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CREAM OF ASPARAGUS SOUP
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TASTE3 @ 18



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Every year since 2003, Caroline Gosselin, owner of Restaurant 18, holds a fund raiser for the University of Ottawa Heart Institute, in honour of her father Edgar who passed away from heart disease. My own father passed away last year, so I know the significance of doing something to keep a loved one's memory alive and I thought today was a great day to talk about this wonderful event.



chef_rene_rodriguez.jpg



chef_blackie.jpg



matthew_carmichael.jpg



Chef Matthew Carmichael, Executive Chef of Restaurant 18, is joined by two of the most talented Chefs in the region - Chef Michael Blackie of

Brookstreet Hotel and Perspectives Restaurant and Chef Rene Rodriguez, Chef/Owner of the new Navarra Restaurant. All three created an amazing culinary experience for the 80 or so people that participated.

We tried to take photos of all the creative dishes that were served to us by Restaurant 18's awesome staff, but the camera soon proved to get in the way of a great meal. Here are the dishes that the Chefs prepared for our first course;



carmichael's_lobster_dish.jpg

CHEF MATTHEW CARMICHAEL

Poached Nova Scotia Lobster, Rochon Family Farmed Asparagus, Morel Mushrooms and Wild Ginger Lobster "Air"

This dish was splendid. The lobster was cooked perfectly, with a buttery, sweet flavour and crisp texture. The Morels were amazing and everyone commented on how generous the portion was. The Lobster air added quite an interesting texture to the dish and the fresh asparagus was perfect.



CHEF MICHAEL BLACKIE

Miso glazed darne of cherry wood smoked black cod, braised lamb shank, organic baby carrots and sun choke puree, curry acidulated pearl onions, ramps and a natural pan reduction.

This dish was deep, smoky and popping with surprising flavors. At first the fish was smoky, then the tangy zip from the glaze made way for the deep natural flavour of the fish. The braised lamb

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blackies_back_cod.jpg

fresh.

shank with the puree was a surprise. It matched well with the fish and the pearl onions were amazing. The ramps were crunchy and



rodriguez_crispy_pork_cheek.jpg

CHEF RENE RODRIGUEZ

Confit of crispy pig cheek, green pea "pil-pil", olive oil, soft goats cheese and espelette

This dish was a complete surprise. I'd never eaten pig's cheeks before and completely enjoyed this experience. They are basically a little nugget of fat with a morsel of meat in the centre, but it was amazing. Crispy on the outside, melt in your mouth goodness underneath it, and a deliciously tender bit of pork in the middle. The "pil-pil" (pronounced peel-peel), is almost a stew - fresh crispy peas on top of smooth goats cheese with a tomato puree that almost reminded me of a paneer. This is certainly one of the items I am looking forward to trying again at Rene's new restaurant Navarra - it's opening very soon on Murray Street. (Keep watching for details).

There were other fantastic dishes. Carmichael served a Smoked Quebec Squab breast that was wonderful. It was served with a crispy squab leg confit, braised diakon, and a currant coriander seed compote. The dish was bursting with different flavors and textures and was one of the highlights of the evening. His dessert offering was a refreshing Rhubarb "Float" - a tangy drink served in a shooter glass with marshmallow and krispies.

Blackie presented a very interesting duck breast dish. An "Inside out Duck Sphere, molton chevre core, gosling rum and sage mirror." Truly unique. His dessert was a complete blow-your-mind blast of chocolately goodness. Tanzania Chocolate Bavarois, Roasted Mango Core, Chocolate Fudge Brownie Core. Rich, deep chocolate combined with the tangy mango, brought a burst of flavor with every bite. My only regret was that there weren't seven or eight more bites.

Rodriguez served an **Amedei Chocolate Mousse** with Raspberry "Baretta." A baretta is fresh raspberries cooked sous-vide with hibiscus, vanilla bean, dried pasilla chili and cocoa nibs. It was another fantastic dessert.

Great wines were served and everyone had a wonderful time. It was one of the best culinary events I have been to in Ottawa and I want to congratulate Caroline for raising more than \$8,000.00 for the Heart Institute.

Thanks to the three Chefs and their Brigades for a delightful evening.

Here's some pictures of the event and the great people that we shared time with.



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byblos_beauties.jpg



klovan_and_friends.jpg



sarah_klovan_dale.jpg

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