



Food and Society Policy Fellows

The Chatterbox

By Marcia Gagliardi, About David Mas Masumoto

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One of the most hotly anticipated restaurant openings of the year is finally happening: this Thursday, August 2, **~SPRUCE~** will be opening its doors to the rabid dining public. Let's watch it blow up on OpenTable! The project was beleaguered with numerous delays (oh, we love historical buildings!), but the former auto barn that dates back to the 1930s is quite the stunner, thanks to Williams-Sonoma Home designer Stephen Brady. Elements include reclaimed limestone from the floors of a French church; a library with saddle leather chairs and newspapers, games, and antique cookbooks; a bar with a white Carrara marble top; ebony-stained oak floors and chocolate mohair walls; and a 70-seat dining area under cathedral ceilings with steel trusses that crisscross under the original glass-and-steel skylight. Executive chef Mark Sullivan's menu will continue the strong seasonal approach he honed at The Village Pub in Woodside—heck, they have their own private farm, SMIP Ranch, and we're not talking some tiny little backyard plot. According to the menu items listed in the press release, I'm seeing a Cal-Med vibe, with ingredients like farro garganelli, sweet pepper-and-eggplant ragout, and leek and fennel soup poured tableside over creamy salt cod dumplings.

Andrew Green's 1,000-bottle global wine list will have seventy of them available by the glass, with more than 100 German rieslings to accompany the house-made charcuterie. There will also be a café, with gourmet takeaway items like artisan pastries, fresh-pressed panini, cheese, and charcuterie by the pound. Spruce's hours are Mon–Fri, 11:30am–11pm, Sat–Sun 5pm–11pm. 3640 Sacramento St. at Spruce, 415-931-5100.

One more note about Spruce: it seems the wickedly talented pastry chef **~WILLIAM WERNER~**, who left the Ritz-Carlton Half Moon Bay earlier this year to join the Bacchus Management Group (who oversees Spruce, The Village Pub in Woodside, and four Pizza Antica locations), will be opening Spruce but will soon be heading off elsewhere. It could be in a month, it could be six months—Werner is at a juncture in his career when he is looking at all his options and considering something major, like potentially going to Japan. For now, it's all TBD. Tim Stannard of Bacchus says, "I wish we could keep him for the next 25 years!" Yeah, you and me both, Tim. Werner has put together a reportedly incredible list of desserts and is training some talented folks—get ready for wow-ness.

And here's a quick update on Bacchus Management Group's brasserie project slated to go into the former Prego space on Union by late fall/early winter (October is being discussed for now). It will be called **~BRASSERIE VACHE~**, a clever homage to the Cow Hollow neighborhood (and what I am sure is going to be a tasty steak frites). More details coming soon—they are really focused on getting Spruce



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launched.

Is [~MANRESA~](#) poaching all our SF talent or what? (Hell, who wouldn't want to work for David Kinch?) First James Syhabout left PlumpJack Cafe and trucked on down to Los Gatos, and now it's Kendra Baker, who has been the pastry chef at Bar Tartine since it opened in 2005. She will begin August 3 in her new position. Who's next, Camber Lay? Well, we're safe for now: Manresa doesn't have a full bar.

Seems lots of restaurants are freshening up these days: one is [~JARDINIÈRE~](#), which is closing on Sunday, August 19 and will reopen to the public on Thursday, September 13, after celebrating its 10th anniversary in business on the 12th. The main changes include converting part of the downstairs dining room (to the left of the bar as you walk in) into a lounge area, with low tables and new banquette seating. Jardinière will also unveil its new lounge menu where people can stop in for a drink and a bite to eat without a reservation—great for symphony-goers, and hungry shoppers. Some new additions will include Liberty Farms duck meatballs with Mission figs and Lucques olives; pork belly sliders with romesco and candied onions; and fried olives. Meowza. They are also adding a sommelier station upstairs, replacing the piano, and thereby allowing the sommeliers to offer a more elegant tableside wine service. There's also going to be a new sound system with different “zones” so the downstairs bar area will have fun/hip lounge music, while the upstairs will have more of a classic jazz vibe. All the upholstery, carpeting, window treatments, and bar stools will be replaced and take on a lighter and more contemporary look, such as sheer Champagne-colored curtains and shimmery paint on the walls, with seating and banquettes in shades of a smoky gray/brown and olive. 300 Grove St. at Franklin, 415-861-5555.

