

Created by: Debra C. Argen

T.W. Food Cambridge, Massachusetts

T.W. Food is the brainchild of **Chef / Owner Tim Wiechmann** and his wife, **Bronwyn** who have created an intimate restaurant in **Cambridge, Massachusetts** that captivates the palate with its innovative menu.



Entering through the celadon green velvet curtain into T.W. Food and I immediately felt the passion and attention to detail that Tim and Bronwyn have for the restaurant; there is evidence in the charming waiting area with floral banquette where large colorful gourds were arranged on the coffee table, brightly hued dahlias, which I later learned came from Tim's Godmother's garden, graced the tables, the artful placement of gourds and pumpkins on a long shelf caught the eye, and a Swiss cowbell in a landing gave a nod to Tim having once lived in Lausanne, Switzerland.



The restaurant is at once intimate and inviting with a wood floor, lemon walls, an exposed brick archway graced with a large rectangular mirror, geometric tapestry, contemporary paintings, plants and an arrangement of curly willow in a tall vase on high wood shelves. Low Jazz music creates the perfect backdrop for watching Chef Tim in action in the entrance to the open kitchen where shining copper skillets hang overhead. The tables were double draped with pristine ivory tablecloths and napkins and flanked with comfortable rattan and metal chairs.

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The menu at T.W. Food changes almost daily and is not actually printed until late afternoon each day, as Chef Tim Wiechmann works with a select group of farmers to bring the freshest local ingredients of the season to use in the restaurant. The menu is diverse enough to satisfy even picky palates, and challenging enough for more adventurous ones.

Edward F. Nesta and I had dinner at the restaurant in October 2008 when the bounty of autumn harvest was beginning to appear, which was reflected in the menu selections. Each day, T.W. Food has two Grand Tasting menus, consisting of seven-courses showcasing the season that may also be paired with wines, as well as an à la carte menu. What I found to be especially appealing is that one of the Grand Tasting menus is vegetarian, which has inspired courses that even non-vegetarians would appreciate.



Both of the October Grand Tasting menus looked fantastic, so we decided to divide and conquer by each experiencing one of the menus with wine pairings. Chef Tim Wiechmann began our evening by sending us a delightful Amuse Bouche of celeriac mousse with sage on puff pastry rounds, tomatillo, and remoulade. I was hooked, love at first bite, with the taste of celeriac and tomatillo, two of my favorites, although often under-utilized vegetables.

Edward is a foie gras fan and for his first course he had the Smoked Foie Gras crème brûlée with Maine heirloom liberty apple served in a cup that was rich and flavorful and an interesting way to present foie gras. This course was expertly paired with Schoffit, Riesling, "Grand Cru Sommerberg" 2004, Colmar, Alsace, France.



Smoked Foie Gras

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Palate fully awake after the Amuse Bouche teasers, I continued with a Salad of smoked banana potato, gala apple and leek, walnut-yoghurt vinaigrette and orange-wine gelée. This was a flavorful course full of surprises including the smoked banana potato. Although I have tasted many smoked items in my lifetime, this was a first for a smoked potato, and the taste was unbelievably good. The salad was also well paired with Domaine de Baumard, Chenin Blanc, 2004, Sauvennières, Loire Valley, France.

For the second course, both menus featured Heirloom Carrot soup with cumin and curried gnocchi parisienne presented in large cups. The gnocchi looked like croutons sitting on the carrot soup with a light texture and lovely flavors that worked well with the creamy carrot soup enhanced with a foam crown, and paired with Russiz Superior, Tocai Fruilano 2002, Venezia-Guilia, Italy.



Heirloom Carrot Soup



Edward continued with Scallop & Lobster, herb marinated sea scallop and lobster, heirloom tomato gazpacho, and native melon which was a gorgeous presentation in a deep round bowl singing the praises of Autumn colors in deep red, orange, and melon. The taste was wonderful, and the small Ducksbury scallop from Ducksbury, Massachusetts located south of Boston, was sweet and lovely especially when paired with l'Ecole 41, Chardonnay, 2006, Columbia Valley, Washington.



The third course on the Vegetarian menu was an inspired Hubbard Squash sweet-savory ice cream, basil pistou, green cabbage and kohlrabi salad that had a perfect yin yang balance. Savory ice cream works beautifully to enhance flavors yet regrettably is not something often appearing on menus. The course was artistically presented in a deep round white bowl with the ice cream wearing a crown of basil pistou on a

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bed of cabbage and garnished with a bright orange Nasturtium. The mélange of flavors were subtle with just a hint of sweetness complemented by the spice of the pistou that worked beautifully with Schoffit, Chasselas, "Vielles Vignes", 2007, Colmar, Alsace, France.



As I am not a fan of eggs, I deviated from the Vegetarian course of Slow Poached-Egg, ragoût of wild mushrooms, tuscan kale and saffron mousse, and ventured into the "other" tasting menu of Scottish Salmon pan-seared, wild mushrooms, eggplant caviar, and fish emulsion. Presented in a large bowl, the salmon arrived with a crisp skin on a bed of eggplant caviar and buttery wild mushrooms, and was paired with a delicious Domaine Font de Michelle, Syrah and Grenache, Chateauneuf de Pape, 2004, Southern Rhone Valley, France.

Next on Edward's menu was a lovely course of Farm Veal, agnolotti pasta and slow-roasted ham, cranberries and Dijon mustard jus that brought the season forward with the addition of cranberries. Beautifully presented with the tender pasta wearing crowns of tiny heirloom carrots, with cranberries and squiggles of sauce, this course was another winner that was well paired with Gundlach Bundshu, Merlot, "Rhinefarm Vineyard", 2004, Sonoma Valley, California.



Farm Veal

For my fifth course there was a melt-in-your-mouth Tourte of puff pastry with collard greens and bleu cheese "fourme d'ambert" that was outstanding. The flaky pastry was delicately golden with a heavenly mélange of flavors of the slightly bitter greens and the tang of bleu cheese encircled by green and purple broccoli florets that proved that vegetarian definitely does not need to be boring.



Tourte

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Both menus featured a Cheese course with local artisanal cheese makers that included comté "trios comptoires" aged 24 months and jura morbier artisanal served with thinly sliced pear and a toast point, also well paired with Chardonnay, "Fleur de Chardonnay", 2005, Côtes du Jura, Jura, France.



For a memorable finale to the Grand Tasting, Chef Tim created an enchanting light layered dessert of Native Pears in chamomile tea gelée on a base of sugar pumpkin "panna cotta" with spiced coulis, which captured the essence of the season and was expertly paired with Domaine de Barrubio, 2006, Muscat de St. Jean de Minervois, Languedoc, France. A delicious plate of miniature financiers, tuilles, and gelées followed.

T.W. Food is the type of restaurant where you enter as a stranger and leave as a friend. The restaurant features two Grand Tasting Menus, one of which is an inspired Vegetarian Menu, in addition to the à la carte menu. Dinner is served Monday - Saturday from 5:00 pm - 10:00 pm, and on Sunday from 5:00 pm - 9:00 pm. Reservations strongly recommended.

Read **Chefs' Recipes** where **Chef Tim Wiechmann** shares his culinary vision and tempting recipes.

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