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Good Tastes: Restaurant News in May

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By Compiled by Celestina Blok

COWGIRL CHEF WHIPS UP A COOKBOOK

Denton-bred food and travel writer Ellise Pierce followed her heart to Paris when she was wooed by a Frenchman five years ago, but eventually she stayed for the food. Longing for a taste of Texas to ease her homesickness, Pierce began searching French markets for ingredients to re-create her most cherished dishes from home. "The more I cooked, the less homesick I felt," she says. Soon, Parisian friends began to ask Pierce to teach them her delicious, Texas-inspired method of food preparation. The "Cowgirl Chef" was born. Pierce began leading in-home cooking classes, and started blogging and writing a popular column for the Star-Telegram. Now she has written a cookbook. In *Cowgirl Chef: Texas Cooking With a French Accent* (Running Press, \$25; available May 15), Pierce meshes French cuisine with Texas twists in dishes like chicken empanadas with cilantro yogurt and chorizo "cowgirl" quiche. Part memoir, part cookbook, the lovely tome includes chapters on "Tex Mex 101" and "Cowgirlified Frenchy" dishes, as well as "Tacos, Tarts and Tartines." Pierce shares her recipe for minty cantaloupe soup here, a dish that helps her keep cool during warmer months in her nonair-conditioned Paris apartment. Save the date for her Central Market Fort Worth cooking class July 25. www.cowgirlchef.com.



POUR OUT YOUR HEART



[View photos](#)

Minty Cantaloupe

Minty Cantaloupe Soup

Makes 4 servings

2 ripe cantaloupes,
peeled, seeded and cut
into chunks

Juice of 1 lemon

6 large, fresh basil
leaves, plus a bit more
for serving

8 fresh mint leaves,
plus a bit more for
serving

Pinch of sea salt

About 1 ounce of
crumbled Roquefort
cheese

About 1 ounce of

Tea and sympathy have long been joined in a ritual sharing over a hot cuppa. Imagine the uplifting and heartwarming properties of a porcelain cup that, when poured full, holds your beverage in a heart-shaped embrace. The Inside Out Heart Cups set from Classic Coffee & Tea includes six 5-ounce teacups in assorted colors. The cups and saucers are the newest in the whimsical contemporary line from Yedi Houseware (known best for its butterfly cups), which recently launched an online shop in celebration of its 10-year anniversary. \$50. Market Street, 5605 Colleyville Blvd., Colleyville, 817-577-5020; www.yedihouseware.com/collections/.

OL' SOUTH TURNS THE OLD 5-0

Serving everything from steaks to Swedish crepes, Ol' South Pancake House will celebrate 50 years of feeding Fort Worth this month. (Word is that even legendary pianist Van Cliburn is a regular.) The 24-hour pancake palace has been family-owned since 1962, but one thing has changed. It's no longer filled with a haze of cigarette smoke. The diner's signature Dutch Babies, miniature German pancakes filled with tangy, fresh-squeezed lemons, powdered sugar and whipped butter, have fed many a hungry Fort Worth soul. Ol' South is commemorating the anniversary by treating customers to a complimentary buttermilk short stack May 15. Get yours until midnight. 1509 S. University Drive, Fort Worth; 817-336-0311, www.olsouthpancakehouse.com.

SPICING THINGS UP IN BURLESON

Part bar, part farm-to-table restaurant, the new Spice Rack Tapas Bar & Grill is using organic produce from family-owned and operated Walnut Creek Farm in Alvarado. The menu is short and sweet, combining typical pub fare such as Buffalo wings and quesadillas with grass-fed beef burgers, fresh ceviche and organic vegetable fries -- a medley of lightly battered peppers, mushrooms, zucchini and carrots. Venison steak tacos come with Rack sauce, a piquant condiment used in many of the Spice Rack's dishes (hence the restaurant's name). If you want to try the ghastly-hot ghost pepper wings, a waiver must be signed; but if you finish a dozen, they're on

toasted almond slivers

1. Put cantaloupe pieces in a blender along with lemon juice, basil, mint and salt, and purée until it's very smooth. Chill in the fridge for at least 3 hours before serving.

2. Pour the soup into bowls and garnish with a bit of Roquefort, toasted almonds and torn basil and mint leaves.

Brandy Alexander

Brandy Alexander

Makes 1 drink

11/2 ounces brandy

1 ounce dark crème

de cacao

1 ounce half-and-half

1/4 teaspoon grated

nutmeg

Put all liquid ingredients in a blender with ice. Blend until smooth. Pour into martini glass. Sprinkle nutmeg on top.

the house. 133 S. Wilson St., Burleson, 817-295-7221, www.spicerackgrill.com

WOW, OUI!

Tim Love, currently Fort Worth's most talked about chef-restaurateur, is one of the partners reopening a swanky new version of the Oui Lounge, the longtime Bluebonnet Circle dive that closed quietly in March. Love won't offer a dining menu, but there is talk of a potential food-truck presence. Originally opened 50 years ago, the Oui is back with a retro '70s vibe -- with one difference: It's smoke-free. "We feel the Oui thrived in the '70s," says Love. "And there isn't a more fun and thriving time, especially when you want to party, than the '70s." To help get the party started, Love provided his recipe for the Brandy Alexander, a cool cocktail said to have been among John Lennon's favorites. 3509 Bluebonnet Circle, Fort Worth.

