



August 16, 2009

NEW JERSEY DINING | KINGSTON

Local Ingredients for a Worldly Menu

By [DAVID CORCORAN](#)

IT is tempting to say that [Eno Terra](#) is a dazzling restaurant, but that wouldn't be quite right. The experience is actually quite low-key. It's only in retrospect, when you think back on the meal and the setting, that you realize how seamlessly and pleurably it all came together.

Not that there is anything low-key about this year-old restaurant's ambitions. Just check the résumé of the chef, Christopher Albrecht, who spent his career, until now, with the towering [Tom Colicchio](#) — first at [Gramercy Tavern](#) and then at [Craft](#) in Manhattan and finally as executive chef at Mr. Colicchio's high-stakes Las Vegas venture, [Craftsteak](#).

In a recent conversation, Mr. Albrecht, 37, said Eno Terra's owners, the brothers [Carlo and Raoul Momo](#), intended to make it "the ultimate expression of sustainability." Hyperbole, no doubt, but a clue to the level of their aspirations. The menu lists dozens of ingredients grown within 50 miles or so of [Kingston](#) — still a sweet, rustic-looking crossroads village, located near Princeton in one of the remaining slivers of truck-farm country that gave the Garden State its name.

When I visited, in late June and July, there were sugar snap peas and spring onions and real baby carrots, the kind with a stub of green stem still attached. There were pencil-thin grilled asparagus and glorious, sizzingly sharp arugula. There were cheeses from Long Valley, chicken from Griggstown, beef and pork from Skillman. Come December and January, of course, the fresh-grown bounty won't be quite as bountiful. But even now, Mr. Albrecht is preserving a couple of cases of New Jersey apricots for winter desserts.

What he does with these ingredients is relatively straightforward. They are allowed to speak for themselves.

Meaty radicchio di Treviso (hardly local, but never mind) is grilled to lend a burnished smokiness to its natural bitterness. It comes on a long white plate with arugula, local strawberries in balsamic syrup, prosciutto from San Daniele in Italy and triangular slices of the mozzarellalike toma primavera cheese from [Cherry Grove Farm](#) in Lawrenceville — an exuberant, captivating dish. And almost a full meal, if you pair it with, let's say, a half-order of the tender, almost creamy gnocchi, in a sauce crunchy with snap peas and heady with basil pesto.

For a restaurant of this quality, the prices are surprisingly reasonable. Near the high end of the

menu you can order osso buco (from Pennsylvania) for \$32 — and it's fork-tender, in a soulful Madeira reduction, with tasty hand-rolled mushroom tortelloni — but you can also eat in the bar, order a glass of wine and a plate of cheese or cured meats and escape for about \$25. “We’re a neighborhood restaurant, too,” Mr. Albrecht said with a touch of pride.

The main dining room is restful and elegant, with soft lighting and featuring a water wall and a stunning sculpture made of weathered wood and live ferns, the work of the local artist Robert Cannon. When it's light outside, diners can look out on a graceful patio carved out of the stony hillside at the base of which Eno Terra sits. (There's no service outdoors, though diners carry their own plates out there.)

Graceful, but not so dramatic as to distract from dishes like poussin al mattone (chicken grilled over oak and cherry embers, under a hot brick for maximum crispness and juiciness). Or first-rate grilled yellowfin tuna, its purple center a Pop Art contrast with chartreuse circles of summer squash. Among the entrees, the only serious disappointment was charred, tough sirloin tips.

Mr. Albrecht is his own pastry chef, and he turns out a sensational blueberry dessert: crepes with a lemon-cream filling, strewn with plump, flawless berries and their syrup. A three-cheese cheesecake (goat, mascarpone and cream cheese) isn't far behind.

Then there's a chocolate tart, with candied hazelnuts, a cloud of whipped cream and spiced caramel that sticks, for a delectable moment, to the roof of your mouth. Now that is dazzling.

Eno Terra

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Kingston

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enoterra.com

EXCELLENT

THE SPACE A country restaurant in an expanded 19th-century frame building. Wheelchair accessible.

THE CROWD Casual but well turned out.

THE STAFF Knowledgeable and attentive.

THE BAR Spacious and welcoming. The wine list is long and well chosen, with a strong Italian accent.

THE BILL Lunch entrees, \$12 to \$18. Dinner entrees, \$22 to \$36; tasting menu, four courses for

\$49. American Express, Visa and MasterCard accepted.

WHAT WE LIKED Grilled radicchio, beet salad, vegetables à la grecque; gnocchi, pasta Bolognese; osso buco, poussin, grilled scampi, rib-eye steak, tuna; chocolate caramel tart, buttermilk panna cotta, cheesecake, blueberry crepe.

IF YOU GO Lunch: Monday through Friday, 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Dinner: Monday through Thursday, 5:30 to 9 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 5 to 10:30 p.m.; Sunday, 4 to 9 p.m. Reservations recommended. Internet mapping services may send you to the wrong address; consult the restaurant's Web site or call for directions.

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