



THE LATEST BUZZ FROM THE BIRCHWOOD CAFE

good real food

August • 2010

3311 East 25th Street • Minneapolis • 612 722 4474 • www.birchwoodcafe.com

Meet the Team! I'm pleased and proud to formally announce that Locus Architecture will be our architects for the Birchwood Cafe expansion & remodel. Though we interviewed three other firms, this is not how I first met Locus crew Wynne Yelland, Paul Neseth and Adam Jonas. Last fall I received an invite to an event hosted by Locus Architecture called 2 x 2, a salon-style discussion series "pairing local pioneers to discuss passions, inspirations and relationships". In keeping with the theme, the invite stated to "bring two friends." When I responded asking if I could bring four friends — in hindsight, perhaps an ungracious request!— Wynne's reply was "If I can talk you into doing one of these events this spring, you're on! Deal?" What could I do? I'd already invited my four friends and besides, I thought, he's not really serious, is he? So I made a deal. It turned out that Wynne was very serious, and I was very nervous when I realized what making that deal actually meant. Thankfully our farmer Greg Reynolds agreed to be my "pioneering partner" and we were both surprised to see over 100 people show up on a Saturday night in April for a discussion on local foods and sustainable farming. In preparing for the event, Greg and I met with Wynne several times and I was impressed by his insightful questions, collaborative spirit and sincere interest in the local foods movement. I was already a fan of the Locus combination of modern design and commitment to sustainability, and once I learned Wynne grew up on a farm and was an avid cyclist I thought: "hmmm!" This, and not his firm's resume or list of relevant projects and references (the due diligence came later!) is what compelled me to tell him about our upcoming expansion and invite him to interview for the project. We're very excited to be working with Wynne, Paul and Adam. Starting with the concept of "dirt to dirt" and following the food from our farms to our tables to our compost bin, I know they view our project as a benefactor, not only to the larger local foods movement, but also to a sustainable environment, our local economy and our community. We can't wait to see our vision for Birchwood Cafe manifest in the building plan and design and we look forward to sharing it with you. Stay tuned!

What's Happening/Birchwood Buzz

Now through August 31st: Eat Local Challenge Hosted by Natural Food Co-ops (you can sign up at our very own Seward Co-op!) the Eat Local Challenge celebrates our communities' growing passions for foods grown or produced locally. At Birchwood, we make eating local easy (and we do the dishes too)! And for the entire challenge our locally sourced and house-baked granola will be on sale at these fine Co-ops: Seward, The Wedge, Linden Hills, East Side and Selby Mississippi Market.

Tues Aug 3rd / The 27th Annual National Night Out Wow! Minneapolis was ranked **FIRST** among similarly large cities for its 2009 National Night Out turnout, with 100% of its residential neighborhoods participating, 1,033 confirmed events & 59,370 people participating — that's more than 15% of the city's population! Take this chance to get together with your neighbors, build new relationships, strengthen existing ones and make connections that last far beyond the one night event. It's not too late to organize an event for your block — call Seward Neighborhood Group (612.338.6205) or visit www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/nno.

Wed Aug 11th / Green Drinks, 6-7:30pm

Twin Cities Green Drinks (TCGD) is part of a global non-movement to charge your eco spirit, make some new connections, and learn a thing or two. This summer, Twin Cities Green Drinks is hosted by Natural Built Homes and meets here the 2nd Wednesday each month for themed discussions featuring guest speakers and a lively mixture of people from NGOs, academia, government, business and nonprofits. Greendrinks.org

Sat Aug 14th / Join Birchwood @ The Garlic Festival

The MN Garlic Festival features fantastic foods, celebrity chefs, marvelous music, area artisans, goofy games., and lots of GARLIC — all in support of a healthy environment, sustainable farms and vital rural communities in Minnesota. Local garlic growers will have the first of their fresh 2010 gourmet crop at the festival, cured to keep in your kitchen for up to a year! The Garlic Festival offers a unique culinary experience with a cadre of chefs from renowned local restaurants (including Minneapolis' Birchwood Cafe, Common Roots and Craftsman) cooking and serving at the festival cafe, "The Great Scape." Join us from 10-6pm at the McLeod County Fairgrounds in Hutchinson.

Sat Aug 21st / Local Farmer Meet & Eat w/ Whole Grain Milling

Come meet the secret to the success of our Breakfast in Heaven Granola! Whole Grain Milling products contribute the bulk of the granola's ingredients and can be found across our menu in almost every other item containing flour or beans. WHG is a multigenerational, family run farm/milling operation which grows and process certified organic grains and beans. They'll be driving up from their farm in Welcome, MN to share stories, samples and maybe even sign your bag of granola! 1-3pm @ Birchwood.

Sun Aug 22nd / Tour de FARM @ Riverbend, 4pm

The Birchwood Cafe alongside the Corner Table and Craftsman restaurants invite you to a Sunday Supper celebration of local, artisan farmers in the fields of Greg's gorgeous Riverbend Farm. Enjoy four or five courses of local fare paired with wine in this idyllic farm setting. No electricity is used, so the events are expected to end at sunset when candlelight is needed. Tickets (\$50) at www.tourdefarmmn.com

Fri Aug 27th / Birchwood at the State Fair

Find Chef Marshall at the Healthy Local Food Stage, presented by Renewing the Countryside at the Eco Experience. Marshall will perform 4 cooking demos: 10:30AM Brunch Fare, 12:00PM Ethnic Food Traditions, 2:00PM Seasonal Soups and Salads, 3:30PM Eating Local on a Budget. And of course all will be served on a stick (j/k)!

