



Edge by Goldmoor Inn

Food That Matches That View!

Story by Sunil Malapati
Photos by Gigantic Design Co.

There's an old adage in real estate—it is all about three things: location, location, location! Imagine an old castle on a small hilltop overlooking a broad river valley. The setting sun casts its last golden rays as you sit on the terrace sipping a gin gimlet. Soon, you will move inside for a cozy dinner and somehow the food manages to keep up with the view. The sensory overload is real.

The Goldmoor Inn has been providing hospitality as an upscale country inn for nearly three decades, consistently winning the TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence. The accompanying restaurant was also very highly regarded, rated as the top restaurant in Galena and the No. 5 most romantic date night spot in the U.S. on TripAdvisor in 2022. However, the perception that the restaurant was exclusive to the guests at the Goldmoor Inn did persist, and the owners Sloba and Birgit Radin decided to give the restaurant its own name and identity. And Edge was born.

Executive Chef Brandon Veitch was hired to develop both the menu and the identity of this new venture. Chef Veitch grew up in the Chicago suburbs, trained in the hospitality program at Roosevelt, and then gained experience working in various kitchens in Chicago and California. His experience ranges from a Mediterranean restaurant within a hotel to a private yacht in Catalina, and that eclectic range shows up on his menu. In my conversation with the chef on a cloudy fall afternoon, he was animated talking about the time he spends crafting the seasonal menu, displaying both food intelligence and a passion for the craft. I asked him to walk me through

his thought process about a meal a group of us had a week or so before.

Let me set the stage. As I walked in with Bryce and Christy, we were warmly welcomed by the staff at Goldmoor Inn and owner Sloba Radin. Kristina and Ryan, who were enjoying the terrace ahead of us, joined as we settled into our seats in a private dining room. As we contemplated the menu, fresh bread with a signature whipped butter with rosemary and brown butter was placed in front of us. I wondered at the wisdom of starting with such a strong flavor as rosemary and was quickly converted to admiration at how balanced the butter was. The brown butter enhanced the butteriness with rosemary adding a sly herbal note, perfect with warm bread. Christy was particularly happy with the gluten-free bread that had great texture. We were settling into a cozy space with a great wine list and signature cocktails.

The fall/winter menu has four appetizers, three salads, and eight entrées (and a possible shared braised short rib and lamb lasagna dish). The menu takes about two months to develop, with Chef Veitch balancing the expected with the “reach” for the adventurous. Each season is built with available produce in mind and specific proteins he can source. Some of the produce may end up in more than one dish, making prep easier, while signature flavoring oils distinguish them on each plate. While the chef consults reading blogs and books, especially *The Flavor Bible* (I can attest to the brilliance of this book!), he also relies on his own experience and intuition. The meal we experienced is the brilliance of culinary knowledge refracted through one singular chef.

We started with three dishes: “Ring” of braised rabbit, Hokkaido scallops,

and Italian burrata. The sweetness of the Hokkaido scallops was enhanced with brown butter whipped potato and apple pie filling, and contrasted with house kimchi, duck and shallot crumble, and sherry gastrique. The crumble and kimchi, a welcome textural respite from the soft scallops on soft potato. The Italian burrata (soft fresh cheese made from mozzarella and cream) was surrounded by a symphony of taste and flavor: roasted grapes and squash, arugula, broccoli with piri piri (a Portuguese sauce with African influence), Iberico ham, and ciabatta crisp—a world tour on a plate!

The “Ring” of Braised Rabbit is undoubtedly the most eye-catching of appetizers and solidified for me my take on the chef: unfamiliar takes on familiar comfort foods. Inspired by Grant Atkins (of Alinea fame), Chef Veitch embarked on making a ring of rabbit confit slowly cooked in fat and shaped it using Activa, a meat binder. He chose rabbit after recently playing with it as a ragu for

Easter and pairing it with cherry in spring. The ring is decorated with alternating drops of caramelized onion gravy and feta mousse, and surrounded by marinara sauce with Calabrian chile. Inside is a salad with pecorino cheese. Fried food with marinara sauce is oh so familiar, but here transformed into a dazzling gourmet feast for the eyes as well as the palate.

The entrées displayed similar showmanship with intelligent pairing of flavors and textures. Let me start with the Venison Tenderloin I had. The gaminess of the venison was offset first by a deep salt rub for two hours followed by a juniper spice rub for 4 to 5 days. The tenderloin was then simply seared and presented as three towers with accompaniments. Sweetness in the form of carrot puree, parsnips, apple, and huckleberry jus; textural contrast with apple, rye flour and juniper crumble, and Brussel sprouts; and herbal notes with rosemary oil for parsnips and garlic herb butter for Brussels sprouts. An arresting visual that lived up to its promise.



“RING” OF BRAISED RABBIT



BEEF WELLINGTON



PHOTO: 365INK

“PASSION” CARROT CAKE

The Brussels sprouts that supplied textural contrast to the venison played a different role with the White Pekin Duck Breast. The duck breast itself had a great sear after rendering the fat and was complemented by sweet potato risotto and chestnuts for sweetness, soy balsamic mushrooms for umami, red wine jus to enhance meatiness, and duck crumble for more texture. The Brussels sprouts here added a welcome green note to the surrounding richness.

Beef Wellington as a signature entrée is the chef declaring his expertise, and this version lends credence to that declaration. The beef encased in a gorgeous puff pastry was perfectly medium rare. The mushroom duxelles were a luxurious indulgence with a root vegetable medley dressed in rosemary oil providing the carbohydrate base. The sauce Au Poivre cut through the richness with peppercorn bite. The other beef dish, Bison Ribeye, exhibited solid meat cookery with the accompaniments superbly supporting the flavors: foie gras mousse, red wine braised onions, broccoli, brown butter mash, all topped with a lovely sauce bordelaise (red wine and shallots).

Chef Veitch’s Mediterranean influence most clearly shows up in the Amish chicken with a sparkling Zatar marinade. A white bean cassoulet worked with the perfectly juicy chicken with golden raisins, curry roasted cauliflower, and pine nuts, and the pomegranate jus added the right amount of astringency.

The desserts showcase techniques closer to a savory chef than a pastry chef, and the results are delightful. Chef Veitch indicated that the previous places he worked at included pastry chefs responsible for desserts and he is having quite a bit of fun learning new techniques. The thoughtfulness displayed in putting together flavors and textures in the main menu translates very well to the dessert menu.

We had two of the three featured desserts: “Passion” Carrot Cake and Chocolate Pretzel Indulgence. The latter had a gorgeous chocolate half-sphere with pretzel cake, Nutella buttercream, salted caramel, and peanut buttercream.



EDGE EXECUTIVE CHEF BRANDON VEITCH

I am not a huge fan of chocolate, it tasted good enough for me. The “Passion” Carrot Cake on the other hand was my favorite bite of the night! A deconstructed dessert in the best way possible; warm autumnal flavors permeated the moist carrot cake, but the accompaniments stole the show. Candied carrots added to the carrot flavor while coconut crumble and pineapple brought the piña colada to the party. Ginger snaps added both texture and warmth while the cream mousse provided the contrasting softness and indulgence. I could never have pictured those flavors together, and now that I have, I cannot imagine them apart!

While the taste of that carrot cake lingers, I cannot help but be impressed with how well the food and the ambience work together to create an unforgettable experience. I can only imagine how heavenly it would be to sit on the terrace sipping an Aperol spritz and indulging in a summer feast. For now, it is the warmth of comfort food to ward off the cold just outside the window. ■

Edge by Goldmoor Inn

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