

# Chef<sup>TM</sup>

MAGAZINE

CELEBRATING  
**54**  
years

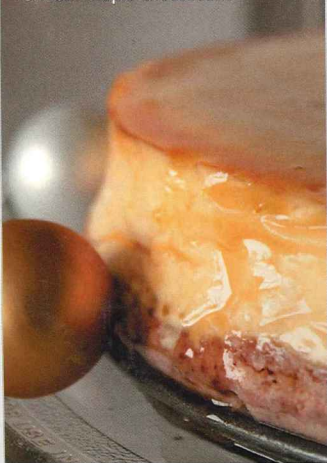
The Magazine for Foodservice Professionals

Guillermo Tellez, executive chef,  
Square 1682, Philadelphia



Heirloom beets and chèvre  
shine in a side salad

Recipe Cards: Fabulous  
Vermont maple cheesecake



Multitasking ovens that do it all

### Inside this issue:

#### The new role of sides

Side dishes move toward the center *pg. 14*

#### Star vegetables

The dish on produce *pg. 18*

#### Starches steal the show

Recipes for potato panache and polenta perfection *pg. 21*

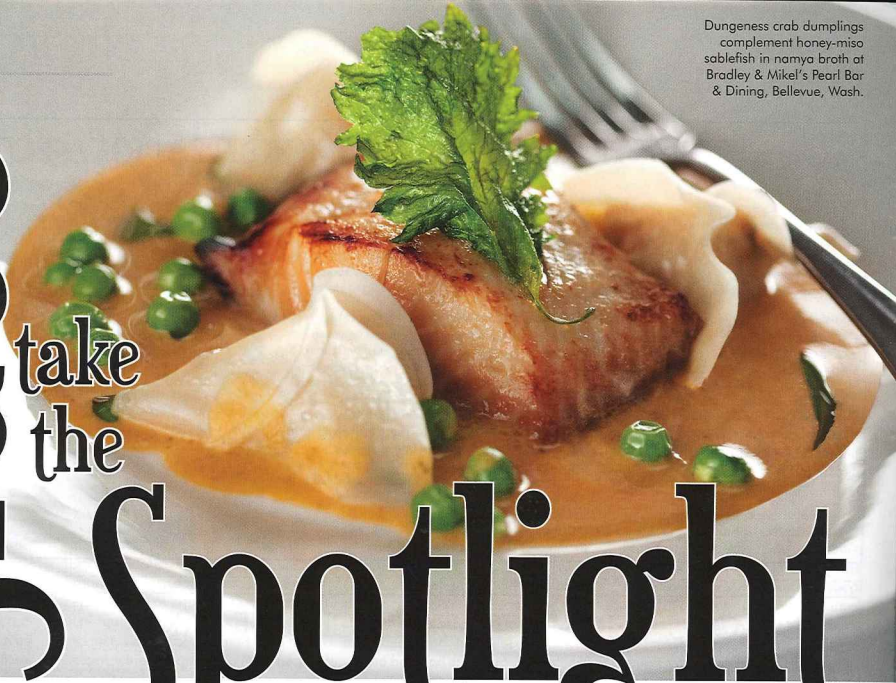
#### Plus:

Buffet equipment solutions *pg. 24*

Ovens *pg. 28*

Update: Prep tables *pg. 32*

# Sides take the Spotlight



The long-overlooked side dish moves to center as wallet-friendly, farm-to-table dining gains ground

As the economy plods slowly out of a prolonged recession, restaurant operators are seeking ways to lure budget-minded diners. Many are embracing the versatile side dish as a way to curb attention from traditionally large and costly center-of-plate proteins. By shifting the emphasis toward seasonal vegetables and starches and scaling back on the protein, chefs can save on food cost and appeal to budget- and health-conscious diners alike. Emphasizing vegetable sources and adding sophisticated touches like local cheese or smoked

meat, fresh herbs, house-made dumplings, ancient grains or even shellfish boost value perception.

