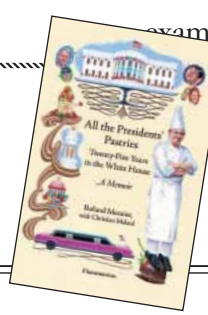


## ON THE SHELVES

**"All the Presidents' Pastries: Twenty-Five Years in the White House"** by Roland Mesnier with Christian Malard  
 » For a review of this book, please see the Literary Life section this weekend, March 10 & 11



## AROUND TOWN

### KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR ...

Just arriving in Dupont Circle is famed chef **Herbert Kerschbaumer** (formerly of La Nicoise, **Café Promenade** etc.), and his new Euro-American bistro, **Jack's Restaurant and Bar** (1527 17th St. NW; 202-332-6767; www.jacksdc.net). Check out the interesting — and well priced — cocktails, the proceeds of which go to the Whitman-Walker Clinic.

Bringing an urban feel to Middle Eastern food, **Yazuzu** (2120 18th St. NW; 202-319-8989; www.yazuzu.com) comes to Adams Morgan — and does it at a reasonable price.

### NEW OFFERINGS

Not new, but returning is **Charlie Palmer Steak's** (101 Constitution Ave. NW; 202-547-8100) infamous "Wine Wednesdays," celebrating the restaurant's all-American wine collection, consisting of over 10,000 bottles from all 50 states. Every Wednesday there will be a featured bottle at half price with an appetizer or entree that complements that varietal.

### CLOSED DOORS

**South Beach** in Bethesda, **Mama Quan's Tiki Hut** in Clarendon and **Macaroni Grill** in Ballston have all closed their doors for good.

## AROUND TOWN » PREPARING FOR A CONVENTION

# A dinner party for 5,400, kosher no less

### The D.C. Convention Center preps for AIPAC conference with meat, dairy separation

By **Robin Tierney**  
 Special to The Examiner

Imagine planning Sunday dinner for 5,400. Now imagine conforming the meal to strict kosher dietary rules, such as complete separation of meat and dairy from preparation to serving. Remember to prepare kosher vegetarian and vegan options ... and order 25,000 bagels — sesame, onion, but mostly plain.

Five days before the American Israel Public Affairs Committee Policy Conference, the staff of Centerplate/NBSE is running a koshering marathon to attain 100 percent kosher certification. Centerplate, the Wash-

ington Convention Center's respected catering team, will serve four other events during the same period.

Like an orchestra maestro, Centerplate banquet operations director Telma Maria Villarreal is in constant motion.

"We started the koshering process Friday [March 2]." This includes steam-cleaning 50 "Queen Marys" — giant wheeled racks that transport food. Dipping coffee urns in boiling water in front of rabbis. Sealing and marking koshered equipment and vessels as "ready."

Villarreal understands the need for separate sets of vessels, plates and utensils to prevent mingling of meat and dairy, and hot and cold. She's allocating 20,000 plates for just this one function.

Choreographing details with precision and grace, Villarreal has pulled off plated dinners for 8,500 to Mayor Fenty's inaugural reception for 15,000.

### BY THE NUMBERS

What it takes to feed more than 5,000 kosher conference attendees for three days, three meals:

- » 20,000 plates
- » 1,300 servers — 600 people will be brought in to supplement the convention center's 700-person staff
- » 25,000 bagels — some sesame and onion, mostly plain
- » 125 gallons of sauce for one entrée
- » 8,000 pounds of ice
- » And countless refrigeration trucks to store all the food



"Totally different dynamics go into this function," she says about the AIPAC affair. For example, each server will be assigned only one instead of two tables. To handle the

conference's banquets, meeting room meals and receptions, Centerplate is supplementing its 700-person convention center staff with 600 servers brought in from other facilities.

Centerplate executive chef Gregg Malsbary is working closely with 16 rabbis and Foremost, a Manhattan-area kosher caterer hired to prepare the food. On the menu: balsamic short ribs crowned with onion confit, bundled broccolini, sweet baby roasted peppers and "Opera Gâteau," a layered chocolate delicacy.

"We work off of refrigeration trucks to store the food [at the right temperatures], and we're bringing in equipment from all over the East Coast to enable the tight turns," says Malsbary, who calmly oversees a maelstrom of culinary logistics. Just imagine a shopping list jammed with such items as 125 gallons of sauce for the entrée and 8,000 pounds of ice.

## Gastronomic destination: D.C.

### A look into how Washington has evolved into a culinary superstar — with super chefs

By **Alexandra Greeley**  
 Special to The Examiner

Washington has certainly become a restaurant destination, says Dusty Lockhart, communications manager at The Ritz-Carlton in Georgetown. To underscore her observation, Lockhart points to a December article in USA Today extolling the culinary glories Washington presents. The article lists several outstanding dining spots, including CityZen, Maestro and Citronelle.

