

The Scene
March 2011

Sustainable, locally raised food transitions into extraordinary menu at Barbed Rose

By Sue Mayfield Geiger



I am feasting on stewed local okra from Froberg's Farm made with potatoes, tomatoes, onions and nigella sativa (black onion seeds). It is something special that the Barbed Rose sous chef has put together to accompany a red fish dinner entrée. I am lucky enough to sample this delicacy beforehand as well as some onion chili rings and crispy beer battered flounder served on a smear of malt vinegar tartar sauce. But the four delicately fried oysters sitting atop thick, smoky bacon pieces garnished with tangy, sweet homemade jalapenos really get my attention.

Open a little more than six months, the Barbed Rose has already won ten Best of City Search Houston awards, and named one of 2010's best new restaurants by food guru Alison Cook. Joe Schneider, Patrick Burford and Chef Jason Chaney own and operate the Barbed Rose—located at the end of a dead end street in old downtown

Alvin. Situated across from a city park gives the place a natural feel and offers a nice view of trees and a sloping terrain. With just 15 tables in the main dining area (there is also a Burger Bar next door) the atmosphere is intimate due to dark beadboard ceilings and hardwood floors.

From the Texas earth to your table

“We frequent Froberg’s Farm or Bradshaw Nursery,” says Schneider, “and if it just came out of the earth, it is what we are going to buy—green onions, okra, cauliflower, broccoli, strawberries and whatever is fresh.” They try to procure as much locally grown produce possible. “Our first goal is local, then 100-mile radius and lastly, within the state of Texas,” adds Schneider, who does admit that if they have to go beyond those boundaries, they source it out, but only for something that is not available locally.

Tito’s and Dripping Springs vodka from the hill country are on hand as well as Haak wines from Santa Fe. Coffee (from beans roasted in Houston) is made in a French press right at your table.

Schneider ended up in Texas (via New York and Florida) after his parents moved here. He learned the food business while in charge of kitchen operations at various officers’ clubs while in the Army. His professional career veered toward the scrap metal industry for several years before the foodie urge reeled him into being a restaurateur.

And the urge has paid off. “It’s a dream come true with hard work involved,” says Schneider, who purposely chose to open his establishment in Alvin due to being five minutes from his house. Also owner of the adjacent property and buildings nearby, Schneider will soon open his own meat market and deli along with a bakery and tea room. Cold cuts will be made in-house, steaks will be cut to order and all baked items (artesian breads and pastries) made from scratch. “We’ll be doing our own hams, salami, andouli, everything,” says Schneider, who will be processing the old-

school way, just like that of his grandfather, who was a meat packer.

Chaney—educated at the Culinary Institute of America in New York—has worn his chef’s hat in Switzerland and Italy. The new trend to “eat where your food lives” is something he takes quite seriously. “The demand for local food is actually something that is reverting backwards, because food used to always be supplied locally and not necessarily trucked in,” says Chaney, adding that people have become more aware of their carbon footprint. Everything offered at Barbed Rose is seasonal and cooked fresh—you won’t find a can opener in this chef’s kitchen.

A menu like no other

Their Certified Angus beef is locally raised as is Akaushi beef (akin to Kobe) and Wagyu beef (crossbred). Akaushi contains high concentrations of oleic acid, which is a heart-healthy fat that has a high ratio of mono-saturated fats to saturated fats. Eating this beef can actually lower your cholesterol. House-made bacon and sausages are smoked on the premises.

Wild game (venison, bison, antelope, wild boar and ostrich) mostly comes from the Texas hill country and water buffalo (leaner than bison) comes from South Texas. All sauces are homemade, including the mayo, mustard, ketchup and Worcestershire. “If I can’t make it, we won’t offer it,” says Chaney.

The menu at Barbed Rose is broken down into starters, soups, salads, sandwiches, entrées and Trick-Out-Your-Burger, which gives you a choice of meat (beef, buffalo, poultry, crab cake, Portobello); cheese (Swiss, American, Provolone, Texas Goat, Pepper Jack, Smoked Cheddar); toppings

(mushrooms, jalapenos, onion chili rings, caramelized onions, bacon, avocado); sauce (mustard, garlic aioli, mayo, crystal bacon aioli, malt vinegar tartar, chipotle ketchup) and a variety of sides.

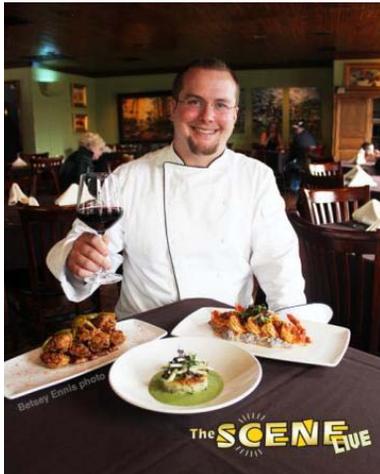
Some of the entrées include BBQ shrimp and grits, bacon-wrapped filet, pan seared redfish, and smoked pepper steak with sides like truffled mac/cheese and fresh vegetables in season, but you want to be sure and check out the Butcher Board Specials that are broken down into Hooves (prime, Wagyu, Kobe), Horns (wild boar, Buffalo, venison), Feathers (duck breast, quail, ostrich) and Fins (jumbo shrimp, alligator, scallops). This changes depending

on what is available. A Business Express lunch is also available weekdays.

Desserts—like bananas foster bread pudding, Grand Marnier cheesecake, and sticky coffee cake—are not only eye popping, but taste bud popping.

Weekend reservations are highly recommended unless you don't mind a long wait. Of course, you could wander over to the Burger Bar and chill while waiting, watch a little TV and munch down on some of those fried oysters with jalapenos atop the smoky house bacon, or as Schneider and Chaney like to call them—“a party in your mouth.”

The Barbed Rose (named for Schneider's mother, Barbara) has won TEN Best of City Search Houston Awards:



Pictured: Chef Jason Chaney

- Best Restaurant**
- Best Fine Dining**
- Best American**
- Best Burger**
- Best Seafood**
- Best Dessert**
- Best Lunch Spot**
- Best Business Lunch & Dinner**
- Best Group Dining**
- Best Outdoor Dining**