

## ZenKitchen Newsletter – October 2009

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*Dear friend of ZenKitchen,*

Since ZenKitchen opened on June 25th, we've had a busy, rollicking time. We've served over 2,000 diners, opened hundreds of bottles of wine, and generally had a great, exhausting, exhilarating experience. We've seen a lot of old friends, and made a lot of new ones. The ZenKitchen community keeps growing: it now includes a few dozen farmers and other producers, a growing list of great suppliers, our wonderful staff, and of course you, our patrons.

We've also received some wonderful feedback, through the media, popular blogs, from a variety of online reviews on sites like HappyCow, Ottawa Foodies, Gluten-free Ghetto, and most important from our repeat customers. So, we would appreciate your continued efforts in helping to spread the “zen” to your friends, family and co-workers.

Looking ahead into the fall-winter season, Dave and I have been tossing around some ideas. Live music? Wine tastings? Beer tastings? Special chef tasting menu dinners, like the initial monthly dinners? Cooking lessons along certain themes? ZenKitchen was built by the incredible enthusiasm and feedback from our supporters and as we move forward with this big restaurant adventure, more than ever, we appreciate your support and feedback. Send us a line about your thoughts, or better yet, drop by to ZenKitchen, which we hope will be like your second home.

It's always a delight for us to see you and serve you. Our heartfelt thanks for your continued support and many happy returns to ZenKitchen. Bon appetit, Caroline

Caroline Ishii  
Chef and Owner  
ZenKitchen  
[www.zenkitchen.ca](http://www.zenkitchen.ca)

*You are on the email list for this newsletter because you asked to be notified about ZenKitchen activities or we thought you would be interested. If you'd like to be moved from this list, we would be pleased to do so. Just send an email to [info@zenkitchen.ca](mailto:info@zenkitchen.ca)*

**Ron Eade's Omnivore Supper Club at ZenKitchen on October 20**

Ottawa Citizen food blogger Ron Eade and his supper club co-host Mike McCracken have chosen ZenKitchen as the location for their next Omnivore's Ottawa Supper Club on Tuesday Oct. 20 at 6:30 p.m! A general notice has appeared on Ron's blog, Omnivore's Ottawa.

Caroline has created a special menu at an all-inclusive price of \$85, with one glass of wine or non-alcoholic beverage paired with the main course, including taxes and tip. Optional Prince Edward County wines for each course is \$25.

The menu is:

- 1) Gourmet greens with salt-roasted heirloom beets and fermented nut cheese
  - 2) Handcut tortellini filled with exotic mushrooms in garlic brodo
  - 3) Pumpkin arancini
  - 4) Cassoulet pot pie with merguez seitan and root vegetables, served with house-made pickles and harvest chips
  - 5) Zen dessert sampler
- Fair trade, organic coffee or tea.

As always, attendance is open to singles, couples or small groups -- all that Ron and Mike ask is you enjoy truly great cuisine, you're not an overly picky eater, and that you come to enjoy yourselves and others who share your sense of culinary adventure.

Neither Mike nor Ron receive any special consideration or cut-rate price for their modest efforts; it's all in the name of good dining.

So, here's the fine print:

Restaurant: Zen Kitchen, 634 Somerset St. W. ([www.zenkitchen.ca](http://www.zenkitchen.ca))

Dinner date/time: Tuesday Oct. 20, 6:30 p.m.

Reservations deadline: Friday Oct. 9, or until it's sold out.

Cost: Full meal with one wine or non-alcoholic beverage, \$85 including taxes and tip. Optional Prince Edward County wines to accompany each course is \$25 extra.

Other essential details:

-- Reservations through the restaurant, call 613-233-6404. Be sure to say you're with the Omnivore's Supper Club.

-- On reservation, guests will be asked to confirm the number in their party, name of the contact person, phone number and credit card information. As this is a relatively small establishment, please note that in the event of a no-show or last-minute cancellation (without a very compelling reason), or should the person making the reservation not be able to find a replacement to fulfill his/her commitment, they will be charged half of the total commitment on their credit card.

-- Names and phone numbers will be shared by the restaurant with Ron (so we know who is coming, how many, etc.). First names and last initial, along with the number in their party, will be published in my blog Omnivore's Ottawa on Monday Oct. 12 at [www.roneade.com](http://www.roneade.com)

### **ZenKitchen wins VQA Award**

ZenKitchen has received the 2009 VQA Gold Restaurant Award of Excellence, one of only two Ottawa restaurants (along with John Taylor of Domus) to win this prestigious

award from Wines of Ontario. It recognizes Ontario establishments that exhibit strong support of Ontario VQA wines and high professional standards in wine service.

### **TV series update**

We're almost finished filming the TV series. Airing of "The Restaurant Adventures of Caroline and Dave" has been pushed back a bit. The series will air on the W Network beginning in January. We've seen some rough cuts, and even we were saying, "that's great - I wonder what will happen next!".

### **New Art Coming In!**

Thanks to the hard work and discerning taste of our volunteer curator, Beth Greenhorn, we'll continue to exhibit art by new and upcoming Ottawa artists in our dining room. Next up: photographers Kim Elmslie and Richard Weintrager, who's colourful images will be mounted October 3rd. Special thanks to our first exhibiting artist, Patti Normand, whose beautiful paintings have received so much attention from the media and our diners.

