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OCTOBER 2014

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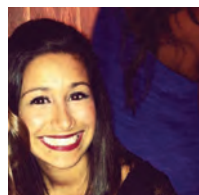
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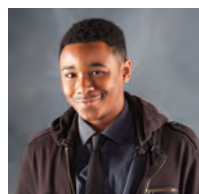


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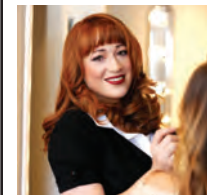


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RICK RAMIREZ

chefs' TOOLBOXES

Stepping Behind the Kitchen Door of Five OC Chefs



WRITTEN BY: **DEIRDRE MICHALSKI**
PHOTOGRAPHED BY: **DHRUMIL DESAI**
PHOTOGRAPHY ASSISTANT: **PATRICK MARTIN**

Just like a painter with their favorite brushes, we know that chefs indeed have their favorite tools of the trade, so we set out to discover just what these intricate instruments may be. Paying a visit to five impressive restaurants here in Orange County, we spent some quality time with their executive chefs as they unveiled their favorite go-to kitchenware. But what's the fun of seeing the tools without watching them be utilized? Mastering mouthwatering meals, these creative chefs showed us their beloved items in action. From custom-made knife handles to vacuum-sealed techniques and playing with fire, we watched the shenanigans unravel and the dishes take form. Join us on this exploration as we step behind the kitchen door.



WAYS & MEANS OYSTER HOUSE
513 E Chapman Ave
Orange, CA 92866
714.516.1800
www.wmoysters.com

"We plan our prix-fixe menus with creative, flavorful cuisine in mind. However, we always offer alternative dishes as well. Our venue is unique to any other restaurant in Orange County and is the perfect setting for celebrations and romance."

—MICHAEL PHILIPPI, EXECUTIVE CHEF AND OWNER



THE HOBBIT
2932 E Chapman Ave
Orange, CA 92869
714.997.1972
www.hobbitrestaurant.com



THE HOBBIT, a charming house in the heart of Orange, has been known as a very unique dining experience for 42 years. The cuisine is referred to as “contemporary continental,” with an always impressive menu. The duo of Executive Chef Michael Philippi and his wife, Debra, works beautifully together. They share a passion for fine dining and offer a romantic and creative venue for guests to enjoy. The restaurant offers an elegant seven-course prix-fixe menu with one seating per night, held at 7pm, Wednesday through Sunday, and includes a cocktail hour, a tour of the downstairs wine cellar with champagne and hors d’oeuvres, intermission and even a visit to the country-style kitchen.

On this recent visit, Chef Michael prepared for us the Grilled Quail With Wild Mushroom Stuffing, complete with chive polenta and a sour cherry sage reduction sprinkled with delicately fried artichoke hearts. One of Michael’s favorite kitchen tools is his Weston Pro-2300 Vacuum Sealer, which he used to carefully marinate the quail in a sage infused olive oil for three hours. Another favorite item is his heavy copper saucepan, providing even heating for the reduction of sauces. The final dish was robust yet refined and one bite encouraged another.



THE DISH:

Grilled Quail With Wild Mushroom Stuffing
chive polenta and a sour cherry sage reduction sprinkled with delicately fried artichoke hearts

THE INGREDIENTS:

Marinated quail • Wild mushroom stuffing • Chive polenta
Fried artichoke hearts • Fresh chives • Dried sour cherries
Mushrooms • Shallots • Sour cherry and sage reduction
Chef’s custom salt mixture • Sage infused olive oil



THE TOOLS:

Weston Pro-2300 Vacuum Sealer • Plastic pastry bag and tip
Solid copper sauce pan • Strainer • Tongs
Silicone pastry brush for glazing • Mercer chef’s knife
Boning knife



ANTONELLO RISTORANTE and Owner/ Chef Antonio Cagnolo, have an impressive tradition here in Orange County since 1979. This is one of the very few establishments still embracing table side flambé preparation and service for their guests. The restaurant features an elegant dining room with wood-beamed ceilings, a jazzy lounge with music six nights a week and all the charm of European-style service. Tucked away in various corners of this large venue are eight different private dining rooms of various sizes for social gatherings and celebrations. Scampering up and down the staircases—behind the kitchen, above an alcove, and elsewhere, we explored each and every space. We settled into the Levendi Room, which was named in honor of the Napa winery. Levendi in Greek means a toast “to celebrate life” and indeed, that is the gusto with which Antonio Cagnolo embraces life. The walls were beautifully hand-painted in rich, gold tones to resemble Old World stonework and seemed to envelope us with warmth. Individual client wine lockers adorned one entire wall. Now THIS is a wine room!

