

# Courier News

WEDNESDAY, MAY 25, 2005



## TIDBITS

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Correspondents

### **Pluckemin Inn beautified**

The husband-and-wife team of Carl and Gloria LaGrassa, owners of Ocino in Washington, opened the Pluckemin Inn in April. The entire 1890s Federalist structure was reconfigured to resemble a glorious manor house. Visitors pass a beautiful pond replete with spring flowers.

Among the highlights of this three-story building are two wine cellars with seating for 50, two dining rooms paneled in French oak inlaid with rustic metals and a stone floor, brick archways, a pair of stone fireplaces and a three-story, glass-enclosed wine tower that holds 15,000 bottles of wine.

Highlighting the place is a well-appointed bar named "The Plucky." Folks gather for Chesapeake Bay steamed shrimp en cocotte, crusted calamari with Italian hot peppers, baby basil panache, and a smoked garlic "schmere," assiette of house cut French fries with three dipping sauces, house made sirloin burger, with cippolini onion confit, six-week pickles, served with or without an assortment of cheeses and Korean-style baby back ribs.

Among starters offered on the menu titled "Our First Spring" are: Japanese Kummamoto oysters, kaffir lime mignonette, wasabi tobiko, a selection of the chef's oysters with osetra caviar mignonette and sauteed Hudson Valley foie gras with sour cherries, pistachio powder and port squeeze.

Selections from the grill include a 20-ounce prime dry-aged New York Strip steak with mushrooms and a merlot reduction, and a chef's rack of seven marinated Niman ranch lamb rib chops with tomato confiture and tomato-thyme sauce. The menu continues with roasted Black Sea Bass, scallop shumai, galangal ginger, coconut and thai basil, wild king salmon a la plancha with house-cured gravlax, golden beets and roasted peach granite, and crispy veal sweetbreads with green asparagus risotto, parmesan cheese and devonshire mustard. Priced separately, accompaniments include: Yukon gold potato puree, roasted shallots, house-smoked bacon and sage and sauteed broccoli rabe and sweet garlic, snuff haricot verts and basil.

You may swoon over the chocolate "Timeline" of old- and new-world Aztec frozen hot cocoa, manjari bombe, sesame caramel tart.

Hours: Closed Sunday and Monday. Plucky Bar: 4 p.m. to closing, Tuesday to Friday. 5 p.m. to closing Saturday. Main dining room: 5 p.m. to closing Tuesday to Saturday. Major credit cards accepted. Handicap accessible. Reservations encouraged.

Pluckemin Inn is at 359 Route 202-206 and Pluckemin Way, Bedminster. Call (908) 658-9292.