

Where's the beef? In Parkdale

Bistro-inspired chef butchers, smokes and cures his meat and is a dab hand at fish as well

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RESTAURANT CRITIC

It's a bad time to be a cow in Parkdale, but a good time to be a meat eater.

Chef-cum-butcher Mark Cutrara has just opened **Cowbell Restaurant**, a 30-seat fine-dining room at 1564 Queen St. W.

Cutrara, who cooked at Silver Spoon and Globe Bistro before apprenticing at The Healthy Butcher, is serving a daily changing menu inspired by 19th-century French bistros. He butchers, smokes and cures his meat, all of it naturally raised and organic.

"Someone just sent me trout that's three hours old. I'm so excited," he said over the phone.

Cutrara paired the trout, from Trillium Springs Fish Farm near Holland Centre, Ont., with herbs from his roof garden and heirloom tomatoes and favas from the Nathan Phillips Square farmers market.

Cutrara and his wife, Karin Culliton, live in Parkdale with their two children and want to enrich the community. Diners interested in where their food comes from will certainly benefit from the upcoming Farmers' Nights, when farmers will be on hand to discuss the ingredients in the special menus.

IF PARKDALE has prize cows, then **Cluck, Grunt & Low** in the Annex ups the ante with pigs and chickens.

The new restaurant at 362 Bloor St. W. serves two styles of barbecue, Kansas City and Memphis. Meaty, tender back and side ribs (\$15 half rack, \$24 full) do hard time in the fruitwood smoker, but not enough: There's a fat cushion on the underside that should melt away.

But first, the Memphis style is dry rubbed with a heady spice mix: I detect cayenne, paprika and black pepper before the smoke rolls in. Kansas City is your classic "wet" sauce, tomatoes, spice, sugar and vinegar in balanced proportions. Both leave the lips tingling, and side dishes make for good eatin'.

Unlike Phil Nyman, the veteran pit master behind Phil's Original BBQ on College St., Cluck executive chef Marc Thuet (Bistro & Bakery Thuet) is a late convert to the barbecue cause. (Original executive chef Paul Boehmer left last week.) Thuet produces the ribs, rotisserie chickens, pulled pork and brisket at his Liberty Village catering kitchen before shipping it over.



Pan-seared rainbow trout with favas, tomatoes at Cowbell Restaurant in Parkdale. Below, Mark Cutrara with dry-aged (42 days and counting) N.Y. striploin.

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"He's just developed a new cornbread, peach cobbler and Mississippi mud pie," said wife and partner Biana Zorich.

"He's doing mac & cheese with smoked sausage, and he doesn't even know how to make Kraft Dinner."

FROM CLUCK to quack, as in a nicely done Peking duck dinner at **Chung King Garden Restaurant** at 4394 Steeles Ave. E. in Markham.

For \$37.95 and one-day's notice, you get a gorgeously lacquered duck (presented before carving) that is first served as crisp skin wrapped in pancakes, then chopped meat folded in lettuce leaves and finally as a rich duck soup.

But there are other delights at Chung King, which eschews cheap fillers and excess oil. There is sizzling rice with meat sauce (\$8.95), garlicky sautéed pea leaves (\$8.95), fine wheat noodles (\$8.95) and Uyghur lamb skewers (\$13.95) — the meat dosed with cumin and chillies

Staff speak Mandarin, Cantonese

and English but only accept cash.

MICHAEL PATARAN is leaving Toronto for Paradise Island, the Bahamas. Pataran was executive chef of **The Windsor Arms Hotel** until the delayed opening of the hotel's planned Japanese restaurant. Hotel owner George Friedmann, meanwhile, decided to open a steakhouse instead, with Stephen Ricci (ex-Prego della Piazza) as executive chef and such old-time favourites as mile-high ice cream pie.

AFTER A TWO-YEAR absence, Rosa is back on Eglinton West.

Rosa Marinuzzi, the force behind **Seven Numbers**, has opened a new location at 516 Eglinton Ave. W.

Marinuzzi, described by her sons as "the first lady of linguine, matron of mascarpone, diva of al dente," is turning out her famed homestyle Italian dishes at dinner only.

The 307 Danforth Ave. location remains open.

CHANGES: Winnie Tsang (ex-Monte Cristo) has replaced Fawzi Kotb as executive chef of **Opal Jazz**



Lounge, while Bruce Leslie was promoted to chef de cuisine of **Jamie Kennedy at the Gardiner**, replacing Michael Dixon. At **Crush Wine Bar**, sous chef Michael Wilson replaces David Gaunt as executive chef.

RICE BAR, the build-your-own rice bowl restaurant in Kensington Market, has extended the DIY con-

cept to the in-house **Wich** sandwich counter.

IN NORTH TORONTO, two openings of note. For gelato in the purest Italian style, try **Il Gelatiere Artigianale** at 647 Mt. Pleasant Ave. And Spanish tapas bar **Cambalache** replaces the long-time **Samovar/Barmalay** at 505 Mt. Pleasant Ave. apataki@thestar.ca