

Simplicity is the taste for River Room chef

By Pasha Carroll
Neighbor Newspapers Staff Writer

Instead of putting more ingredients into menu items at The River Room, Chef Benjamin Krawiecki would rather take them out.

The executive chef at The River Room for more than a year has revamped the menu and will soon roll out even more changes.

"I love simple food," Krawiecki said. "It is not what I can add, but what I can take out and make it taste great."

Krawiecki said he learned the concept in Miami, where he worked with a menu that only had steak, fish and lobster on it. It was seasoned and cooked perfectly, so the meat, not the added ingredients are what the customer tastes.

"I want to hear 'that was a great piece of beef,'" Krawiecki said. "The flavors shine through the quality of veal."

Even with his "no fu-fu" approach, Krawiecki said some menu items are staples at RiverRoom, items that won't be cut out in the upcoming change.

"The crab cakes never changed and probably never will," he said. The crab cakes and blackened mahi mahi are fan favorites.

"What I like doesn't always matter," he said. One menu staple that everyone loves is the seared diver scallops. The "huge, sweet, tender" scallops are served in a brown butter caper sauce and scrumptious, he said.

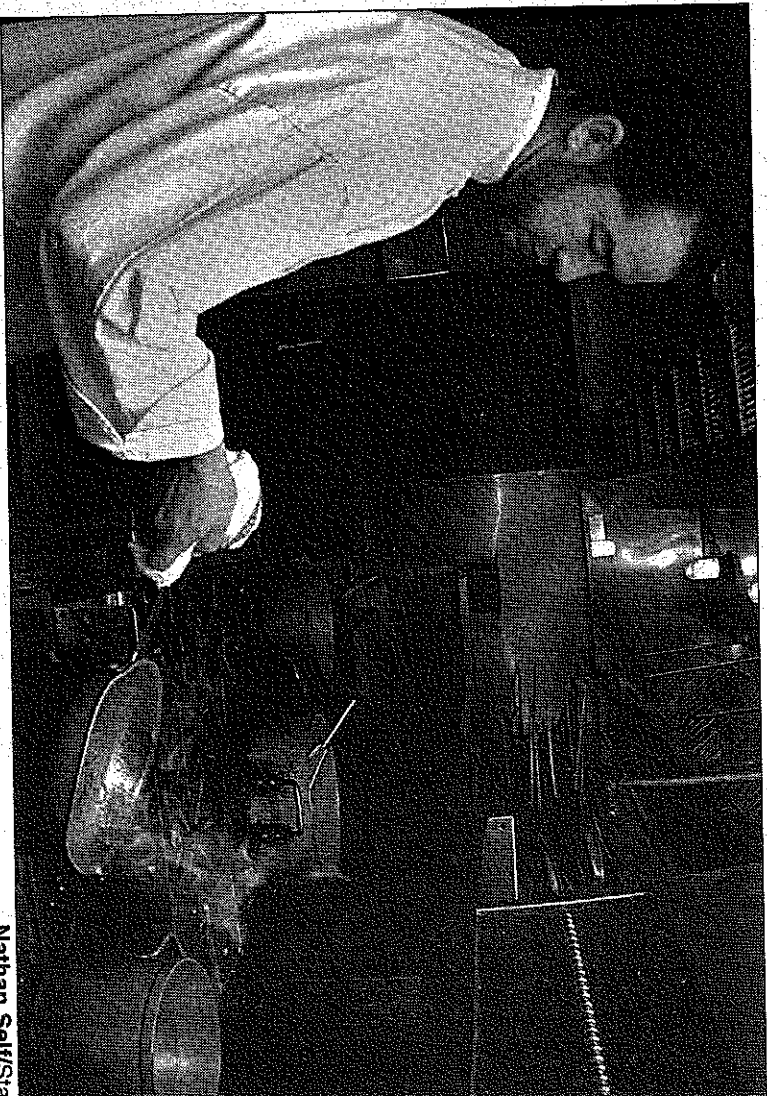
This fall, Krawiecki is also planning on bringing the concept of comfort to the River Room.

