

## THE SCOOP CONTINUED ...

**AND MOLLY DARCY COMES TO CLAYTON**

STL's latest Celtic pub, **Molly Darcys**, has found its home in downtown Clayton, inside **The Seven Gables Inn** at 26 N. Meramec Ave. St. Louisans **Carl Winters** and **Bob O'Loughlin** and Irishmen **Bill Cullen** and **Terry Brennan** launched the Irish-themed restaurant last month; the Clayton location is the sister restaurant to Cullen's original Molly Darcys, located in Killarney, Ireland. The menu offers a mix of Irish (bangers and mash, fish and chips) and American (burgers, chicken wings) for both lunch and dinner.

**ENTER EXO**

Watch for co-owners **Fred Finley**, **Harry Michel** and **Trey Goede** to begin welcoming guests early this month to **Exo**, a new restaurant-lounge housed in a converted 6,000-square-foot house at 3146 Locust St. Finley said the new venture will feature an upscale, contemporary atmosphere, complete with two levels and a patio; a Cajun-style menu designed by chef **Eric Brenner** of **Moxy Bistro**; and entertainment in the form of live music, DJs and works from local artists.

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Listen up, fútbol fans: You can now catch matches – including

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**SPOTLIGHT ON: DAVID GUEMPEL**

In the highly volatile restaurant world, chefs come and go with fair regularity. A couple of years here and then to greener pastures there, then off to another market altogether. Some don't even stick around long enough to leave a lasting impression. Then there are those veterans like David Guempel, chef at Bowood Farms' new restaurant, Café Osage, who carve out their own space and become an intrinsic part of the local scene.

Like a lot of us, Guempel started out as a kid working fast food. But he stuck with the food business – it was fun, he took

to cooking naturally and "there always seemed to be an opening somewhere for a cook." Guempel quickly rose above paper hats and Frialators, though, and became a real presence on the local culinary scene. He put his stamp on several venerable area eateries, including Calico's Bar and Grill, Duff's Restaurant and the late Cafe Balaban, where he was chef for 10 years. But he truly made his mark as chef and co-owner of Zinnia, "the purple gem of Webster Groves." Zinnia opened in 1989 at the corner of Big Bend Boulevard and Shrewsbury Avenue and was a visual

and culinary local landmark until some hard economic realities caused Guempel to shutter the brightly colored building this past March, a move he said was definitely not undertaken lightly.

He landed back in his old CWE stomping grounds this summer, trading the "purple palace" for the chartreuse doors of Bowood Farms, when he was tapped to lend his talents at the new café.

Although the Café Osage menu isn't as elaborate as Zinnia's was – right now it's breakfast and lunch only – Guempel is in a great position as a chef because he has access to all of Bowood Farms' bounty; the nursery's huge garden just across the street from the café provides the freshest of produce, and the owners' Clarksville farm provides even more ingredients. And while he may not have as much control over the menu as he did as an owner, Guempel still adheres to the basic philosophy he's always espoused: Keep things simple. No "art on a plate," no long and involved prep, no overworking things; let the ingredients speak for themselves.

While Guempel said he won't be returning to restaurant ownership any time soon (unless he gets a "truckload of free money"), he looks to be a presence on the St. Louis culinary landscape for some time to come. Lucky for us.

– Matt Sorrell

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