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"We believe fresh, good food not only feeds the body, but the mind and spirit as well."

Reynaldo Hernandez,  
Co-Founder and VP,  
Epicurean Group



## Present Perfect

As a chef and owner of a sustainable foodservice management company, I welcome the bounty that autumn brings to our clients and to my family. I share with my fellow Epicurean Group chefs an eager anticipation of the fall harvest season.

I'm grateful that, today, our country is gradually reverting to eating the kind of food that our grandparents ate - rather than the processed, pre-packaged food that until recently was so prevalent in American kitchens. Customers want fresh, organic, local, seasonal food and they are going to farmers' markets or joining CSAs to get it.

Fresh ingredients make all the difference. I appreciate all our sustainable partners who provide us with amazing foods. It's so empowering to work with family farmers like Capay Organic, Jacob's Farm, Guisti Farms and Airdome Orchards - and artisan producers like Cowgirl Creamery. It inspires me every time I go into the kitchen and start to work with such quality nutritious ingredients. I feel fortunate to be able to create original delicious dishes to share with our customers.

—**Chef Rey Hernandez**, Co-Founder and VP, Epicurean Group

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## FALL MENU

Serves 8

*Capay Organic Parsnip and Apple Soup*

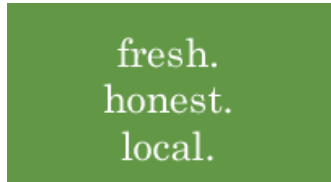
*Jacob's Farm Heirloom Tomato and Avocado Salad with  
Aged Balsamic Vinegar*

*Guisti Farms Mini-Pumpkins Stuffed with Sausage and Sage  
Served with Beluga Lentils and Sautéed Spinach Roots*

*Airdome Orchards Persimmon and  
Cowgirl Creamery Goat Cheese Tart*



photo: [www.chowtownstudios.com](http://www.chowtownstudios.com)



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### Capay Organics Parsnip and Apple Soup

4 tablespoons butter  
1/4 cup sliced garlic  
1 medium yellow onion, sliced  
2 large shallots, sliced  
2 1/2 pounds parsnips, peeled and pencil cut\*  
3 Fuji apples, peeled and quartered  
2 quarts vegetable stock  
1/2 cup cream  
Kosher salt

*\* Epicurean Tip: Use a Pencil Cut for Maximum Flavor  
I like to use a "pencil cut" to prepare mirepoix for stock or vegetables for puréed soups. This cut creates a vegetable that is not only more even in size but, with more surface area exposed, it's also more flavorful. Use a pencil cut for long vegetables like carrots and parsnips. Here's how: First peel the vegetable. Holding the vegetable in one hand with the tip on the cutting board, cut on an angle, as if you were sharpening a pencil. Rotate the vegetable a quarter turn and make another cut. Continue to the end.*

#### Directions:

Melt butter in a large soup pot over medium heat until it stops foaming. Add garlic and cook until just fragrant. Add onion and shallot and cook until just tender. Add parsnips and apples and cover with vegetable stock. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer. Cook until parsnips and apples are fork tender. Remove from heat and puree with an immersion blender. Finish with cream and add salt to taste. Keep warm over low heat.

#### For the Garnish:

1/2 cup evaporated cane juice  
1 tablespoon melted butter  
2 each, Fuji apples, peeled and cut into wedges

For the garnish, place cane juice in a sauté pan over low heat and whisk in the butter. Add the apples and cook until tender but firm. Remove from heat.

#### To serve:

Ladle soup into 8 bowls and top with sautéed apples garnish. Serve immediately.

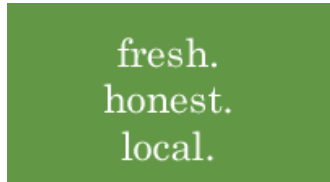
### Jacob's Farm Heirloom Tomato and Avocado Salad with Aged Balsamic Vinegar

1 large shallot, sliced into thin rounds  
3 tablespoons red wine vinegar  
1 large garlic clove, chopped fine  
1/2 teaspoon mayonnaise  
Kosher salt  
Fresh ground pepper  
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
4 each ripe Hass avocados cut in half, pitted and cubed into 1-inch pieces  
3 large heirloom tomatoes cubed into 1-inch pieces  
1/2 cup chopped fresh basil  
4 ounces, Ricotta Salata cheese, shaved thin using a cheese slicer, box grater, potato peeler, or mandoline  
4 tablespoons aged balsamic vinegar

#### Directions:

Soak sliced shallots in a cup of ice water for 10 minutes. Stir frequently, drain and pat dry. Set aside.

In a non-reactive bowl, whisk the red wine vinegar, garlic, mayonnaise with salt and pepper until smooth and well incorporated. Continue to whisk steadily while drizzling in the extra virgin olive oil until thoroughly incorporated into the dressing. Place avocados in a separate non-reactive bowl and top with 3 tablespoons dressing, toss until evenly coated. Set aside.



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In another nonreactive bowl, toss prepared shallot, tomatoes, basil and remaining dressing until evenly coated. Add salt and pepper to the tomato mixture to taste. Set aside.

To serve:

Divide avocados evenly onto 8 salad plates. Spoon the tomato mixture over the avocados and sprinkle with Ricotta Salata cheese. Drizzle aged balsamic over each salad. Serve immediately.