#### Memorable accompaniments

Amid the rising cost of many proteins, chefs are getting creative in their use of side dishes to maintain their market share, says Bradley Dickenson, chef of Bradley & Mikel's Pearl Bar & Dining, Bellevue, Wash. ([www.pearlbellevue.com](http://www.pearlbellevue.com)).

"We need to figure out how make an entrée feel good and fulfilling with-

out putting ... 10 ounces of protein on the plate. I don't need those big portions anymore, and a lot of people don't want them. [One] thing we've done to balance our food cost goals to our guests' perception of value is to reduce the portion of an upper-end protein and serve it with a more sophisticated side dish."

On Pearl's menu, a 7-ounce Wagyu sirloin is thoughtfully paired with house-made blue cheese fritters and Yukon gold potatoes. A 5-ounce broiled duck breast gets a lift from a warm, nutty bulgur salad. A 6-ounce honey-miso marinated sablefish is enhanced by house-made Dungeness crab dumplings in namya curry broth. "It's funny—I never thought of those dumplings as a side dish, more as a bonus to the fish," Dickenson admits. "We just wanted to do more with sides, whether it's vegetables, potatoes or dumplings. Some days, it's a lot of work, but it makes it special."

At farm-to-fork restaurant Miller Union ([www.millerunion.com](http://www.millerunion.com)) in Atlanta, sides get the same level of attention as proteins. "For us, we really start with the vegetables," says executive chef Steven Satterfield. "We are working with growers that are breeding animals and getting great-quality pasture chicken and heritage pork, but a lot of times I think chefs' emphasis is always

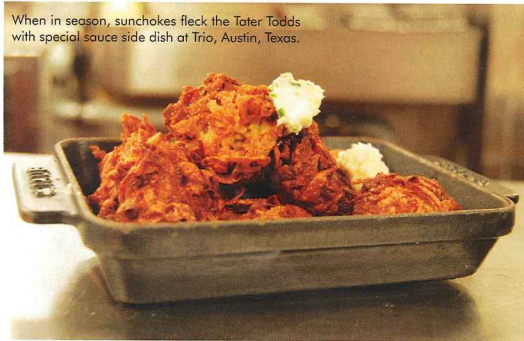
on proteins, and the side dishes become the afterthought."

Georgia Vidalia onions are the stars of a vinaigrette tossed with bacon and potatoes and served with a grilled 7-ounce mountain trout. An unctuous, 8-ounce pan-seared duck breast sits atop a large pile of local sweet corn and butter bean succotash. "I am a big fan of eating fresh foods and I think our bodies respond really well to them. Any one of our dishes has a nice balance of vegetables on every plate—and are things I personally would like to eat."

#### À la carte, elevated

Chefs can also create buzz by rethinking how they present à la carte sides. Rotating seasonal items and revamping classics can lift the side to the status of a signature dish and boost check averages. At Pearl, the à la carte sides change seasonally with rifts on timeless flavor pairings, from straightforward summertime green beans with brown butter and almonds or smashed potatoes with caramelized onion to a top-selling "eggplant Parmesan," fried in a crispy tempura batter and served with no-cook tomato sauce. Because of the dishes' affordability, diners can mix and match sides with entrées, depending on how adventurous they feel. "These items

When in season, sunchokes fleck the Tater Tods with special sauce side dish at Trio, Austin, Texas.



are \$6 or \$7, so you could take a little bit of a risk and at least try something new. Or people may just want mashed potatoes—because they're comfortable with that—though it doesn't come with their entrée. So you have to give them options," Dickenson says.

No foodservice concept has led the way in signature sides quite like the steakhouse, where legendary hash browns and opulent creamed spinach have been known to lure as many diners as a dry-aged ribeye. At three-year-old Trio Restaurant ([www.triorestaurentaustin.com](http://www.triorestaurentaustin.com)) at The Four Seasons Hotel in Austin, Texas, chef de cuisine Todd Duplechan says that steakhouse guests love the "choose-your-own-adventure" style of dining. However, he adds, "If you're going to have a la carte sides that stand on their own, they have to be a little more adventurous."