He loves braised food, which means slow cooking in a liquid stock. As the weather turns even cooler he will add braised lamb shank and a braised pork belly to the menu.

He will always keep a certain comfort side on the menu, that he says is not crazy or inventive, it is just a staple, macaroni and cheese. But his twist is macaroni and Gouda cheese.

Krawiecki did not just become a good chef on his own. He has been mentored by some of Atlanta's finest chefs since he was 15-years-old.

Chef Guy Luke, the former



Nathan Self/Staff

Ben Krawiecki, Executive Chef at The River Room, fires up the kitchen with simplicity and "no fu-fu" approach to food.

owner of Violettes, was his first inspiration. Krawiecki said Luke was an incredible lawyer by trade and a chef and carpenter by love.

"He inspired me. Not so much in his violent French attitude but as far as philosophy," Krawiecki said. Luke did everything himself, he stuccoed the restaurant, built the tables and even fixed the stove.

Krawiecki said he didn't go to school at the Culinary Institute of America and the Florida International University School of Hospitality to learn everything that is needed to be a good chef. A good chef knows everything in his kitchen, including how to fix the appliances, he said.

"I know a little bit about everything," Krawiecki said.

Chef Gary Mennie of Taurus and Canoe in Atlanta taught Krawiecki to have respect for food and for people.

"It didn't matter how busy you were on the line, he'd talk to you in one toneless so you had to concentrate on what he was saying," Krawiecki said. "He was always cool, calm, and collected."

Krawiecki said he will continue to bring his learning experience as he grows into his future.

"I will always be in the restaurant business. I would like to have more than one of my own," he said.

FITNESS & WELL-BEING

Piedmont Healthcare names vice president

Holly Bates Snow has joined Piedmont Healthcare, PHC, as the vice president of Government and External Affairs. In this role, Snow will serve as PHC's healthcare liaison in the political arena on the state and national level. Previously, Snow worked more than 14 years with the Georgia Hospital Association. While there, she served as vice president of government relations and public affairs and was responsible for representing the interests of Georgia's hospital industry before state and federal officials, including members and staffs of the Georgia Congressional Delegation and Georgia Legislature. She also

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Information: 1 (800) 669-8387.

Stretch and relax

Yoga class meets at 1:30 p.m. Mondays in the parlor of the Hinson Memorial Activities Center, Sandy Springs United Methodist Church, 85 Mt. Vernon Highway. \$10 a class, or \$75 for 10 weeks.

Diabetes classes

The Diabetes Resource Center at Piedmont Hospital is offering grocery store tours for people living with diabetes.

Led by a registered dietitian who is also a certified diabetes educator, tours are held one Wednesday morn-

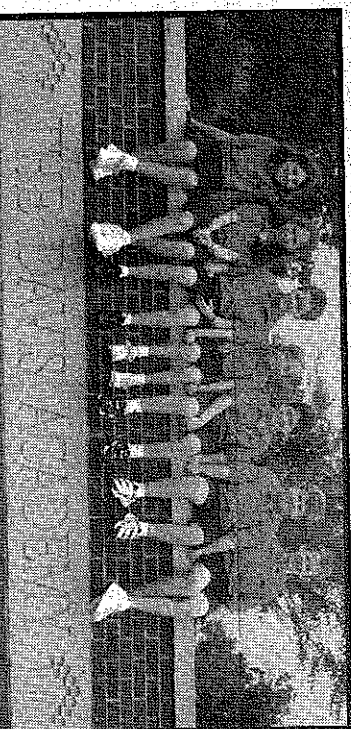
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7:00 p.m.
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10:00 - 11:00 - Coffee & conversation with Middle School Principal Peter Cline

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FAITH & RELIGION

Concert series at Dunwoody Methodist

The Concert Series at Dunwoody United Church will hold the Atlanta Sacred Chorale. The ASC has touched hearts and spirits with formative power of sacred choral music for over 50 years.

Nov. 6, 4 p.m., Dunwoody United Methodist Church, 1548 Mt. Vernon Road.
Suggested donation for this concert is \$10 at

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