For a city once considered a culinary backwater; a place where folks cared more about politics than food, finding such high-profile restaurants is stunning. It's also about time.

What's sparked D.C.'s coming-of-age? Many factors have played into the city's gastronomic rise, but according to Michael Birchenall, editor of D.C.'s Foodservice Monthly, chef extraordinaire and kitchen genius Jean-Louis Palladin may well have been the flashpoint.

"He was the first world-class chef we could claim who made his name here," says Birchenall, adding that Patrick O'Connell of the Inn at Little Washington and then Michel Richard also built their names in Washington — inspiring young chefs to stay on.

"The key is a core of chefs who have stayed and are producing excel-

lent products," he says. "The numbers are not equal yet to San Francisco and New York, but in all food articles, you must now talk about D.C. José Andrés, Fabio [Trabocchi], Robert [Weidmaier], Michel [Richard] ... you can talk about them in any conversation about great American chefs without apologizing."

But more than showcasing great chefs and individual restaurants, D.C. and the metro area also have attracted a slew of upscale and midrange restaurant groups — BLT Steak, Il Mulino New York, Charlie Palmer Steak, Bobby Van's Steakhouse, The Oceanaire Seafood Room and McCormick & Schmick's, to name a few. A booming local economy and the city's fiscal stability, says Lynne Breaux, executive director of the Restaurant Association Metropolitan Washington, plus D.C.'s beauty and walkability have helped make the city a gastronomic destination.

And the future looks bright. "I see continued growth, and the market can sustain more growth. The competition is very friendly between restaurants," she says, adding that Alexandria and Arlington both are coming on strong.

After all, says Juliette Rossant, editor of Super Chef, the online magazine, it makes sense for restaurant groups to continue their move to D.C. "The groups have better buying power for insurance and can negotiate better real estate deals," she says. "And they are aligning themselves with top-name chefs. That trend will continue in D.C."

The effect is that we will eat better, she says, because restaurants have to compete with a celebrity draw.

## DINE WITH US

**Area Code**  
 ALX - Alexandria    FFX - Fairfax  
 ARL - Arlington    MTG - Montgomery Co.

<b>AMERICAN</b>	<b>WAREHOUSE BAR &amp; GRILL</b>	<b>703.683.6868</b>	ALX	warehousebarandgrill.com
	\$24.95 - Horseradish Crusted Salmon - Topped with Maine Lobster			
	<b>POLO GRILL RESTAURANT</b>	<b>703.550.0002</b>	FFX	pologrill.net
	\$16.95 - Cajun Chicken Oscar - Topped with spicy lump crab & crawfish & hollandaise sauce			
<b>SEAFOOD</b>	<b>BLUE IGUANA</b>	<b>703-502-0706</b>	FFX	blueiguana.net
	\$21 - Weeknight Dinner Special. Exclusive Three Course Menu served Sun-Thurs. Call for details.			
	<b>FERDINAND'S RESTAURANT</b>	<b>301.949.1617</b>	MTG	
Early Bird Specials - Mon-Sat Call for details				
<b>SEAFOOD</b>	<b>WHARF RESTAURANT</b>	<b>703.836.2836</b>	ALX	wharfreastaurant.com
	\$23.95 - Cashew Crusted Mahi Mahi - shitake mushrooms, spinach, & ginger soy beurre blanc			
	<b>RTs RESTAURANT</b>	<b>703.684.6010</b>	ALX	rtsrestaurant.net
\$18.95 - "Death By Gumbo" Shrimp, oysters, lump crab, crawfish & nouvelle sausage				
<b>FRENCH</b>	<b>LE REFUGE</b>	<b>703.548.4661</b>	ALX	lerefugealexandria.com
	\$26.95 - Cassoulet Maison - The perfect dish for the cold weather			
<b>ITALIAN</b>	<b>SAVIO'S ITALIAN RESTAURANT AND BAR</b>	<b>703.998.8474</b>	ALX	saviosrestaurant.com
	\$29.95 - Dinner For Two. Includes a bottle of Red or White Wine, Mon-Thurs. Call for details.			
	<b>MARCO POLO</b>	<b>703.281.3922</b>	FFX	marcopolorestaurant.com
	\$18.95 - Thursday Night Prime Rib Buffet - The best prime ribs in town			
	<b>EXTRA VIRGIN MODERN ITALIAN</b>	<b>703.998.8474</b>	ARL	extravirginva.com
\$18.00 - Tagliolini Casaliva - Pasta with prawns, bay scallops and asparagus in fresh tomato sauce				
<b>PINES OF FLORENCE</b>	<b>703.549.1796</b>	ARL/ALX		
\$16.95 - Zuppa de Pesce - King Crab legs, mussels, clams, scallops, squid, and shrimp on pasta				

## THE EXAMINER KNOWS HEALTH

Your diet and fitness news everyday in **HEALTHY LIFE**