

## Table Talk | Cary Neff's bistro is debuting soon

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PETER TOBIA / Inquirer Staff Photographer

Two chefs at Le Castagne have branched out with **Cucina di Amici**, a prepared foods/catering operation in Sewell, Gloucester County. Manager **Tim Spence** mans the counter. Cary Neff is about two weeks away with **Coquette Bistro & Raw Bar**, his French spot at Fifth and Bainbridge Streets, in the space that's housed a couple of Thai restaurants.

Neff, who also owns **Sansom Street Oyster House**, is going for a warm, 1930s-'40s feel - down to the phone number, which he's quaintly listing as CEdar 8-9000. There will be a raw bar and a drinkin' bar, a first for the location.

Chefs are the husband-wife team of David and Carla Gilberg; he cooks, she bakes. He was head chef at **Loie** off Rittenhouse Square after a stint as executive sous chef at **Matyson**. Coquette's dinner entrees will run from a \$10 burger to \$23 for coquilles St. Jacques. The *plat du jour* includes \$45 bouillabaisse-for-two.

It'll be a six-day dinner operation, though as of earlier this week, Neff was not sure if he'd skip Mondays or Tuesdays. Brunch will be served on weekends, and there will be a late-night menu.

Speaking of French: The countdown has begun at **Pif**, the Italian Market-area BYOB from David Ansill, who's pulling the plug after six years to go full time at **Ansill** at Third and Bainbridge. Pif's last day will be July 14, Bastille Day.

And Gene Giuffi, a former line cook at **iPasion!** (after time at **Nan**, **Davio's** and **La Boheme**), is planning **Cochon**, a casual country-French BYO in the ex-Cafe Sud space at Catharine and Passyunk in Bella Vista. (Name means "pig," but menu won't be pork-centric.) Partner is his wife, Amy. They hope to open in September.

### Chef chat

Chef Jonathan "Jonny Mac" McDonald and owner Jonathan Makar have reconceptualized **Snackbar**, the boîte at 20th and Rittenhouse, off the square. Nightly small- and large-plate menu now has a pub bent (asparagus salad with escargot and brown butter; mussels with white beer and thyme; pork belly with pickled melon, rhubarb and kumquat; even a burger) - still on the avant side of avant garde, but more accessible. They've also added \$8 specialty cocktails.

**Le Castagne's** executive chef, Brian Wilson, and its sous chef, Mike Delone, have branched out in South Jersey with **Cucina di Amici** (137 Egg Harbor Rd., Sewell, 856-227-3227), a prepared-foods/catering operation with 12 seats for dining in. It's open from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. every day but Sunday, when hours are 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

### Briefly noted

**Day By Day**, which has done lunch and catering seemingly forever at 21st and Sansom Streets, rolls out a dessert operation Wednesday. It's called Day By Day AfterDark, run by Molli Barg, daughter of chef-owner Robin Barg, with help from her brother Michael and pastry chef Marva Brown. It'll be open from 6 to 11 p.m. Wednesdays through Fridays.

**Water Works**, off Kelly Drive behind the Art Museum, has brought in its first general manager, former **Le Bec-Fin** manager Jeff Clauso, and a dining-room manager, Mick Hally, last at the **Moshulu**. Ed Doherty, the **Capital Grille** alum who was running Water Works' front of the house since its opening, had been consulting.

### Chain-chain-chains

Plymouth Meeting Mall will get a **P.F. Chang's** at year's end, as well as a **California Pizza Kitchen** and **Redstone American Grill**. **Pei Wei Asian Diner** - Chang's more casual sibling - has October openings due in Wynnefield Heights (next to the Target under construction at City Avenue and Monument Road) and Springfield Square in Springfield, Delaware County. Chang's also is coming to Valley Square, the center in Warrington that also houses Wegman's and also is expecting a **Ted's Montana Grill** and **Kildare's** (no timetable available). Kildare's also just signed a lease in the Orlando, Fla., area, on International Drive. I also hear that deals are close for **Fleming's Prime** and **Bonefish Grill** in Marlton.