Duplechan calls his selection of playful, seasonal sides "an updated twist on the classics—some things I know of and some things I grew up with." In a lofty nod to the baked summer squash with breadcrumbs Duplechan ate as a kid, he confits local heirloom squash in olive oil in the oven with herbs, onion and garlic topped with Parmesan-herb breadcrumbs for crunch. "What you're left with is the distinct flavor of squash plus the velvetiness of olive oil and the crunch of Parmesan to tie it back to my childhood," he says.

Another signature, Duplechan explains, is Trio's sweet corn crème brûlée, which is executive chef Elmar Pramb's savory interpretation of the famed custard dessert with a burnt sugar lid. Roasted sweet corn kernels are added to a purée of sautéed corn, garlic, onion, wine, cream, cornstarch and butter. The mixture is spooned into ramekins,

topped with sugar and torched briefly to create a crackable sheet of caramel atop the savory corn custard. Tater Todds are Duplechan's interpretation of the childhood favorite using Russet potatoes, sunchokes (when available) and blue cheese. The "special sauce" of house-made ketchup, whole-grain mustard and aioli, is his homage to the 1982 film "Fast Times at Ridgemont High."

"They're all normal dishes. I just take familiar concepts and upgrade them and try to have a little fun."

#### Celebrating the vegetable

As diners continue to clamor for what's local, seasonal and healthy, chefs are spending more time on the vegetable component of the plate, starting at the source.

The staff at Trio has been pushing for a more locally driven menu since the restaurant opened three years ago, and its efforts have been embraced by the surrounding community.

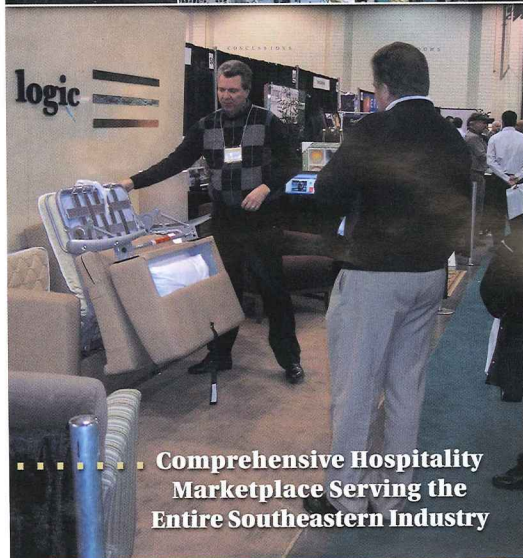
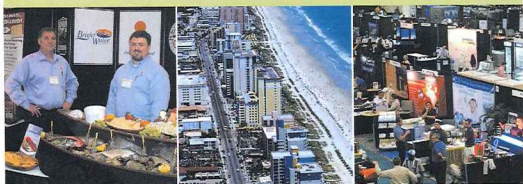
"Texas—Austin specifically—has really grabbed onto the local food movement," Duplechan says. "I know from growing up here that people from Texas are proud and like to support Texas things emphatically. So I like to put more focus on what I get around here as the community has grown around me."

Most of Trio's sides change with the seasons, barring items that are available year-round like the signature potato purée with local olive oil and truffle macaroni and cheese. Duplechan says that in the coming weeks, Chinese long beans, summer squash and sunchokes will give way to sides featuring sweet potatoes, pumpkin, spinach and arugula. And yet, he has developed a strategy for keeping items on his menu over longer stretches than the seasons typically

# 35TH ANNUAL Hotel, Motel and Restaurant Supply Show

## OF THE SOUTHEAST

Myrtle Beach ■ South Carolina



Comprehensive Hospitality  
Marketplace Serving the  
Entire Southeastern Industry

