



The Gothic to have new concept restaurant

BY ABIGAIL CURTIS
BDN STAFF

BELFAST — One of Belfast's best-known buildings, the Gothic, will boast a refurbished facade and a new dining concept when chef Matthew Kenney opens Arata in the space later this month.

The Searsport native and raw food celebrity chef's newest project is described as a plant-based "experimental culinary incubator," with a focus on flavors from the Far East. It will replace The Gothic, the restaurant Kenney opened with a media flurry in the brick Victorian building in June 2013. The Gothic, which was named the 2013 Restaurant of the Year by the website Eater Maine, quietly closed for good last November.



RACHEL CARR | MATTHEW KENNEY CUISINE

Matthew Kenney's newest restaurant Arata opens in Belfast at The Gothic at the end of May.

The new seasonal restaurant will feature such fare as smoked king oyster buns, Arata ramen with pulled mushrooms, grilled bok choy, kimchi pancakes with Bibb lettuce and sesame oil cake. It is located close to Kenney's PlantLab, which serves as the chef's experimental and learning space.

"I'm thrilled that the next project aimed at crafting the future of food is taking place in my home state of Maine," Kenney said in a press release. "I'm excited to share a delicious, healthy menu with the Maine community, and continue to prove that plant-based cuisine truly knows no bounds."

The brick building that will be home to Arata also has made headlines for other reasons recently. In March, a Massachusetts man crashed into the building at high speed, later dying of his injuries. The floor-to-ceiling plate glass window behind the bar at the Gothic was shattered, and contractors are working to repair the damaged wall.

Arata, Japanese for "fresh and new," according to Kenney, is scheduled to open on Friday, May 27.



MICKY BEDELL | BDN

Head chef Jeremy Yehle slices up steaks at the Brahma Grill in Bangor on Wednesday.

Filling the 'big steak' niche

Brahma Grill in Bangor updates menu, prices

BY SHELBY HARTIN
BDN STAFF

For Bangor restaurateur Brett Settle, there are two kinds of people in the world.

One has a penchant for high-quality steak prepared carefully to their specifications. They appreciate fine marbling — flecks of white fat that melts into the steak to create the flavor they long for. They know a good steak when they see one, and they'll go out of their way to find it.

The other sits across from the steak eater.

"We're catering to the steak eaters. Now we want to take care of the people who come in with the steak eaters," Settle said.

Brahma Grill, Settle's most recent endeavor in downtown Bangor at 96 Hammond St., has been in business for nearly two months since opening quiet-

ly in March. With a newly updated menu and lowered prices, Settle is listening to patrons and adding to the steakhouse's menu to cater to a wider variety of customers.

You can find a steak at many downtown eateries, from Blaze to Timber, "but no one just does steak," Settle said. "No one specializes in high-quality, Midwest, real big steaks."

That's the niche he's filled, providing restaurant-goers with USDA choice steaks, the second highest quality steak in the USDA grading system. With a recent update to the menu and also to his supply chain, Settle has lowered his menu prices slightly and added some additional options. He now uses steaks from Certified Angus Beef in Ohio. He was previously ordering from Creekstone Farms in Kansas.



ASHLEY L. CONTI | BDN

Michelle Perkins (left) laughs with Leeann Hawes while looking over the menu recently at Brahma Grill in Bangor.

"It's very, very expensive to buy very good meat — anybody that eats it knows it," Settle said.

The 20-ounce porterhouse has been reduced in price by \$7 to \$46 as a dinner with sides, while the 10-ounce tenderloin was reduced by \$8 to \$38, as a dinner with sides. A new option of a 6-ounce tenderloin has been added to the menu for those looking for a smaller portion. That is available for \$28. All four

steak cuts also are available a la cart, with options starting at \$19.

New half portions of items in the barbecue section of the menu also have been added for the beef short rib and chicken dinners, which are served with bacon macaroni and cheese and steak fries.

The menu also offers a selection of salads and bucatini pasta dishes, such as Sea-
See Brahma, Page C3

Adapting, trying something different

On a hot late summer day in 2008, I stood in the parking lot of my son's preschool while he refused to get in the car. Defiantly, with his little arms crossed, he planted his feet and expressed how he wasn't ready to leave yet.

Will was 3 years old at the time, and we'd just left orientation for his first school experience. He was entering the two-day-per-week preschool program and had been looking forward to it for months. He had practiced his teacher's name again and again, met the requirement of being potty trained virtually overnight and generally got ready for what



SARAH WALKER CARON
MAINE COURSE



SARAH WALKER CARON | BDN

Fluffy Strawberry Muffins.

school would be like.

But that orientation? It was brief and fun and exciting, and he hadn't had enough of it. He'd met his classmates and his teacher, explored the school and the playground and wanted more.

As his mom, I was caught between emotions: I didn't want him to think it's OK to refuse to get in the car, but his excitement was so sweet and heartening. Ultimately, after a few pictures, he did get in the car and we went home. And, the enthusiasm

didn't wane. He loved every day he spent in that preschool.

In a few short months, Will, now 10, will start middle school. It's hard to believe that my sweet, smart, opinionated boy is old enough for this already. When did that little boy outside preschool morph into this tween? And what will he do in a school this big?

It's something we've both thought about. The school — larger than any I went to in my grade school years — is enormous to us. And I don't really
See Muffins, Page C3

Fresh fish delivered to your front door

BY KATHLEEN PIERCE
BDN STAFF

There was excitement last year on North Haven when fisherman Matt Luck arrived with fresh sockeye salmon. Caught far away in the chilly waters of Alaska's Bristol Bay, why were islanders cheering?

"If you are going to buy salmon from Maine, it's farmed salmon. This is very different. Everyone got to meet Matt, which is why people wanted to buy in the first place," said Cecily Pingree, owner of Calderwood Hall restaurant and market on the island. She purchased enough sockeye to last her all year.

It's a funny scenario. Fish from Alaska arriving by skiff to a tiny island in Maine by a bearded commercial fisherman from away. In Brunswick, 40 people welcomed Luck in the same fashion.

This year shares of

Luck's catch can be reserved beginning May 18 from his company Pride of Bristol Bay. Buying a 20-pound case of vacuum-packed fillets may sound excessive, but it's a more sustainable way to shop. You lock in freshness and price, and "it encourages people not to get in their car when they think, 'What's for dinner tonight?'" Luck said. "The technology [for flash-freezing fresh fish] allows us to preserve this product."

Loosely based on the community-supported agriculture model popular on farms, where shares of vegetables, flowers and fruit are purchased from a farmer long before they are harvested, customers reserve their fish before nets are cast. But why are Mainers going gaga over protein from away in a locavore economy?

"It's important for people
See Fish, Page C2

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