

Spice



KICKING ICE CREAM UP A NOTCH

Executive chef Michael Pataran is challenging your taste buds in ways it may not have been pressed before, and making them sing at Shogun Revolver with his ice cream flavors. **PAGE 18**

Food. Wine. And fine living

DIARY OF A FOODIE



Shavaughn MOSS

Oh boy, I'm in trouble!

Oh boy, I'm in serious trouble, and it's all because of Janis Galanis and Jenny Pierre-Smith. These two upstart young women who've had the audacity to open up a chocolate shop, that literally has me running there at least every other day for my fix of choice, decadent dark chocolate.

I could understand if the Chocol-Art Shoppe was close to my workplace, and I could just stroll over and pick up a piece, but I actually have to hop into a car and drive to the Mount Royal Plaza to purchase pieces of the delightful stuff these women are making in their newly opened establishment. But the draw is so seductive, it literally pulls me to do it, because I know that when I do get there it would have been worth the trip.

To make it worse, these women are doing things like Tamarind-filled chocolate pieces, Cayenne Truffles, Guava-filled chocolate pieces, and Ginger mint, chocolate dipped pretzels and cookies to name a few, in whatever chocolate you desire — dark or milk, and even some white. My favorites are the Tamarind filled, Cayenne truffles and ginger mint in dark of course.

As soon as I stepped through the door on that first day, it was like stepping into heaven, as the chocolate scent wafts to the door to greet you, and the warm, welcoming smiles that Galanis and Pierre-Smith give you pulls you into their cocoon, and makes you not want to leave. I think it's that genuine friendliness, and the promise of the goodness of what you will get that will keep you coming back.

Actually, my latest sinful find, which I've been sneaking to for the past week-and-a-half, I've held pretty close to my chest, because once word gets out, everyone will be flocking there, and when I do show up, my favorites will probably be sold out, which would upset me.

But the two people that I really wanted to introduce the offerings to were my mom Jestina, and sister Keisha. Because of a few harried days, whenever I hit the Chocol-Art Shoppe, I wasn't able to take my mom with me, and Keisha was out of town. She returned on Tuesday, and stopped by my office on her way from the airport. Wrong thing for her to do — I twisted her arm to pick up my mom, and it was off to the Chocol-Art Shoppe for us three girls.

After proudly showing off my new find, and sampling a few new stuff, we made our selections, and were homeward bound. I, of course selected the Tamarind-filled pieces, and Ginger Chocolate pieces, and all I could think about as I happily exited the establishment with my stash was boy am I in trouble, as Galanis cheerily said to me see you in a few days.

Yep, I'm definitely in trouble!

Journey to AUGUST MOON

Former lawyer-to-be, Alexandra Lynch serves up astonishing cuisine in her homey restaurant

By SHAVAUGHN MOSS
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Alexandra Lynch has a degree in political science, but a passion for food, that has birthed a woman who seems to turn out perfect tasting food anytime she puts her mind to whipping up a little something, whether it be Greek, Bahamian, Vietnamese, Thai, Moroccan, African or whatever.

She has always been exposed to food, as she traveled the world with her parents in her early childhood days. To this day, she says she can still remember the garlic escargots she smelled cooking in Luxembourg, and vowed to herself that she would duplicate it.

She grew up in Nassau, but attended

university in England, where she was exposed to some of the best Iranian, Thai and Vietnamese foods. Upon her return to Nassau, and leaving all that good food behind, the young woman who loves to cook and loves food was left wanting — wanting to know what she would eat.

That led Alexandra who was supposed to enter the legal profession, to form a catering company, she named simply — Alexandra, which she has been operating for the past 18 years.

"I said let's have fun, I have nothing to lose, so I started training myself on the taste that I remembered from my childhood of the garlic escargots," and Alexandra's catering company was born.

■ See Journey to August Moon on B2

MANGO CHEESECAKE

Pureed fresh mango gives this cheesecake a light and soft texture and subtle tropical fruit flavor.

Servings: Makes 12 servings.

CRUST

1 1/2 cups graham cracker crumbs
1/2 cup sugar
6 tablespoons (3/4 stick) unsalted butter, melted

FILLING

3 large very ripe mangoes (each about 13 ounces), peeled, pitted, coarsely chopped
3 8-ounce packages cream cheese, room temperature
1 1/4 cups sugar
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
4 large eggs
Sliced peeled pitted mangoes

For crust: Preheat oven to 325°F. Lightly butter 9-inch-diameter spring form pan with 2 -3/4-inch-high sides. Stir cracker crumbs and sugar in medium bowl to blend. Add melted butter and stir until evenly moistened. Press crumb mixture firmly onto bottom (not sides) of prepared pan. Bake until crust is set, about 12 minutes. Cool completely. Maintain oven temperature.

For filling: Puree mangoes in processor until smooth. Set aside 2 cups mango puree (reserve any remaining puree for another use). Beat cream cheese, sugar, and vanilla in large bowl until smooth. Add eggs 1 at a time, beating well after each addition. Add 2 cups mango puree and beat until well blended. Pour filling over crust in pan.

Bake cake until set and puffed and golden around edges (center may move very slightly when pan is gently shaken), about 1 hour 25 minutes. Cool cake 1 hour. Refrigerate uncovered overnight. Run small knife between cake and sides of pan to loosen. Remove pan sides. Transfer cake to platter. Cut into wedges and serve with sliced mangoes.

Recipe: Epicurious.com

Grappa, the good, the bad and the ugly

UNCORKED



Chef Michael PATARAN

Up there with those bad tequila flashbacks live the even worse Grappa ones — well, for this guy anyway. Grappa is up there with olives and sour gums ... definitely an acquired taste. It is a wickedly, unique, distilled Italian beverage. Traditionally, made from pomace, the discarded grape seeds, stalks, and stems are a by-product of the wine-making process.

Grappa has been around since the Middle Ages. For generations, Italians from north to south have ever so softly consumed this "firewater" after meals and even added a little to their morning espresso to "better" it.

During my work stay in Calabria back in '97, I worked at a restaurant whose owners also owned a creamery called Calabria Piu (in the town of Rossano) where my breakfasts included (along with 20-minute old fresh mozzarella and the yellowest egg yolk I have ever seen), a few

shots of the locally made stuff. Whoa! ... Good mornin'!

Even though it was originally an acquired taste, popular only in Italy, Grappa today, is making itself known around the world. Distilleries from Australia to Oregon are trying their hand at making Grappa, with surprisingly good results.

Grappa was originally made in Bassano del Grappa, a town of around 30,000 residents in Italy's northern Veneto region (famous for its Soave wine). It is from this town that Grappa gets its name. Grappa started as a by-product of the Italian winemaking trade, a rough drink made with what was available, high-octane enough to get the farmers through the cold winter months. It was good at warming you up, but not particularly palatable — similar to the moonshine of the Midwestern United States.

■ See Uncorked on B4



WINE OF THE WEEK N.V. ANTINORI TIGNANELLO GRAPPA, TUSCANY, ITALY

(Available at Bristol Cellars)

COLOR: Crystal clear
NOSE: Made from both Sangiovese and Cabernet grapes. This Grappa displays aromas of strong perfume, well-articulated aromatics that meld into a soft, generous core of musty grape characteristics.
PALATE: As soon as the marc has fermented, it is drawn off from the tanks and pressed, and immediately taken to the distillery. This procedure guarantees that distillation is carried out using the best quality marc possible — rich in alcohol and more importantly with good aromatic characteristics.

PATSY POINTS: 85 points