Chef Antonio dazzled us with his flambé techniques—making it all look so easy! His “tool” is really his signature method—to flambé. With a gentle sauté of the scallions, diced parsley, butter and beurre blanc, he ignited the scampi and created a golden sheen. With a forward tilt of the sauté pan, a splash of liqueur and a flick of the wrist, Chef had the flames leaping into the pan. Instantaneously the scampi was complete, and a rich sauce was unveiled. Voila! Scampi Flambe’ Anisette!



THE DISH:

Scampi Flambe’ Anisette

THE INGREDIENTS:

Raw fresh whole scampi • Trimmed scampi • Diced scallions
Diced Italian parsley • Beurre blanc sauce • Anisette liqueur
Olive oil • Butter



THE TOOLS:

Fish knife • Paring knife • Stainless tined fork • 10 inch sauté pan
Wooden cutting board • Tableside service rolling cart
Portable butane burner with gas stovetop



"I am used to preparing cuisine table side and enjoy the interaction with our guests. They are often surprised, but it feels very comfortable doing this in a suit—or even better yet, in a tuxedo!"

—ANTONIO CAGNOLO, OWNER AND CHEF



ANTONELLO RISTORANTE & ENOTECA LOUNGE
3800 South Plaza Dr
Santa Ana, CA 92704
714.751.7153
www.antonello.com

WITH PANORAMIC VIEWS of the Back Bay Preserve, this bistro offers waterfront views and a retractable roof for the quintessential indoor/outdoor Newport Beach dining experience. French-born chef, Bruno Massuger, has developed an inspirational farm-to-table menu, featuring California cuisine with a nod to Napa influences.

On our recent visit, Executive Chef Bruno's creativity shined through with two delicious dishes, the first being the Alaskan King Copper River Salmon, a healthy yet savory dish indeed. Trimmed using his incredibly sharp Global chef's knife and then pan seared, the fish was gracefully placed atop risotto infused with truffle oil, asparagus spears and baby carrots. The finish was a drizzle of chardonnay and butter sauce, creating a perfect balance of delicate flavors. The next plate to entice was the Rolled Short Rib, carefully trimmed, tied and baked, served over a rich polenta and al dente spinach. The finishing sauce was prepared with a beef demi-glace base, a hint of Valrhona dark chocolate and accents of sweet, fresh blueberries. Equal parts rich as it was sweet, it was the ideal balance for the tastebuds.



THE DISH:

Alaskan King Copper River Salmon

chardonnay butter sauce atop risotto, asparagus and baby carrots

THE INGREDIENTS:

Alaskan King Copper River Salmon (wild caught) • Risotto
Baby carrots • Asparagus • Chardonnay butter sauce
Salt • Pepper

THE DISH:

Rolled Short Rib

chocolate and blueberry sauce, served with polenta and spinach

THE INGREDIENTS:

Rolled and tied short rib • Rich beef demi-glace sauce
Polenta • Fresh blueberries • Valrhona Chocolate bits • Pepper



THE TOOLS:

Global chef's knife • Global boning knife
Riveted handle chef's knife • Vollrath silicone spatula
Mercer Cutlery wooden handled turner/spatula
Vollrath NSF whisk • Mercer Cutlery Diamond Knife Sharpening Steel



“Harkening back to my French roots, I prefer to source locally—working with local farmers and purchasing seasonal products. I am proud to say that most of the vendors we work with are within 150 miles of the restaurant.”

—BRUNO MASSUGER, EXECUTIVE CHEF

BACK BAY BISTRO

1131 Back Bay Dr
Newport Beach, CA 92660
949.729.1144
www.newportdunes.com





“My Misono chef’s knife has a hand-crafted handle that was custom made for my hand. That may sound odd, but it works well for me and is comfortable in my hand. Needless to say, this one does not go through the dishwasher!”

