Ritz takes local, seasonal foods to a higher level



Manzanita at the Ritz-Carlton, Lake Tahoe is serving up seasonal cuisine that is locally sourced. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

TRUCKEE – *"I'll be taking my plate out back and licking it." "Brown butter is like my crack." "The pork was out of this world." "I can't eat enough apricots right now." "With the rosemary, it doesn't make the ice cream too sweet."*

Those were some of the comments as guests devoured a four-course dinner at Manzanita restaurant at the Ritz-Carlton, Lake Tahoe.

It was a night for Chef Stanley Miller to show off what is in season, what is new and that he has more than filled the shoes of Traci Des Jardins. Des Jardins opened the restaurant in

December 2009. Miller took over executive chef duties a year ago this month.



“I share recipes because if you don’t know how to make it, it doesn’t matter.”
Stanley Miller

Sitting outside at the “long table”, the backdrop is of the slopes at Northstar. The table is exquisitely set – giving it a mountain feel with carved wood, plants in cylinder vases and muted colors. Warding off the cool evening temps are heat lamps, including a long gas fireplace not far from the dining table.

An herb garden on the back patio includes things like purple sage, lemon balm and edible flowers. Chefs are picking them as guests mill about. Soon they will be incorporated into various dishes.

Miller uses 10-year-old starter for his sourdough bread. He had it shipped to California when he moved here. Before being hired he told management he would not buy bread.

His first course is a salad. It has greens from Del Rio Botanical in West Sacramento that were not ordinary. One diner said she had been pulling those same greens from her garden because she thought they were weeds.

Frog Hollows apricots, ricotta and goat cheese stuffed squash blossom, with a pistachio vinaigrette topped the salad. The blend of flavors and earthiness of greens make it so the salad could be a meal unto itself.



The “long table” at Manzanita.

It is complemented with a Viognier from Terre Rouge in Plymouth. The rest of the meal is paired with a delicious Barbera from Nevada City Winery.

A crispy soft shell crab on top of a shaved vegetable salad with Capay Organics potato gnocchi, Riverdog Farms charred onion and spring garlic dressing was the next course.

Miller said tomatoes and berries would be sweeter this summer because of the drought.

He got his start in the food industry as a teenager in Ohio working in his family’s butcher shop. Miller grew up where food was strictly for nourishment. He was one of the first boys to take a home ec class.

“I remember sewing my first apron. Baking was very easy for me,” Miller said. Winning a baking award in high school made him realize maybe he could do something more with his skills.

To this day, he says, “Cooking for me is fun.” Plus, he no longer has to wash dishes.

He started the third dish long before the guests arrived. The pork is slow roasted for three to four hours.

“It’s so good with the richness of corn and peaches,” Miller said.



Fresh herbs grown on site are part of many dishes.

The roasted Salmon Creek natural pork was served with Dwelly Farms bean and white corn succotash, porcini mushrooms, and Twin Peak Orchard peach chimichurri.

“The mushrooms are my favorite. They are like candy. It’s rare for people to use fresh porcini,” Miller said.

Some called the ensemble earthy. Most agreed the pork was incredibly tender and just melted in their mouths.

Dessert was a blueberry brown butter tart with rosemary ice cream and candied lemon.

Had people not been so full, seconds would have been in order.

Other seasonal dishes at the Ritz include grilled Monterey calamari, watermelon salad, Tuscan kale salad, heirloom tomato salad, king salmon, flatbread pizzas with summer vegetables or smoked tomato and mozzarella and more.

“I share recipes because if you don’t know how to make it, it

doesn’t matter,” Miller said. “Plus, I keep making new ones.”

He said he has volumes of recipes, but no book – yet – to show for it.



The blueberry brown butter tart is the perfect finishing touch.

The Ritz this summer is putting on various food and wine events so people can have experiences beyond eating at the hotel’s various restaurants.

Winemaker dinners will be on select Thursday evenings at Manzanita. They will feature Northern California wineries and a five-course meal prepared with fresh, local ingredients by chef de cuisine Jeremy Grossman.

A six-week, themed cooking class series hosted by the hotel’s culinary team will be offered on Fridays from 3:30-5pm starting July 11 and concluding Aug. 15. Classes include grilling, summer entertaining, super foods and healthy foods, date night cooking, sweets and treats and farm-to-table.

For more info about the Ritz’s culinary options, go online.

