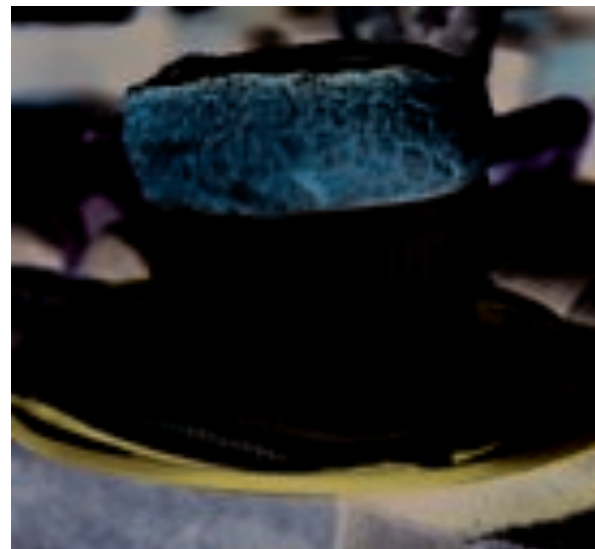


FOOD DRINK DISH!

BY DOTTY GRIFFITH

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID LYLES



WHIPPED INTO SHAPE! The founding trio, from left, Hedda Gioia Dowd, Mark Maguire and Cherif Brahmi, with canine consultant Lucky, relax in the semi-private stone enclosed dining area. *Above:* Sweet and savory soufflés tempt the palate.

RISING STARS *In love with a lifestyle centered around fine food and wine, a dream trio whips up a French-kissed soufflé bistro*

The French connection at Rise n°1 starts with the principals. Hedda Gioia Dowd drew her inspiration for a salon de soufflé from her memories of summers in France with her grandmother and the late lunches they shared.

Chef Cherif Brahmi, best known as executive chef of Maguire's, was born in the French culinary bastion of Lyon and trained in France before coming to the U.S. After cooking in some of Dallas best kitchens, Brahmi partnered with Mark Maguire for their successful, long-running venture, Maguire's Regional Cuisine.

Operations guy Mark Maguire honed his skills in France as well where he oversaw the grand opening of EuroDisney in Paris. In his spare time, Maguire learned to appreciate the French style of leisurely enjoying wine and food.

Their parallel experiences and Dowd's vision have come together to create a new concept in Dallas dining, the soufflé bistro, which opened in Inwood Village early last month.

About the name; Rise n°1 plays on French street sign graphics that identify streets by arrondissement (municipal borough). For the restaurant, it indicates the birth order. The Inwood Village location is Rise n°1. Names of four more locations planned to open by 2009 will Rise in numerical order, i.e. Rise n°2.

Nothing says French cuisine more than the classic soufflé. "I grew up with a mother and grandmother who made savory and sweet soufflés," says Dowd. "I'm still amazed how light I feel after eating one."

Rise n°1 "isn't so much about 'French' as a category" as it is about a style of dining and a salute to a specific food, the egg, says Dowd. There's no more complete food than the egg and "there's nothing more celebratory than a soufflé," she adds.

If Hedda Dowd's name sounds familiar you may know her as the founder of Antique Harvest (www.antiqueharvest.com), a company that specializes in fine French antique linen and silver. Of course, her first business will be reflected in the decor of Rise n°1.

Napkins, known in French as serviettes, are one-of-a-kind antique linen, made from pre-industry flax and hand-embroidered with assorted family initials, purchased from French chateaux, vineyards, and farmhouses. Flatware is an eclectic mix of antique silver plate utensils from France. The couch in the lounging or reading library (complete with Wi-Fi Internet connection) was salvaged in Dallas by Dowd while walking her dog, Lucky. She had the sofa re-covered in 18th-century French hemp called chanvre. Everything diners see in the restaurant will be available for purchase.

While the soufflé and the simple perfection of the egg are the focus of the menu, it goes beyond as well. Offerings include French onion soup, steamed artichokes with gribiche vinaigrette with fine shreds of hard-cooked egg), salad nicoise, artisan-made brie and cornichon sandwiches.

With a fine supporting cast, the soufflé will remain the star of the menu, however. Hearty, savory soufflés include ham and Gruyere, spinach and goat cheese, smoked salmon, blue cheese, wild mushroom and brie, as well as lobster thermidor.

Satisfying the sweet side are dessert soufflés, including chocolate, Grand Marnier, raspberry, cassis, caramel, and apricot.

Finding ovens that could produce soufflés quickly and consistently was an important part of the restaurant development. Maguire says the ovens, found in France and customized to chef Brahmi's strict specifications, can produce a soufflé in the amount of time it takes to cook a steak to medium.

Food is just part of the experience at Rise n°1. It's about savoring and imbibing in a relaxed atmosphere. "It won't matter what you're wearing or who you are, you'll feel embraced," says Dowd. ■

5360 W. Lovers Ln., Ste. 220 (Inwood Village) 214.366.9900, Hours: Monday through Saturday, 11AM to 11PM and Sunday, 9AM to 3PM, www.risesouffle.com.