Sat Aug 28th / Riverbend Farm Days, 10am-3pm In July, over 30 folks helped weed eggplants & beets. At our 4th Riverbend Farm Days (aka Crop Mob "Lite") you'll work hard, but not so hard that you can't bring your kids and have a whole lot of fun too. Plus, you will be rewarded with a delicious lunch, provided by Common Roots. Meet at Birchwood or Common Roots at 9am to carpool or show up ready to work at 10am at Riverbend Farm (Delano, MN). RSVP to lee@simplegoodandtasty.com.



C A F E

good real food

August • 2010

Birchwood All-Star “SUPER-STAR” Edition: Meet Kitchen Lead Matt (a.k.a. Matteo) Pearson!

Sometimes it feels like it should take advanced coursework in game theory for a cook to be able to manage all the orders moving through our kitchen. There are so many variables and limits: constantly changing menus, ingredients with shifting properties as they change temperature and combine, jigsaw patterns of oven and burner space, temperamental equipment, and the ebb and flow of the rush which ideally has no effect on our 15 minute order goal... so it makes us really happy when we find someone like Matt! When we first met him (six years ago), he was young, fresh, energetic and a little green, but he had the talent. And as Matt grew he began to lead and coach others, so we promoted him. He took a ready interest in our values and ideals, and we grew to cherish him and his ideas. It is clear that Matt has contributed more to the Birchwood than he could ever know. So it is with great joy and gratitude that we wish Matt and his family (our illustrious baker Sandra and their sons Aphia and Sebastian) the fullest joy and best of luck in his transition. After more than half a decade, Matt is leaving us this month — he’s enrolled in a law enforcement program to reach his dream of becoming a civil servant. His goal is to be a help to society and we know that with him on the police force we’ll all be a little better off. Matteo, on behalf of all the Birchwoodians — thank you!


Six years is more like 60 in restaurant years! Tell me about your early memories of the cafe. It was drastically different than it is now — we’ve gone so far in that time. Back then, our breakfast was just quiche, oatmeal, fruit and yogurt, waffles... our menus have come a long way. We didn’t have the entrees like we have now, and no turkey or bean burger. We didn’t sell the pounds of granola. So much has changed! **What has changed for you in that time?** Kids. That’s the biggest thing ever. Car payments, having a car in general — and I used to go out all the time, But having children, it doesn’t get bigger than that. **What was it like meeting Sandra?** It was great, fantastic. I became an early baker trying to get closer to her. At that time she was working overnights. I just liked her a lot. **What’s the greatest thing you’ve learned at Birchwood?** It’s about people — no matter who they are, they’ll fit in if they’re good people. We’ve had so much diversity here but it works because they’re all good people. **What was a memorable day at the cafe for you?** When Sebastian was born. It was a Saturday night, snowing outside with just James and I cooking on the line. Sandra called me and it was so slow that it probably didn’t matter that I just up and left. That was great. AND I’ll never forget my very first solo early bake. It was right before open and I had just put the fresh cinnamon rolls in the old bakery case when the shelf collapsed and all my pastries fell on the floor. **Oh no! What did you do?** I made more. I don’t remember it too well, it was a blur. **What do you hope the Birchwood will be like 6 years from now?** Amazing, it definitely will be amazing. With Tracy and everyone’s skills — it will be huge (I mean locally, not physically). I mean, we went from not selling retail granola at all to having it in nearly all the coops in the cities. Our food is

becoming more and more locally sourced. It’s hard to be 100 percent because of the winter and limits on what we can grow, but we’re getting closer. **What do you think you’ll miss the most about Birchwood?** The people I’ve worked with — they’ve always been great and I’ve always gotten along with them. **Want to give a shout out to a staff member?** To Thad: I hope everyone still reverses it and calls him Matteo instead of Thaddeo! **What message would you like to pass on to all staff and customers?** Stay fresh — don’t make me arrest you! ;)

An Ode to August

It can be a bittersweet month for some; ask any teacher or student. The long summer days start to hint at departure and suddenly there’s an urgency to cram in grand adventures, trying to slow down time to prolong the season. For us at Birchwood, at the other extreme, August is the GREATEST month! The sweetest bounty from our local farms is just rolling in: misshapen multicolored sun-sweet heirloom tomatoes, luxuriously silky ears of tender sweet corn, and vine ripe, juicy sweet musk melons. Rest assured that Chef Marshall is singing praises to the eighth month as he concocts delicious dish after dish for our harvest menus. Beyond fruits and vegetables, August’s bounty arrives in many forms! New to Birchwood is our focus on the freshest farm egg. Have you noticed? This year we began using eggs from even smaller local farms (Hidden Stream Farm, Earthenpath Farm, and Yoder’s Farm). These smaller operations concentrate more attention on varying diet and increasing pasture time for their chickens. And when the laying hens eat better, we eat better scrambles, omelets and savory waffles! The ripeness of summer concentrates and permeates in the chicken via the mature vegetation, insects and worms they consume. The result? Eggs that are intensely flavored and with yolks as deep orange as a setting summer sun. Yes, August is great indeed!

Where is the Birchwood Cafe? ... and where does their food come from?

good real food 
 C A F E
 Mon thru Fri • 7am - 10pm
 Sat • 8am - 10pm Sun 9am - 8pm
 3311 East 25th Street • Minneapolis, MN 55406
 612 722 4474 • www.birchwoodcafe.com