Letter: Sponsor helps provide Bread & Broth meal

To the community,

Another great dinner was served by Bread & Broth on June 30 thanks to the generosity and help of Getaway Reno/Tahoe. Owner and publisher of Getaway Reno/Tahoe, Todd Poth was “quite impressed to see the need in the community and glad that we could help at least a little bit.” Poth and his Getaway Reno/Tahoe crew Meghan Burk, communications director, and Jessica Schnoll, marketing director, (Zephyr Cove Consulting) served more than 100 meals to the dinner’s thankful guests.

“When you hear someone say, ‘thank you so much, I haven’t eaten in four days’, said Burk, “it makes you stop and think about how everyday you should be grateful for the simple things in life, like a full belly.”

Burk is also a regular B&B volunteer and frequently experiences firsthand the need in our Lake Tahoe South Shore community at the Monday evening dinners.

In addition to helping the less fortunate in our community, Getaway Reno/Tahoe does a fabulous job of providing Reno/Tahoe area information, attracting travel and tourism to our community. Bread & Broth would like to commend Getaway Reno/Tahoe for all of their efforts to promote South Lake Tahoe and support B&B’s efforts to ease the hunger within our community.

To help B&B as a donor or sponsor, contact me at 530.542.2876 or carolsgerard@aol.com.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Nutting’s wife to run for his seat; appeal filed

By Peter Hecht, Sacramento Bee

The last time people witnessed the determination of Jennifer Nutting, she stood in the well of the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors chambers as her husband, embattled Supervisor Ray Nutting, wiped away tears.

The board voted to ask a judge whether Nutting must be kicked out of office for official misconduct as a result of misdemeanor convictions for improperly raising bail money from two county employees and a major contractor doing business with the county. In an emotionally charged speech, Jennifer Nutting hailed her “hero” and lit into those who “maliciously prosecuted my husband.”

Now Jennifer Nutting says she is running for her husband’s seat, which was declared vacant by Superior Court Judge Timothy S. Buckley at Nutting’s sentencing June 6. Six candidates have now opened campaign committees or officially announced that they will run in the Sept. 9 special election to replace him.

Nutting’s entry into the race to serve out the last 21/2 years of her husband’s term adds yet more flair to a long political and legal drama that has raged in El Dorado County. Nutting, who owns a Pollock Pines hair salon, registered a campaign committee Tuesday called “People for Clean Government, Jennifer Nutting for Supervisor.”

On Monday, Ray Nutting’s attorney David Weiner filed legal papers declaring Nutting’s intention to appeal his criminal

conviction. Weiner said Nutting is seeking a new trial on the misdemeanor counts and will challenge the judge’s order forcing his removal from office.

Read the whole story

Study: Pretty food tastes better

By Jenn Harris, Los Angeles Times

Some chefs spend a good amount of time in the kitchen making sure your dish looks beautiful before it reaches the table. And, according to science, it’s not just about the aesthetics.

A study by the Crossmodal Research Library at the University of Oxford found that the prettier a dish looks, the better it seems to taste. Researchers served 30 men and 30 women one of three salads containing the exact same 17 ingredients, all prepared the same way. The only difference was in the presentation.

Participants were asked to answer questions regarding appearance before eating a salad, then regarding taste after finishing the salad. The researchers found that participants rated the Kandinsky-inspired salad as tasting better than the other salads. It also received higher ratings for artistic presentation and complexity.

Read the whole story

Squaw hosting Brews, Jazz and Funk Fest

The 13th Annual Brews, Jazz and Funk Fest at the Village at Squaw Valley is Aug. 9-10.

Continuous live jazz and funk music will be played on two stages, while more than 35 brews will be on tap.

A $5 fee benefits the Humane Society of Truckee-Tahoe.

The festival is open to all ages and well-behaved dogs on leashes. Kids can enjoy additional activities such as Squaw's free croquet, bean bag toss and slacklines, crafting at Everything Hunky Dory, and a 18-hole miniature golf course – as well as mountaintop activities that include roller skating, rock climbing, swimming and hiking.

More more info, go online.

Logging companies must report water use

By Matt Weiser, Sacramento Bee

Logging companies in the Sierra Nevada and elsewhere in California will now be required to report how much water they extract from streams for dust control.

The California Board of Forestry adopted the emergency regulations in response to the drought. The action arose from concerns that very low water flows in many mountain streams could be further depleted by water extractions related to logging.

