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WOODSTOCK

magazine

Culinary Delights

AT THE LINCOLN INN

*Jeygen Saracco
of Lincoln
Inn Restaurant*

FALL FASHIONS
AT ELEVATION
CLOTHING

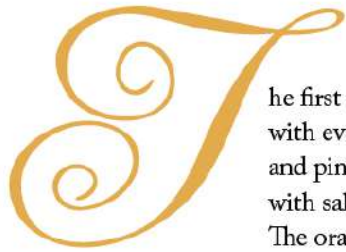
A LOOK BACK
AT TOURISM



The Lincoln Inn & Restaurant Brings Global Fusion to Woodstock

By Maria Buteux Reade | Photography by Lynn Bohannon

Driven by Design



he first course arrived under a glass dome swirling with evanescent smoke. Tender ivory kanpachi crudo and pink-edged radish wafer twirled into a rosette, with salmon and whitefish roe nestled into the folds.

The orange and golden pearls, bursting with oceanic salinity, complemented the buttery kanpachi. Marigold blossoms, miniscule shiso leaves, and blinq blossoms—the caviar of microgreens—added an earthy touch to the pool of seasoned dashi at the bottom of the broad plate. A sip of crisp herbaceous Austrian Gruner Veltliner prepared the palate for the next bite.

That was the opening act of the Lincoln Inn's seven-course tasting menu, culinary theater staged in a relaxed pace over three hours. The fifth course centered on Spanish quail prepared three ways, surrounded by shiitake mushrooms and pickled onions with marinated mustard seed; the ensuing dish featured a perfectly rare wagyu tenderloin and melt-in-your-mouth seared foie gras topped with shaved Italian white truffle. Unique and thoughtful wine pairings enhanced the artfully arranged elements on the plate.



Above: Kanpachi and Radish Crudo and Caviar.

Below: The Lincoln Inn & Restaurant.

Opposite: Mara Mehlman and Chef Saromova.







A GLOBAL EPICUREAN EXPERIENCE

Most meals start with ingredients. For Executive Chef Jevgenija Saromova, they begin with a sketch on a yellow lined legal pad. Jevgenija sees a plate as the blank canvas on which to create her own masterpiece. “We first taste food with our eyes, so the presentation is extremely important,” says Mara Mehlman, Chef Jevgenija’s partner and coproprietor of the Lincoln Inn & Restaurant.

On the yellow pad, Jevgenija pencils in shapes, swirls, slashes, squiggles, and dots. “When I create a dish, I draw how I want it to look. While I’m doing that, tastes start to filter into my head and mouth. The colors, forms, and textures lead me to the ingredients I will choose. I compose the final plate so that guests can taste each individual element and then bring them together on the fork to experience how they work as a whole.”

Jevgenija grew up in Latvia, where every meal was made from scratch. As a teenager traveling to other countries on holiday, she would find the best restaurants and inns and volunteer to wash pots and pans while keeping attuned to the dishes being prepared around her. When she returned to the hotel each night, she would write down notes on all that she had seen and tasted. This culinary passion led her to work in award-winning, high

Above: Paul Newman Private Dining Room. Photo courtesy of the Lincoln Inn.

Below: Sea Scallops, Unagi Kabayaki.





Clockwise from top: Deconstructed Caprese Salad. Langoustine, White Sturgeon Caviar. The patio offers plenty of outdoor seating.



rosette, and Michelin-star restaurants in Italy, France, and England.

Jevgenija and Mara bring an extraordinary global epicurean experience to Woodstock. "We are farm to table because we believe that ingredients must be as fresh as possible," the chef explains. "However, we don't limit ourselves to Vermont ingredients." Far from it, in fact. Jevgenija works closely with a supplier based in North Carolina who sources the highest quality ingredients from around the world that spark Jevgenija's creativity. "Jeff is a miracle. We've collaborated for six years, and I speak with him at least a dozen times a day. Because he's also a chef, he understands my vision and obsession with the finest ingredients, and he goes to great lengths to find them for me. Japanese seafood, Napa Valley quail, French foie gras, Italian truffles. Whatever I want, he will find!" Her skilled hands then transform and condense the flavors and textures into the purest forms of themselves through gastronomic alchemy.

Plates change by season. A fragrance in the air or the graceful shape or brilliant color of a vegetable will stimulate a creation. In late summer, one course featured langoustine with white sturgeon caviar and a dab of airy horseradish cream atop a disk of caramelized roasted

Top: Essence of Apple Smoke and Kanpachi.

Below: Strawberry Sorbet and Chocolate Delice with Honeycomb Twill.





Top: Spanish Quail.

Left and above: Two of the Lincoln Inn's six guest rooms, which combine rustic New England charm with simple elegance. Left photo courtesy of the Lincoln Inn.



Relax with a good book in the library. Photo courtesy of the Lincoln Inn.

onion and rich carrot puree. Sprinkled around the edge of the earthenware plate were two of Chef's signature powders: one made from dehydrated carrot juice and the other a white onion ash derived from burned, paper-thin slices of onion. These delicate touches conjured the vegetable itself while also serving as part of the plate's visual appeal. That dish was further enhanced by a delectably bright California chardonnay.

COMPLEMENTED BY EXCEPTIONAL WINE

"Wine pairings are a vital element to the overall experience," Mara notes. "We seek exquisite varietals, drawing from different winemakers and growing regions around the world. Our cellar has more than 500 varietals. Ninety-nine percent of the wines we pour are not available in standard retail stores. Our program provides our guests the opportunity to taste truly exceptional wines. Take Margaux

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for example, one of the world's most elegant wines. Thomas Jefferson fell in love with Margaux when he was ambassador to France. He brought cases back to the United States where it remained his wine of choice. Rarely can one order Margaux by the glass, but guests here can enjoy this treat."

Mara studied wine in Dijon, France, and has traveled extensively through wine-growing regions of Europe and California. "I read; I talk with wine-makers; I drink and live wine! Chef and I taste every bottle our distributors bring. She has a magical ability to taste a wine and create a dish that will complement it. I make sure each meal represents different regions of the world. The final selection for the menu is a give-and-take with both of us weighing in."

The couple bought the historic 1875 farmhouse inn in 2014 as a ground-up restoration project. "We're a restaurant with six guest rooms, much like you'll find in small villages throughout Europe," Mara says. "Our rooms are simply furnished, clean, and cozy." Securing a room upstairs allows guests to enjoy the unforgettable dining experience, wander out to the terrace overlooking the Ottauquechee River, and then enjoy a deep sleep, knowing an equally delicious breakfast awaits in the morning. Wine optional. ☺



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