A SOUTHERN BREEZE IN KELLER

From the owners of Sugar & Frosting bakery in Keller comes Southern Breeze Market Cafe, a new lunch stop in Old Town Keller inspired by restaurants along the Carolina coasts. Pastry chef Melody Fitzgerald, who started her career at The Mansion on Turtle Creek, participated in Food Network's "Paranormal Cake" episode of Food Network Challenge in 2010. Her husband, Daniel, once served as Bonnell's general manager and helped open Tillman's Roadhouse on West Seventh. Together they're offering items that include seasonal quiche, apple and brie grilled cheese, sweet potato biscuits with honey butter and ham and blackberry salad. Melody also showcases her pastry skills in a dessert menu that includes mixed berry shortcakes and coconut buttermilk pie, made from scratch daily. 138 Olive St., Keller, 817-337-5177, www.southernbreezemarketcafe.com

STAMP YOUR PASSPORT TO FRANCE

Délicieux! Central Market is taking shoppers to France this month for its annual international culinary celebration. Hands-on crepe making, wine tastings and stellar chef appearances will take place during Passport France, running May 9-22 at the Fort Worth and Southlake locations. Aisles will be filled with French foodie finds like La Mère de Poulard cookies, Fallot Dijon, lollies, French chocolates, vinegars, oils and more than 40 French cheeses. (Try the 30-month aged Comté made from milk drawn from 18 local farms near the village of Arsure-Arsurette.) Cooking

classes include soufflé-making, a tour of French cheeses, wines of France and French cooking for the whole family. A class on regional favorites from the South of France with chef Patrice Olivon, program director of Culinary Arts at L'Academie de Cuisine, takes place 6:30 p.m. May 12 at the Fort Worth store. (He played a part in a team defeat of Iron Chef Cat Cora on Food Network's Iron Chef America.) Tickets are \$60, through www.centralmarket.com or 817-377-9005.

HOT DAMN, TAMALES! FOR BRUNCH

The Magnolia Avenue gourmet tamale kitchen Hot Damn, Tamales! expanded last year to offer more seating and lunch service. Now there's Saturday and Sunday brunch from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. The family-owned eatery hired chef Benito Gavirio, whose résumé includes culinary instructor at Central Market and guest appearances on Univision, to prepare the weekend brunch buffet. Items include citrus mint salad, jalapeño meatloaf, sun-dried tomato feta frittata and the tamales of the day. Brunch patrons can also order Gavirio's lobster eggs Benedict or smoked beef goat cheese omelet a la carte. Pair your meal with the restaurant's house-made sangria. 713 W. Magnolia Ave., Fort Worth; 817-926-9909, www.hotdamntamales.com

SOUTHLAKE'S SLEW OF OPENINGS

Southlake is scoring with multiple new restaurants. Mellow Mushroom (www.mellowmushroom.com), the quirky Georgia-based pizzeria chain, opened last month at 2820 E. Southlake Blvd. The restaurant is popular for its live music and crazy pies, like the Magical Mystery Tour topped with portobello mushrooms, feta cheese and jalapeños. Fuzzy's Taco Shop concept creator Paul Willis opened a second Buffalo Cantina (www.buffalocantina.net) down the street at 2801 E. Southlake Blvd. The original location is near DFW Airport, and both feature fusion fare such wasabi guacamole and crawfish and chorizo empanadas. Next for Southlake is Patrizio Pizza, Pasta & Vino (www.patrizios.net), popular in Fort Worth for its pasta dishes and patio seating. The Southlake Patrizio will open this summer along Texas 114.

NOTEBOOK

Los Angeles-based See's

Candies, established in 1921, is opening a store inside North East Mall on May 25. Using fresh ingredients, See's makes more than 100 varieties of candies, including milk chocolate Bordeaux and classic butter cream. Lucky for customers, free samples are always available. www.sees.com.

Mijo's Fusion is now open in the former Junsuree Thai House space in Fort Worth's Near Southside. Owner Connie Sheen, who owns both Mijo's in Arlington, blends Tex-Mex staples like enchiladas and quesadillas with Caribbean, Venezuelan and Asian-inspired cuisine like paella and lettuce wraps. The restaurant is BYOB while its liquor license is pending. 1109 W. Magnolia Ave., Fort Worth; 817-921-3905.

Fort Worth breakfast favorite Fernandez Cafe, dark for months, was reopened in April by former server Olga Garcia. The menu remains the same and includes migas, omelets and a Thursday-

night special of chicken and tortilla dumplings. The west-side restaurant is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner through Saturday, closing early Sunday. 4220 W. Vickery Blvd., Fort Worth.

Mothers take note: Some restaurants normally closed Sunday will open for Mother's Day brunches May 13, including Grace (777 Main St., 817-877-3388, www.gracefortworth.com); Ellerbe Fine Foods (1501 W. Magnolia Ave., 817-926-3663, www.ellerbefinefoods.com) serving a three-course meal; and Del Frisco's (812 Main St., 817-877-3999, www.delfriscos.com) offering its Sunday prime-rib special. Make reservations now.

Or, treat mom to a high tea. Royal chef Darren McGrady, who cooked for Queen Elizabeth II and Princess Diana, will host A Royal Mother's Day High Tea cooking class 4-6 p.m. May 7 at Market Street's Dish Culinary Center, 5605 Colleyville Blvd., in Colleyville. On the menu: English cucumber and mint cream cheese sandwiches, smoked salmon and dill quiche, lavender shortbread with honey and more. \$65; 817-577-5047, www.marketstreetunited.com.

[united.com](http://www.marketstreetunited.com).

Shinjuku Station, recently named a top 10 new restaurant by Texas Monthly, is toasting its first anniversary with two seven-course omakase dinners. The tasting menu, paired with select sakes, will include Hokkaido scallop and tuna tartare, baked Japanese mushrooms and sake-steamed Manila clams. May 8 and May 9; seating times 5-9 p.m. \$65. 711 W. Magnolia Ave., 817-923-2695, www.shinjuku-station.com.

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