Logging companies commonly draw water from streams to fill tanker trucks, which then spray the water on dirt roads to control dust. Known as water drafting, the procedure is intended to protect animals, vegetation and people from the dust generated by heavy logging trucks.

Existing regulations require logging companies to report their water use only in streams where salmon or steelhead fish are present. They are also required to obtain stream alteration permits from the state Department of Fish and Wildlife. The new regulations, which became effective June 19, extend those requirements to all other streams in California.

Read the whole story

USFS putting on free educational programs

Lake of the Sky Amphitheater evening programs at the Taylor Creek Visitor Center begin July 11 and continue every Friday evening through August.

The free series kicks off with An Evening with Mark Twain featuring McAvoy Layne performing as Mark Twain at 7pm.

Programs include:

- July 18 and Aug. 29 8:30pm, Winged Flight at Night
- July 25 and Aug. 15 7pm, Wild Things
- Aug. 1 7pm, Snowshoe Thompson
- Aug. 8 8pm, A 50th Year Wilderness Celebration
- Aug. 22 8pm, Birds of the Sierra Nevada
- Aug. 23 7pm, An Evening with Mark Twain.

These programs are sponsored by the U.S. Forest Service and the Tahoe Heritage Foundation.

The Taylor Creek Visitor Center is located approximately three miles north of South Lake Tahoe on Highway 89.

For more information, call 530.543.2674.

Experts: Government, corporations a threat to Internet

By Hayley Tsukayama, Washington Post

What are the biggest threats to the Internet in the next 20 years? According to experts canvassed by Pew, the biggest threats aren't a rise in hacking attacks or new waves of Internet crime. They're government and big online corporations.

Control and consolidation were the top threats for experts canvassed by Pew's Internet and American Life Project in a study published Thursday. The think tank asked more than 1,400 experts – academics, theorists and those who work in the technology industry – to weigh in on what risks the Internet faces through 2025.

The majority pointed to government surveillance, restrictive regulation and corporate greed as the things most likely to kill the idea that the Web is a free-flowing network of information. Plenty expressed concern that the Internet will fracture due to government policies, such as those that limit access to the Web as some governments did during the Arab Spring, aggressive intellectual property laws or even well-meaning policies in Canada and Australia that aggressively filter all Internet traffic to combat child pornography. These efforts, experts said, cross the line – or at least flirt with it.

Read the whole story

Suspected DUI driver kills 2 on motorcycle

Two people on the same motorcycle were killed late July 4 on Highway 50.

The man and woman from Dixon, whose names are not being released pending notification of next of kin, were riding west on the highway near Twin Bridges when they were hit by a mini van.

California Highway Patrol Sgt. Chris Davis told *Lake Tahoe News* that Megan Olivia, 28, of Reno was headed east when she crossed the center line and struck the motorcycle. The riders were ejected from the bike and pronounced dead at the scene.

Olivia was arrested on charges of vehicular homicide and driving while under the influence. Bail was set at $135,000.

Davis said a motorist had called in just before the 11:44pm accident to report the Aerostar van driving at a high rate of speed. Officers were not able to stop it before the accident.

Davis said from Thursday at midnight to 6am Saturday officers have made seven arrests for driving under the influence.

There will be a DUI checkpoint tonight on the South Shore by CHP.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• All the paperwork is in place for the Alta Mira Building in South Lake Tahoe to be demolished in September. The California Tahoe Conservancy is the new owner. The property will be an extension of Lakeview Commons.

• Lake Tahoe Outrigger Canoe Race is July 19-20 at Lakeview Commons at El Dorado Beach.

• Tahoe Resource Conversation District is putting on a free workshop July 8 for people to learn how to identify invasive plants. It is from 5:30-6:30pm at the Tahoe City Field Station, 2400 Lake Forest Road, Tahoe City.

• Tahoe Fund is trying to raise $750,000 for the East Shore bike trail. The private money would help Tahoe Transportation District secure $12.5 million in public funding for the path from Incline Village to Sand Harbor. To learn more about project or make a donation, contact Amy Berry at aberry@tahoefund.org or 775.338.1668.

• There will be murder mystery dinners aboard a vintage Virginia and Truckee Railroad steam engine train on July 18 and Aug. 15. For more info or to purchase tickets, call 877.724.5007.