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MARCH 2011

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PICK OF THE
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MID-
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Living**



Strawberry Swirl
Cream Cheese Pound Cake

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Spring Road Trips!

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CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Beignets with a side of tic-tac-toe; The packed house enjoys a taste of N'awlins; A waitress armed with a roast beef po'boy



Next Big Thing: Bayou Bakery

In this month of Mardi Gras, enjoy a New Orleans-inspired moment of beignets, chicory, and more

Soul is hard to find. It exists in the fabric of a place, the crevices, the dark corners, a “second-line” beat, the creak of a beloved leather chair. It’s what draws us back to a restaurant, time and again.

And it’s the ingredient that has made Arlington’s Bayou Bakery an overnight success.

The Scene

Chef/owner David Guas has infused his industrial-chic coffeehouse, bar, and eatery

with design touches that make it feel like it’s been there forever. The colorful glass art was made by his cousin in New Orleans. His wife, Simone, found a dozen antique pie tins and grouped them on a brick wall for instant art. “I wish she’d gotten more; I would have baked with them,” David says wistfully. He himself crafted the lounge area’s ginormous coffee table from reclaimed wood and a warehouse pallet. Overhead, a stuffed crocodile head peers down. A hutch wrapped in zinc



Chef David
Guas

houses cream for coffee. In the women's bathroom, Simone created "wallpaper" by laminating recipes from old Southern cookbooks (including some from *Southern Living*). "Everybody feels at home here," observes David.

The Chef

Like gumbo and beignets, this baker got his start in New Orleans. Raised in foodie heaven, David broadened his knowledge by cooking with his Cuban father and Louisiana-born grandmother. He went on to become a pastry chef with a knack for creating homey but refined desserts. Famed New Orleans chef Jeff Tunks asked him to help open D.C. Coast Restaurant in Washington, D.C.; David ended up designing the dessert program for Jeff's

next four restaurants. His first cookbook, *DamGoodSweet*, is filled with luscious photos and drool-worthy recipes (some of which form the basis of Bayou's menu). His dream for his first shop is simple: "I just want to give people what I grew up with—great food, beer, and music, shared with good friends." Insider's tip: When you run into David, as you will at Bayou, you'll become his new best friend by asking about his favorite topics: hunting, honey, and Harleys.

The Food

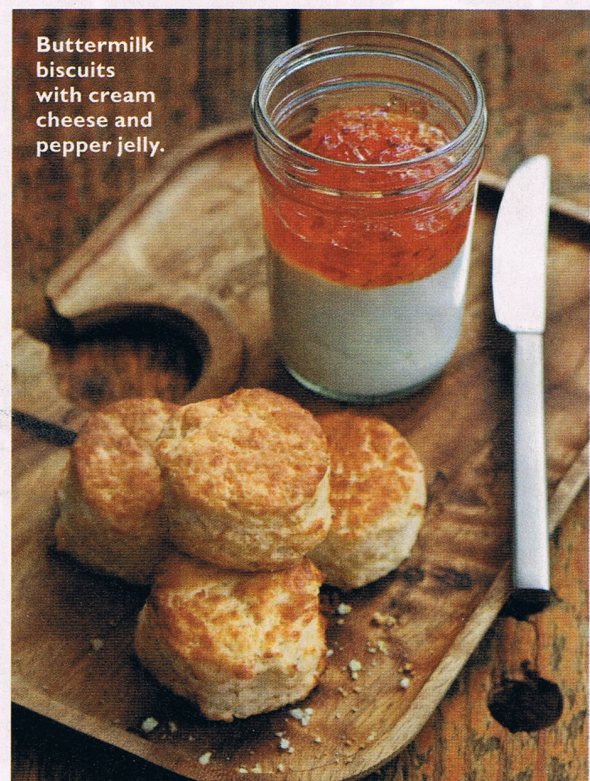
David has broadened Bayou Bakery's scope beyond sweets, and practically everything is made in-house. Breakfast brings bacon and sausage biscuits, steel-cut oatmeal, and croissants. His Arm Drip po'boy is an homage to the Red

Man, once served at his favorite Big Easy po'boy shop, Charlie's, a Katrina casualty (Arm Drip makings: roast beef and gravy, Swiss, sautéed onions, and mayo). He also makes individual muffulettas, which he deliberately misspells on the menu to force people to pronounce it right. There are plates made for sharing, like pimienta cheese or creole cream cheese served with pepper jelly and tiny buttermilk biscuits. At night, folks drop in for surprises, like a jar of spiced pecans or porKorn (salty-sweet caramel popcorn flecked with Benton's gourmet bacon). Any time of day is perfect for a buttermilk beignet, a wedge of lemon doberge cake, or old-fashioned chocolate pudding. On Mardi Gras Day, March 8, you can enjoy Chew Dat Hot Plate specials like Shrimp Creole.

The Drinks

"This is the kind of place where my friends and I like to hang out," says David. So in the morning, there's fabulous drip coffee, espresso, and chicory (yet another nod to New Orleans). At night, there's really, really good beer—half a dozen craft beers on tap. There's a wealth of interesting non-alcoholic options, too, including house-squeezed lemonade, gourmet root beers, and cloudy apple cider from Toigo Orchards.

Bayou is located a block from the farmers' market, and David hopes the warming weather will lead strolling shoppers to stop by for brunch and discover their new home-away-from-home. "I think some things are meant to be stumbled upon." Amen. 1515 Courthouse Road, Arlington; bayoubakeryva.com **SL**



Buttermilk
biscuits
with cream
cheese and
pepper jelly.