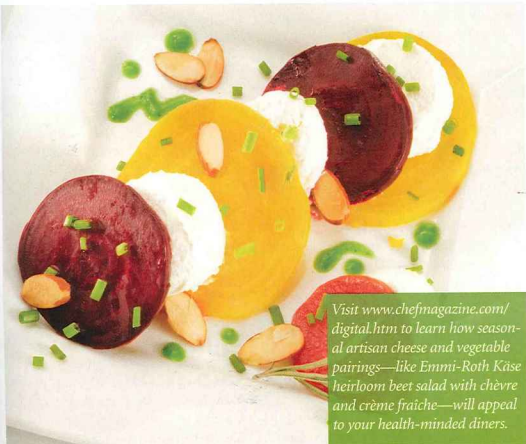
**JANUARY 25, 26 & 27, 2011**

**OPPORTUNITIES AND SOLUTIONS  
IN A FABULOUS RESORT LOCATION**



**1.800.261.5991 ■ [www.hmrsss.com](http://www.hmrsss.com)**

Low Attendance Cost ■ Drivable Location



Visit [www.chefmagazine.com/digital.htm](http://www.chefmagazine.com/digital.htm) to learn how seasonal artisan cheese and vegetable pairings—like Emmi-Roth Käse heirloom beet salad with chèvre and crème fraîche—will appeal to your health-minded diners.

# Experience Vermont Maple Syrup in new ways!

**The Flavor...**  
Pure, natural and delicious!

**The Benefits...**  
A healthful, all natural sweetener from Mother Nature.

**Our Invite...**  
Be one of the first 500 to respond to this ad and receive a complimentary sample of **Pure Granulated Vermont Maple Sugar**.

Visit us today at **VermontMaple.org** and use code **chef10**.  
*Experience the endless possibilities of maple!*

*Thank you from the Maple Sugarmakers of Vermont through the Vermont Maple Foundation.*



**Pure Granulated Maple Sugar**  
**www.VermontMaple.org**

# Sides take the Spotlight



Side dishes become the stars in the seasonal vegetable plate at Miller Union, Atlanta.

permit. "I usually lengthen my seasons by starting a little bit further away when I order product," he says. "There's a guy in Brownsville, Texas, who ships heirloom tomatoes to me in early spring. As it gets warmer there, those die, and then for the majority of the tomato season, I get them from a guy around the corner in Austin."

At Miller Union, Satterfield has always emphasized the vegetable portion of the plate, in part because he works so directly with local growers. "Whether the farmers deliver to us or we pick it up at the market, we have a relationship with these folks, and we are getting really good-quality, fresh produce as a result."

Peak-season ingredients require the right treatment, which Satterfield insists upon the moment the produce arrives from local farms that include Woodland Gardens, East Fork Farm or Crystal Organic Farm. "I make sure the vegetables are handled properly when they come in the door. We talk a lot about preparation, and we try to honor each produce item in a way that it can shine through, and we can allow its qualities to really be showcased on the plate."

Whether he soaks okra in salt water to extract the "goeey stuff" before dredging it in cornmeal and deep frying it, salts and drains eggplant on racks to draw out excess moisture before prepping sweet and sour caponata or braises celery for an unlikely partner to sautéed quail—Satterfield elevates each vegetable's unique flavors and textures

through proper technique.

"Our approach is to pull back away from that long, abandoned cook time that the South often is known for," he says. "How can we focus on cooking vegetables just to where they still maintain color and freshness but still taste like they're supposed to taste? A lot of that means introducing some salt early on before it even hits any heat, which helps draw out some liquid and flavor. Or using a particular kind of fat—butter versus olive oil or even bacon fat as an ingredient."

Because his sides are worthy of standing alone, Satterfield offers a lofty take on a time-honored Southern classic, the seasonal vegetable plate, as an entrée on Miller Union's lunch and dinner menus. The plate is composed of a changing selection of seasonal sides such as succotash with shavings of country ham, 5-minute roasted Brussels sprouts with garlic and shallot and slow-braised Chinese long beans with smoked pork bones. "A lot of people in the South grew up eating vegetable plates because they couldn't afford meat," he says. A smoked bone, ham hock or a few strips of bacon might be added to certain vegetables to offer depth of flavor and succulence, but meat plays a secondary role in the vegetable plate, he notes. "Our vegetable plate is pretty popular. We are getting to be known for preparing vegetables in a way that we're taking good care of them and elevating them to a new place." ✓