

Haute Naturelle

A tiny restaurant serves regional fare in high French style.



THE CHARMINGLY small, civilly quiet T.W. Food, in the Huron Village area of Cambridge, seems to have arrived in the right place at the right time, and with the right philosophy of dining. The owners, chef Tim Wiechmann (T.W. to you) and his wife, Bronwyn Wiechmann, espouse the grassroots principle—“Eat local”—that is the current rage among foodies.

T.W. Food not only buys regional ingredients—butter from Vermont Butter and Cheese, beef from Concord’s Big Ox Farm, bread from B & R Artisan Bread in Framingham—but stresses organic and minimally processed foods, even tilting its wine list to organic and biodynamic vintners. It’s all about “getting the sourcing to the plate,” as T.W. puts it; those sources are so fresh that the menu changes daily. If you see something you like, well, *carpe*

diem, or perhaps *carpe plat*, because it might not be offered tomorrow.

The kitchen treats these local morsels with high French style: T.W. trained at Le Cordon Bleu in Paris and apprenticed at top restaurants there: Taillevent and L’Arpège. He met his wife while working at Ten Tables in Jamaica Plain; they then spent a year in Paris before opening their own place. Wiechmann, though born in Massachusetts, grew up in Switzerland, Austria, Germany, and France, and spent time in South America and Asia (his father, Ulrich Wiechmann, was a globetrotting academic affiliated with Harvard Business School), so his “Slow Food” blend of high-end cuisine with local produce admirably reflects his background.

We settled ourselves at one of only 12 tables—minimalism is a theme here; the menu offers four starters, four main

courses, and no hefty portions—to enjoy a complimentary *amuse-bouche*: a pork terrine with red peppercorn and rosemary garnish, served in a delicious buttery puff pastry. (The chilled terrine might have had even more flavor had it been at room temperature.) A scrambled (local) egg with chestnuts and wild black trumpet mushrooms (\$12), imaginatively served in a martini glass, presented an offbeat mix of flavors, the woody, potent mushroom playing off against the mild egg. The boudin blanc sausage of pork with bread crumbs (\$15) was a trifle bland, despite a perfume of black Périgord truffle and a potato mousseline accompaniment. Yet a salad (\$11) of simple, clean flavors—razor-thin slices of local apples, Maine heirloom yellow-eye beans—delighted the palate with its variety of farm vegetables and the eye with a spectacular geometric presentation.

The roasted wild monkfish (\$29), with black trumpet mushrooms and a sugar-pumpkin sauce, had a delicious buttery flavor and a firm texture. Its somewhat Asian presentation embraced a delicate white daikon radish. Winter root vegetables (\$28), including salsify, parsnip, potato, and baby leek, cooked to textural perfection and served in a creamy gratin of blue cheese, rebutted superbly the notion that you can’t eat “locally” in cold months.

We ended with a few crisp, dainty profiteroles in a light orange crème anglaise and tried “Scotch and cigars,” a chocolate-mousse cake with single-malt Scotch syrup and another crème anglaise, this one in-

fused with flavor from tobacco leaves—given city ordinances, perhaps the only legal way to consume tobacco in a Cambridge restaurant. We preferred the profiteroles, but our local consciousness had been raised. ~CRAIG LAMBERT

Above: Kitchen with a view, at T.W. Food

T.W. FOOD

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Cambridge

Dinner 5-10 P.M.

Monday-Saturday

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Reservations

recommended.

twfoodrestaurant.com