



# Rise No.1 soufflé bistro plans to put French dish on the Dallas map

01:12 PM CST on Tuesday, January 8, 2008

By **JOYCE SÁENZ HARRIS** / The Dallas Morning News  
[jharris@dallasnews.com](mailto:jharris@dallasnews.com)

Imagine a restaurant with a menu of soufflés.

Savory soufflés made with lobster, crab, spinach or cheese. Dessert soufflés made with chocolate, Grand Marnier or hazelnut. Plus, of course, an array of wines and champagnes chosen for their affinity with soufflés.

That's what you can expect when Rise No. 1, a soufflé and wine bistro, opens this month in Inwood Village.

Although a *salon de soufflé* would not be unusual in Paris, Rise No. 1 is the first such restaurant in Dallas. As far as the owners know, it's also the first in Texas. (In fact, they're aware of only one other place in the United States that serves primarily soufflés: Café Jacqueline, in San Francisco's North Beach-Telegraph Hill area.)

Rise No. 1 would not exist without Hedda Gioia Dowd, a Dallas businesswoman who also operates the online linens-and-silver store called Antique Harvest, and who, having a French mother, has a passion for all things French.

Ms. Dowd is nothing if not persistent, and she also is persuasive. For a soufflé bistro, "I knew I needed a French chef," she says. She immediately thought of Cherif Brahmi, a French-born chef whom she has known for nearly 30 years.

Mr. Brahmi has been working in Dallas since 1974, but in 1998 he was hired by restaurateur Mark Maguire to help open Maguire's Regional Cuisine, on Dallas Parkway at Trinity Mills. Chef Brahmi and Mr. Maguire hit it off, formed a business partnership, and in 2002 opened Maguire's Uptown (now closed) on Cedar Springs.

Thus, Ms. Dowd says, she "knew I wouldn't get Cherif without Mark." She began pitching her dream for a soufflé bistro, but the two were not immediately sold.

In fact, they weren't sold for months. "You know how men can be," Ms. Dowd jokes. But she kept after



EVANS  
CAGLAGE/DMN  
**Rise No.1's chef Cherif Brahmi** (left), Hedda Dowd and Mark Maguire

them.

"It took a solid six months of Hedda chipping away at me," Mr. Maguire admits humorously. "I thought she was crazy. But I finally realized that this really was something."

Mr. Maguire had worked for Disney in France earlier in his career. Although he was not a soufflé fan then, he admired the French attitude toward food.

"What affected me profoundly in Europe was the social aspect of dining, so completely different from what I grew up with in the States," he says. "It's not about how quickly you can be served. It's about the people around the table, and the food on the table." He wants to bring that culinary sensibility to Rise No. 1.

Mr. Maguire says Rise No. 1's aim is to make soufflés approachable. Chef Brahmi knows he also must be able to make soufflés in relatively short order to keep the kitchen well-paced and customers happy.

The partners found a French-owned company in Canada to supply their special needs. The ovens are perfectly calibrated, with the commercial capacity to handle "25 to 30 soufflés on each of two decks," Mr. Maguire says. The kitchen will be able to bake soufflés in 10 to 12 minutes instead of the usual half-hour.

Chef Brahmi's expertise makes the construction of a soufflé appear simpler than it is. He even invented a novel way to present a lobster soufflé: with the extracted meat from a 1 ¼ -pound lobster packed into a cleaned-out shell, placed inside a soufflé and baked in a large casserole dish.

The chef also is buying as many ingredients as possible from local and regional vendors. The goat cheese, for example, comes from Paula Lambert's Mozzarella Company. In fact, much of Rise No. 1's philosophy is based on local foods and ecological sustainability.

The partners also chose recycled wood and renewable materials to build the restaurant. The furniture is vintage – with the chairs and tables mismatched – as are plates, silverware and napkins. Even the wait staff's aprons have been made out of vintage French linens from Ms. Dowd's collection.

The partners say the bistro is an idea whose time has come, and they're ready to teach customers about the subtleties and pleasures of soufflés.

"Getting people to understand what a savory soufflé is will be a challenge," Mr. Maguire says. "But Dallas is a very trendy town." One in which there's room for a delicious new idea. Rise No. 1

The restaurant is set to open at 5360 W. Lovers Lane, Suite 220 (the old Lovers Egg Roll space in Inwood Village); 214-366-9900. [www.risesouffle.com](http://www.risesouffle.com).