. We'll send you the next issue.

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Never had pozole? It is a melody of stewed guajillo chile, tomato, smoked hocks and hominy. It comes with a tostada and two eggs. Don't miss it.

Wine Time

[Reef](#) will host a wine dinner featuring Huneeus Vintners on Wednesday, September 1. The five-course dinner with wine pairings will feature wines from Quintessa, Veramonte and Flowers. Price is \$125 per person, plus tax and gratuity. Call 713-526-8282.

Be sure to make reservations for **Andrea Ristorante's** "A Night in Friuli with Antonutti Wines," complete with live entertainment, on Thursday, September 2. The evening will present a four-course dinner paired with Antonutti wines. Price is \$60 per person, plus tax and gratuity. Call 281-496-9443.

Half Off Great Bosnian Cuisine

Enjoy [half-off](#) at **Cafe Pita +**, as seen recently on [Diners, Drive-ins and Dives](#). From the warm lepinja bread to the cevap and palacini, everything at this cozy Westside cafe is made in-house by chef/co-owner Omer Okanovic and his kitchen staff. The lepinja is served warm in baskets before your meal and is the sturdy foundation for both the cevap (juicy spiced finger-sized sausages) and pliesakvice (a seasoned ground-meat patty). By the way, you can get pliesakvice plain or stuffed — two patties with cheese and mushrooms sandwiched in between, a real Juicy Lucy.

Our perfect lunch-to-go offer from **Jami's Fine Foods** has not gone unnoticed: [\\$10 for \\$25](#) worth of take away meals has been a hit. And, with the holidays at our heels, take advantage of our offer on [half-priced catering](#). From egg salad to caviar, Jami specializes in natural, organic ingredients and healthful portions packed with flavor. The menu changes daily, to keep you happy and healthy while enjoying her meals, which are ideal for lunch or dinner.

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