Another Hayes Valley restaurant about to undergo a facelift is [~CITIZEN CAKE~](#), which is closing on August 13 to expand the dining room and bar area. The hoped-for reopening is slated for September 1. Go construction workers, go! 399 Grove St. at Gough, 415-861-2228.

[~LUNA PARK~](#) will have a design refresh in mid-August, and will include new paint, tables, pews (seating), and upholstery. Nothing too major—the changes will actually be done at night after service. Look for some new menu and cocktail items in the next few months. 694 Valencia St. at 18th, 415-553-8584.

Attention fellow NOPA residents: after months of construction, it looks like [~CAFÉ ABIR~](#) should be reopening by August 14 or so. Like I mentioned before, new additions will include a wine and sake selection for tasting, and retail purchase. 1300 Fulton St. at Divisadero, 415-567-6503.

While dining out, all kinds of things can roll up to your table, from a cheese cart to a Champagne and



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caviar cart (a personal fave) to a mignardise cart to a swell steak tartare cart (all aboard!). Well, leave it to San Francisco, and the sick mind of Bruce Hill over at [~BIX~](#) to come up with the organic heirloom tomato cart. Primo tomatoes are served with formaggio de Ferrante mozzarella and finished tableside with extra virgin olive oil, aged balsamic, basil, sea salt, and fresh pepper. To partake in the tomato feast will put ya back \$9.75 per plate. The tomato cart should be wheeling around the restaurant until Halloween. 56 Gold St. at Pacific, 415-433-6300.

[~SEASONS~](#) at the Four Seasons has a new restaurant manager, Sebastien Duclos, a native of France. Duclos has over nine years of experience spanning New York City, France, England, Canada, and Switzerland. I spotted a Relais & Châteaux property in his resume—top drawer, baby. 757 Market St. at Grant, 415-633-3838.

Looks like you non-Mission dwellers now have another spot to find homemade salted caramel ice cream: the pastry chef at [~EOS~](#), Lori Baker (yes, her real last name), is not only making some delish flavors for guests, but they are selling to-go pints of the stuff for \$7. The seasonal sorbets at EOS have always been popular, but Baker, who hails from Home in the Castro, started to ramp things up with awesome ice cream flavors, like roasted banana, mango macadamia nut brittle, Vietnamese coffee, Thai peanut, and peanut butter red miso. The milk they use is hormone-free milk from Clover. I am so ready to head over for their current Arctic Star peach sorbet. 901 Cole St. at Carl, 415-566-3063.

Speaking of peaches, executive chef Stuart Briozza and pastry chef Nicole Krasinski of [Rubicon](#) have something pretty peachy coming up. They have been working with [David 'Mas' Masumoto](#) for three summers now, picking peaches from the Elberta peach tree that they've adopted on his farm. This year, they will be running a five-course [~“GIVE PEACH A CHANCE”~](#) tasting menu, featuring peaches from their tree (along with other Masumoto peaches). The special menu will run from Thursday, August 2 through Saturday, August 11—it's available to anyone who dines at Rubicon, all you have to do is make a reservation. There will also be a special wine pairing with the menu (including a fresh peach Bellini, of course). In addition, Mas Masumoto will be at Rubicon for a special peach dinner on Tuesday, August 7. That night he will work the room, discussing peaches, organic peach farming and all things peachy with anyone who orders the tasting menu. He will also be signing copies of his books, which will be available for sale. The menu is \$78.00 for five courses. 558 Sacramento St., between Sansome and Montgomery, 415-434-4100.