### **Guisti Farms Mini-Pumpkins Stuffed with Sausage and Sage, Served with Beluga Lentils and Sautéed Spinach Roots**

8 each mini-pumpkins with stems attached, about 3-4 inches in diameter

Kosher salt

Fresh ground pepper

16 ounces fresh pork sausage

1 fresh egg

1 cup breadcrumbs

1 1/2 tablespoon fresh sage, chopped fine

1 1/2 tablespoon fresh Italian parsley, chopped fine

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Using a sharp paring knife, cut off the top quarter of each pumpkin. Reserve each top. Scoop out the seeds and the pumpkin flesh to 1/2-inch thickness. Salt and pepper the inside of each pumpkin. Set aside.

In a nonreactive bowl, mix the sausage, egg, breadcrumbs, sage and parsley and season with salt and pepper to create the stuffing. Divide the stuffing evenly between the eight hollowed-out pumpkins. Place the stuffed pumpkins on a sheet pan along with the tops. Place in preheated oven and bake until the stuffing is firm and the pumpkins are easily pierced with a sharp paring knife, about 45 minutes. Keep warm until serving.

For the Beluga Lentils:

1 tablespoon butter

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

3/4 cup yellow onion, diced small

3/4 cup peeled carrot, diced small

3/4 cup celery, diced small

Kosher salt

Fresh ground pepper

4 sprigs fresh thyme

2 cups Beluga lentils

4 cups chicken stock

1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar

3 tablespoons chopped Italian parsley

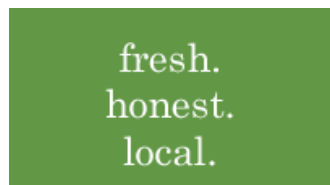
Melt butter in olive oil over medium heat in a large sauce pan. Add onion, carrot and celery. Cook until vegetables are tender and onions are translucent. Season with salt and pepper. Lower heat to low and add thyme sprigs. Add in lentils and stir to mix well. Add chicken stock and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer. Cover the sauce pan and cook until the lentils are tender and all liquid is absorbed. About 30 minutes. Remove from heat and keep warm.

To serve:

Add vinegar and chopped parsley and mix until well incorporated. Adjust salt and pepper as needed.

For the Sautéed Spinach Roots:

12 ounces fresh washed and drained spinach roots (wash repeatedly to remove all soil and dirt from roots)



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2 ounces extra virgin olive oil  
Kosher salt and fresh ground black pepper

Heat olive oil in a skillet over medium high heat until it shimmers. Add spinach roots and cook until just beginning to wilt. Add salt and pepper to taste. Remove from pan and keep warm.

To serve:

Place a bed of the Beluga lentils on 8 plates and place a stuffed pumpkin on top of each one. Place a pumpkin top on each of the cooked stuffed pumpkins. Distribute the spinach roots evenly on each plate. Serve immediately.

### **Airdome Orchards Persimmon and Cowgirl Creamery Goat Cheese Tart**

For the Tart Shell:

1 tart shell pan with removable bottom  
1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour (plus more for flouring the rolling surface)  
4 ounces butter  
3 ounces evaporated cane juice  
1 egg  
1 egg yolk  
1 teaspoon kosher salt  
2 tablespoons whipping cream  
1/2 tablespoon vanilla

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Sift flour and set aside. In a standing mixer with the paddle, cream the butter and cane juice at high speed for 4 minutes. Stop the mixer and scrape down the sides. Mix at high speed for 4 more minutes until light and fluffy. On medium speed, add the egg and yolk one at a time and mix until well incorporated. Stop the mixer and scrape down the sides and run for 2 minutes on high.

Stop the mixer and add the sifted flour, salt, cream and vanilla. Mix on low until dough just starts to bind together. Finish mixing by hand using a rubber spatula. Form dough into a round, flat disc and wrap in plastic. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours.

On a heavily floured surface, roll out the dough to 1/4 inch thick. Roll the dough back onto the rolling pin and lay it over the tart pan. Press the dough into the pan to fit. Leave 1/4 inch of overhang and trim the rest. Refrigerate for 1 hour.

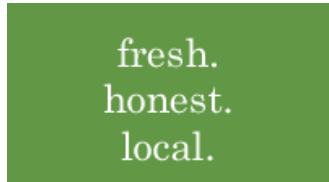
Remove the shell from the refrigerator and line it with parchment. Fill with baking weights or beans to the top. Trim the overhang and bake for 10 minutes in the preheated oven. Rotate and bake for 10 more minutes. Remove the weights and parchment and bake until bottom is golden brown, about 15 more minutes. Cool shell to room temperature before filling.

For the filling:

1 1/4 pound Fuyu persimmons  
3/4 teaspoon fresh lemon juice  
3 teaspoons Piloncillo\*, ground fine  
8 ounces goat cheese  
2 teaspoons fresh tarragon, chopped fine  
2 teaspoons fresh basil, chopped fine  
2 teaspoons fresh chives, chopped fine

*\*Epicurean Tip: A Sweet Spoonful of Piloncillo*

*Piloncillo is unrefined Mexican sugar. It tastes similar to brown sugar mixed with molasses, even though it has no molasses. If you cannot find Piloncillo you can substitute 1 cup of dark brown sugar and add 1 tablespoon of molasses.*



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Preheat oven to 375 degrees

Cut the persimmons into 1/2-inch slices and toss with the lemon juice until well coated. Arrange in the tart shell in overlapping circles. Sprinkle the Piloncillo on top of the fruit. Bake for 15 minutes; the fruit should be cooked but firm.

Remove the tart from the oven. Use the large grate side of a box grater, grate the goat cheese over the top. Return to the oven and bake until the cheese starts to brown, about 15 minutes. Remove from the oven and garnish with the herbs. Cut into 8 slices and serve immediately, while warm.