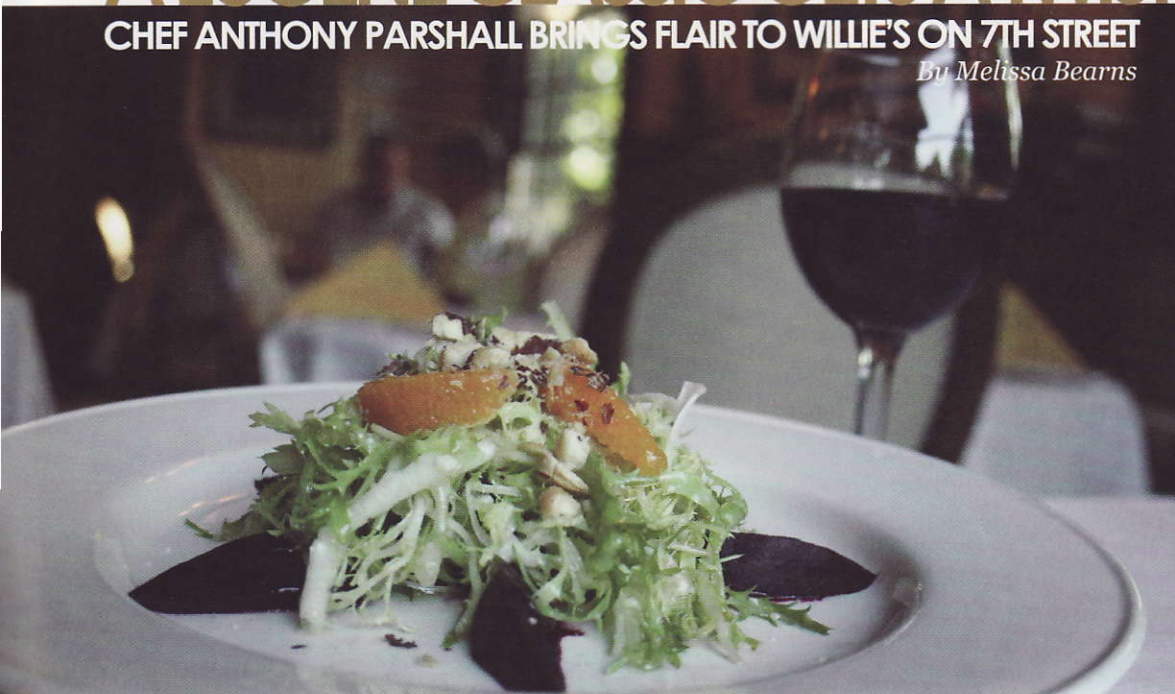


A EUGENE CLASSIC GETS A TWIST

CHEF ANTHONY PARSHALL BRINGS FLAIR TO WILLIE'S ON 7TH STREET

By Melissa Bearnis



With so many new restaurants in town offering up the hottest trends in food, sometimes the best choice is getting back to the classics. Classic the way a real martini is classic, not these fruity, chocolatey aberrations that bear the same name. One of Eugene's oldest and best restaurants, Willie's on 7th Street, is about as classic as it gets.

Except this martini has a twist—Anthony Parshall, a young, creative chef. Parshall started out working for owner Walid (Willie) Saleeby at the Waterfront Bar & Grill where he demonstrated so much talent and promise that Saleeby wanted to see what Parshall could do when promoted to head chef at Willie's.

So far so good. Parshall started at the restaurant in the fall of 2004, and this year, AAA gave Willie's the coveted "Triple Diamond Rating." Parshall updates the menu seasonally and derives inspiration from some unlikely sources. For example, he counts Tom Robbins among his favorite authors. Recently, he re-read Robbins' classic *Jitterbug Perfume* and decided to add something with beets, which play a prominent role in the book, to the menu. The incredible Frisée Salad with Roasted Red Beets, Oranges, Blue Cheese Crumbles and Oregon Hazelnuts was created.

The slightly bitter, crunchy frisée is balanced by the earthy, sensual flavor of the beets and the rich, roasted hazelnuts. Oranges add a light, high note to the dish. Throw in some blue cheese, with its sharp, tangy flavor, and the salad covers the entire flavor spectrum.

Along with creativity, the art of presentation is one of Parshall's strengths. His dishes are visually stunning as well as delicious. Yet the shape in which the food is served—a vertical tower for

the duck, a more horizontal presentation for the veal—never takes center stage over the actual quality of the dishes. Flavor and taste are the top priorities, and the food is as delicious as it looks.

The fall menu will include many of the same dishes as summer's, with a few changes to fit the season. For example, the Port Wine Reduction on the summer's Spicy Muscovy Duck with Yellow Corn Flan and Braised Red Chard will be replaced with a sauce that uses raspberries and sage. Hopefully Parshall will keep the flan, which has a delightfully smooth texture and a slightly sweet flavor.

The rich, creamy French-Style Five-Onion Risotto that comes with the Stuffed Veal Roulade rivals the best risottos I've eaten in France or Italy, where the dish originated.

"The thing I'd hope to capture," Parshall says, "is the connection between the kitchen, the diner, the farmers and the foragers. When people really care, that can elevate the food and the experience to a different level. That's the most important thing anyone can hope to create."

Willie's on 7th Street is located at 388 7th Ave. and serves dinner starting at 5 p.m. For reservations call 541/485-0601.

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