—BRANDON STEIN, EXECUTIVE CHEF

THE CELLAR
305 N Harbor Blvd
Fullerton, CA 92832
714.525.5682
www.cellardining.com

THE CELLAR has been a darling of Fullerton for 45 years. Originally the basement of Fullerton's historic Villa del Sol, the restaurant was created by artistic craftsmen who also worked on Disneyland's Pirates of the Caribbean. With soft lighting, structured archways and cave-like walls and fireplaces, the space is utterly charming in an Old World kind of way. The venue sets the stage for romance and celebrations, offering premier service, an expansive wine list of over 1,400 selections and international cuisine. Led by Executive Chef Brandon Stein, the menu is steeped in classic French traditions with exquisite global flavors.

As we made our way down the softly lit staircase, we entered another world of days gone by. The bar was abuzz with activity and the dining room had couples starting to settle in various corners of the booths. Chef Brandon explained that his go-to kitchen tool was his custom-handled Misono chef's knife which he uses often as he trims and prepares his meat, fish and game. On this evening, Chef Brandon had prepared for us an artful Pan Seared Atlantic Salmon placed on a quinoa base, with a colorful slaw of watercress, mango, red peppers and micro greens. A light beurre blanc sauce was the finishing touch to this polished, yet colorful dish. The salmon and quinoa paired well with the crunch of the slaw, while the herbed butter sauce added a sense of richness to the dish. A welcomed French influence was indeed at hand.



THE DISH:

Pan Seared Atlantic Salmon
quinoa, slaw and beurre blanc sauce

THE INGREDIENTS:

Atlantic salmon • Quinoa • Watercress • Mango • Cilantro
Micro greens • Red pepper • Garlic and shallot herb butter



THE TOOLS:

Wooden cutting board • Misono handcrafted custom chef's knife
Boning knife • Sauté pan • Slotted spatula • Tongs




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www.wmoysters.com

“We don’t take ourselves too seriously. Our goal is to throw a party for our guests every night. What we do take seriously is creating a memorable experience each time they visit us.”

—BEN WALLENBECK, CHEF DE CUISINE





“Ways & Means is proud to be a part of this community. We shop the farmers markets, work with local fishermen, and many of our guests are our neighbors.”

—JUSTIN ODEGARD,
CHEF DE CUISINE

REMINISCENT of a craftsman-style steakhouse, this restaurant is located in historic Old Towne Orange. The space offers low booths and tables allowing guests to peer clear across the dining room. With an expansive bar to the right and an oyster bar to the left, we were ready to call this home for the evening. Every night of the week there are specials---from clambakes, to cocktails or oyster shooters, this place is happening! The restaurant receives accolades for not one, but two Chefs de Cuisine, Benjamin Wallenbeck and Justin Odegard, who are affable craftsmen through and through.

The Roasted Muscovy Duck Breast, served with a butternut purée, Puy lentils, a fresh quail egg and an apple walnut salad was as unique as it was delicious. Though the lentils threw us off at first, we soon learned that these are the “caviar” of lentils (Puy are French green lentils from the Auvergne area). One of the tools that chefs Ben and Justin seemed especially proud of was their Paderno non-stick egg and quail pan to create the ultimate sunny-side up quail egg, which hails from Golden State Bird Farm in Vista, California. A Kasumi Japanese chef’s knife was used to score the duck breast, which was gently sautéed and browned in a saucepan. The purée and lentils were prepared and a refreshing apple walnut salad was tossed and the layering process of plating began. The final dish was sheer elegance as we enjoyed the roasted duck in a whole new way.



THE DISH:

Roasted Muscovy Duck Breast

butternut purée, Puy lentils, sunny-side-up quail’s egg, apple walnut salad

THE INGREDIENTS:

Fresh Muscovy duck breast • fresh quail egg
Butternut squash • Italian parsley • Puy lentils
Baby carrots • Micro greens • Walnuts • Red wine
Green apple • Butter • Salt • Pepper • Garlic • Olive oil



THE TOOLS:

Vollrath silicone spatula • Stainless kitchen spoon
Fish and egg turner spatula • Boning knife
Utility knife • Kasumi Japanese chef’s knife
Paderno quail and egg non-stick fry pan
Tongs • Sauté pan ■

