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Chef shines spotlight on desserts

Devereaux's dinner will highlight spring's bounty

BY LILLIA CALLUM-PENSO STAFF WRITER LPENSO@GREENVILLENEWS.COM • MAY 13, 2009

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Give a pastry chef a savory recipe and he will be able to execute it, but give a savory chef a dessert recipe and good luck, says Chef David Guas. He should know. In his 11-year career, Guas has been both.

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The award-winning pastry chef, cookbook author and soon-to-be bakery owner (he will open Bayou Bakery in McLean, Va., later this year) never intended to get into sweets. But now not a day goes by that Guas doesn't get in touch with his sweet tooth – as owner/chef for DamGoodSweets Consulting.

Guas and Robert Wiedmaier, chef/owner of Brasserie Beck, BRABO and Marcel in Washington, D.C., will be guest chefs at a dinner May 20 at Devereaux's.

"It's one thing to read something in a magazine, be inspired, wait for local fresh seasonal produce to come in and then all of a sudden your brain starts working," Guas explains of the recipe creation process. "With desserts, it happens the same way, but the follow-up aspect requires a lot more."

A lot of chefs can do both, Guas says. But often desserts are an afterthought, overlooked in favor of entrees and appetizers, so the result is typical and unimaginative. Or, chefs see them as too limiting, too exact. But he insists that "the sky's the limit." One need look no further than his desserts for proof.

Guas tends to classify desserts into categories: chocolate, citrus, custard/pudding, iced/cold and fruit. He looks for inspiration in local markets and infuses ingredients with a style influenced by his Cuban heritage and his childhood in New Orleans.

The result? Delectable treats such as Lemon Doberge cake with lemon fondant, honey poached kumquats and buttermilk panna cotta and canela dusted churros with Mexican hot chocolate.

And when pairing a dessert with a meal, Guas says it's about creating something that complements its weight and flows with the season. For spring he suggests highlighting produce, opting for open-faced pies and fruit tarts or shortcakes with berries and cream.

"As far as matching up it's not a perfect science and there's not a formula for that," Guas says. "If you start at the market and taste a strawberry and it's like an explosion, you can't do anything wrong to this as long as you don't

mask it with too much sugar."

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David Guas' Lemon Doberge Cake with Lemon Fondant and Buttermilk Panna Cotta. (Simoneink)



Pastry Chef David Guas, owner/chef of DamGoodSweet Consulting and Bayou Bakery in McLean, Va., will be a featured guest chef at a dinner at Devereaux's. (Simoneink)

YOU CAN GO

• What: Guest Chef Dinner with David Guas, chef/owner of DamGoodSweets in McLean, Va., and Robert Wiedmaier, chef/owner of Brasserie Beck, BRABO and Marcel in Washington, D.C. • When: 7 p.m. May 20 • Where: Devereaux's, downtown Greenville • Cost: \$125 for six-course meal with wine pairings • Call: 864-241-3030 BABY BUTTERMILK BEIGNETS Source: Chef David Guas, DamGoodSweet Consulting (www.damgoodsweet.com) and Bayou Bakery Yield: approximately 24 beignets Ingredients: ¾ cup whole milk 1 ½ cups buttermilk ¾ ounces fresh compressed yeast (or .375 ounce dry yeast) ¾ teaspoon granulated sugar 5 ½ cups bread flour ½ teaspoon baking soda ¼ teaspoon salt Peanut oil for frying (or canola oil) Powdered sugar for garnish Method: In a heavy saucepan, heat milk over medium heat until small bubbles form. Remove from heat and temper in buttermilk. Add yeast and granulated sugar. Pour mixture into mixing bowl. Add all dry ingredients and mix on low with dough hook until combined. Place dough in greased plastic container, covered, in a warm, dry place for 30 minutes. Turn dough onto a floured surface and form a ball. Roll out dough on a floured surface, and then cut into 1 ½-inch squares. Place beignets on sheet pan lined with greased parchment paper. Wrap with plastic wrap and store in refrigerator until ready to cook. On the stove, bring oil to 350 degrees F. Fry beignets until puffed and golden brown. Drain on paper towels

E-mail the reporter at lpenso@greenvillenews.com

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and sprinkle with powdered sugar.

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