### **Greening Initiatives**

Restaurants create a lot of waste. Produce, wine and other food supplies often come in cardboard boxes; a tremendous amount of fruit and vegetable parings get discarded, along with leftovers; bottles and cans from wine, beer, juice, cider, lemonade, etc. get emptied and thrown out, especially as there is no city recycling program for restaurants; and cooking oil must be regularly changed and safely removed.

ZenKitchen is no different - except perhaps how we deal with this waste. Along with a garbage bin, our paper, cans, bottles and glass are recycled from BMI waste management services. Our cooking oil is picked up by an area man who converts it to bio-diesel for his personal use, saving us both money and keeping the oil out of the landfill. And our food scraps and leftovers - approximately 60 gallons each week - goes to a local farmer for compost.

In a concerted effort to reduce recycling waste and combat high fuel charges, we do not offer imported bottled mineral water. We understand that you can't always finish your food and might want to take it home to enjoy later, and our servers are always happy to pack it up in our biodegradable containers. We're proud of these initiatives, and we'll continue trying to find ways to improve our ecological footprint.

### **Zen in the Kitchen Cooking Classes**

Since embarking on my culinary journey, my cooking classes at the Urban Element and the LCBO have been very popular and I have enjoyed teaching new and returning students. There has been a tremendous amount of interest in learning about cooking with whole foods and vegan, so I would like to start teaching small classes at the restaurant so that vegetarians and non-vegetarians alike can learn more about modern vegetarian cuisine and bring the zen into their own homes. I was going to start classes this fall but (surprise, surprise!) opening up and operating the restaurant has left me no extra time to plan and run these classes, so I have decided to postpone the start up of these classes to early in the new year, and will send you out information on them as

soon as they are scheduled, so stay tuned.

### **Our Staff**

You've seen them around, maybe even had the chance to chat with them, but here's the low down on our wonderful staff: In the dining room, Allie and Rachelle are our fulltime servers. Allie recently moved to Ottawa from Victoria BC and is an artist when she isn't slinging seitan at ZenKitchen. Rachelle is a local, growing up in Ottawa East, and is a musician and artist; she's responsible for picking most of our music. Part-time servers include Tara (a graduate student studying immunology at the Ottawa Heart Institute); and Sylvia (a sommelier student and professional translator).

In the kitchen, we have Raphael, Kelsey and David on "the line". Raphael studied at a Quebec culinary school and has previously worked at the Chateau Frontenac in Quebec City and at Play here in Ottawa. Recently completing her masters at Carleton University, Kelsey has traded in her books for knives for now and is pursuing her passion for food and cooking, and pickling in particular. David and his wife recently moved back to Ottawa from Vancouver and they just gave birth to a beautiful baby girl Viola.

Straddling the kitchen and dining room, Lisa is a sometime server, sometime prep cook, sometimes hostess. A raw foodist, she is the force behind our raw menu. She's joined on "prep days" by Amanda, who is also a baker at Bread and Sons and assists with Acorn Creek Farms. Our team is rounded out by hardworking dishwashers Katy and Shen, both students who have recently joined the ZenKitchen family.

### **Meet the Farmers: Waratah Downs**

Certified organic since 2000, John Weatherhead and Colleen Ross' South Dundas farm has become a major supplier to ZenKitchen. They deliver to us every Thursday, and have provided stunning rainbow chard, heritage potatoes, kale and pattipan squash, among other things, since the day we opened. John is originally from Australia (the waratah is an Australian flower, considered by Aboriginal People's of Australia to be a symbol of regeneration, healing and strength), and was born and raised on a dairy farm in Queensland. Colleen worked on farms most of her life, and is a graduate of the University of Guelph's Agriculture program. Colleen is the Women's President of the National Farmers Union of Canada. Together with their 3 grown children, John and Colleen consider organic farming to be part of their community activism. They are leaders in the community, regulars at the Lansdowne and Main Street farmers' markets, and have quickly become good friends. Visit them at their farm, at the markets, or at <http://www.waratahdowns.com>, and tell them Dave and Caroline sent you! We've started to put up a full list of our suppliers on our web site.

### **Media**

We've been very fortunate to catch the attention of Ottawa's media. Full details are on our website, but in case you missed it, here are some highlights:

**Ottawa Citizen**, September 16, 2009: Deliciously Vegan, by Anne DesBrisay

"Zen is a great addition to Ottawa's dining out scene, and a restaurant I'm more excited about than any other I've come across this year. One that just so happens to serve vegan food."

**Ottawa Xpress**, September 2009: Consciously Creative

"...dinner had been so delicious in its own right, quite apart from the ethics behind its preparation."

**Ottawa Magazine**, September 2009: Veg with Edge

"...the feel-good consciousness of ZenKitchen doesn't supersede taste or presentation."

**Ottawa Citizen**, July 4, 2009: Vegans of the City, Rejoice!, by Ron Eade

"ZenKitchen, a high-end vegetarian/vegan restaurant has just opened at 634 Somerset St. W. in Ottawa's Chinatown area, offering gourmet food and stylish atmosphere that goes well beyond the usual cafeteria-style fare at other vegetarian eateries."

**Porter** (Porter Air's in-flight magazine), September, 2009, by Nancy Wong: "This newly opened dining room is giving Ottawa carnivores a new appreciation of the almighty vegetable with its stellar menu of high-end cuisine - minus the meat."