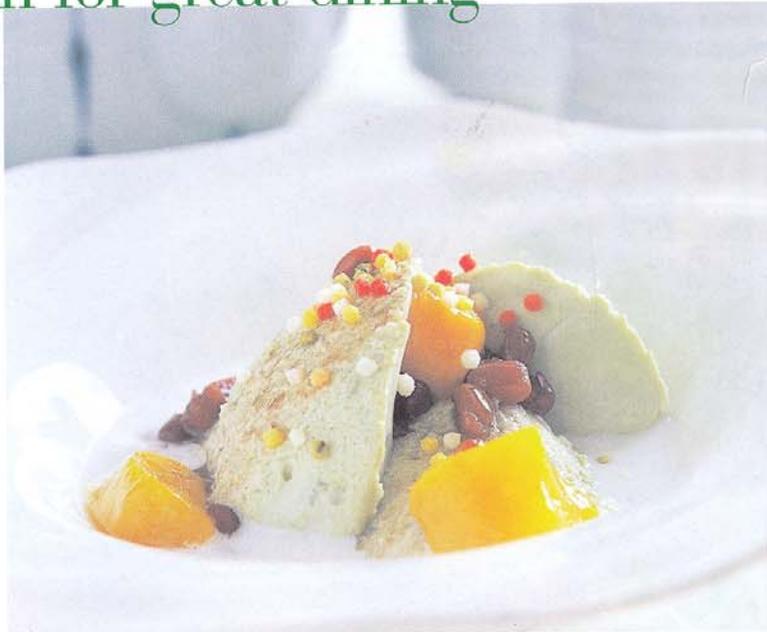


# COLORADO. *expression*

Mangia

Grapevine By Pat Miller, the Gabby Gourmet

## Head south for great dining



### **FARRO ITALIAN RESTAURANT**

(8230 S. Holly St., Centennial, 303-694-5432)

Chef Matthew Franklin, formerly of 240 Union in Lakewood, and John Richard, formerly front of the house at Gallagher's in Denver, decided it was time to go out on their own. The result is the delightful California/Italian bistro in Centennial. Small, casual and comfortable, the partners are serving great food and wine at farro. From a killer flash-fried calamari and tuna "crudo" to mussels, and baby spinach, pear, gorgonzola and walnut salad, it's hard to choose from the list of appetizers. Pasta and pizza shine, and entrees that include pork Milanese, seafood "farro" stew, chicken, flat iron steak, and meatloaf make decisions difficult. With no bottle of wine over \$40, and all dishes under \$20, farro is a perfect neighborhood treat.

### **MEL'S BAR & GRILL**

(5970 S. Holly St., Englewood, 303-777-8223) Mel's Bar & Grill retains the name of restaurateur Melvin Master but sports a new owner. Top toque Chad Clevenger brings excitement with his own style. The decor is homey with a great bar and lounge. Chad's food hints of his Southwestern roots, but he adds American and global touches. Mussels la Cagouille, roast chicken with tarragon, salmon with spinach and steak with frites come from Mel's menu, but a huge selection of Clevenger's dishes entice as well. Seared ahi tuna tataki, pork belly with mashed butternut squash, lamb shank with acorn squash, a grilled pork chop with spaetzle and caramelized apple jus, and short ribs showcase Clevenger's style. A very nice wine list complements the food.

### **LA SANDIA MEXICAN KITCHEN & TEQUILA BAR**

(8419 Park Meadows Center Drive, Lone Tree, 303-586-5511) La Sandia opens in the Vistas in Park Meadows. The space is gorgeous, as Owner/Chef Richard Sandoval always dazzles with decor. Downstairs is the dining room with bright colors, panels separating tables and a great private room. Upstairs, the rooftop patio is covered, heated and boasts

a fabulous bar and comfortable seating. The food is similar to the sister restaurant in Northfield. Duck mole, fajitas, pork carnitas and striped bass are some of the entree choices. Margaritas flow, and wine and beer complement the food. La Sandia is one of many choices in the new restaurant row. Others include White Chocolate Grill, Cru, Brio and The Counter.

### **ENCANTADO RESORT**

(198 State Road 592, Santa Fe, 877-262-4666)

Heading to Santa Fe? Do not miss the new Encantado Resort just seven miles out of the city. One of the most beautiful spots ever, 65 casitas (small villas) cover the area in addition to a magnificent spa and lodge. Aspen's former favorite chef, Charles Dale, takes the helm at Terra—a gorgeous restaurant that is a must whether staying at the resort or not. The fabulous Santa Fe/Californian modern look brings the outdoors in with huge windows and warm

colors that reflect the mountains and sunsets. The perfect table settings are simple and elegant and the fabulous bar area adds to the scene. The food amazes with homemade breads, seven herb ravioli and duck tamales with foie gras to start. Entrees of date-crusted rack of lamb, salmon on bruschetta, guinea hen prepared "sous-vide" and outrageous veal breast entice. Do not miss truffled pommes frites and cheesy tator tots! The wine list is as exciting as the food and service is perfect.

#### ON THE RADAR

**MERLE'S BURGERS & BEER** on Main Street in historic downtown Littleton opened this fall in an old service station now sporting an urban chic look. With appetizers such as fried pickle spears, salads ranging from ahi tuna to caprese salad, build-your-own burgers and tasty barbecue entrees, Merle's offers a fun spot for happy hour and family fun.

**WHITE CHOCOLATE GRILL** (Vistas at Park Meadows) brings steak, fish, sandwiches and more to the scene. The space is very large, modern and comfortable with a fabulous outdoor fireplace. Enjoy good food and wine, excellent service, and lots more than white chocolate.

**ROOT DOWN** brings great dining to Highland (33rd Avenue and Osage Street). Built in a 1950s-era service station, Chef/Owner Justin Cucci created a midcentury modern interior that includes a bowling alley lane as the bar, '50s Knoll chairs and a modern phone collection on the walls. An open kitchen is the focal point for globally influenced seasonal cuisine, including vegetarian and vegan offerings along with fish, poultry and beef. Enjoy veggie burger sliders on "nun buns," gnocchi with oven-dried tomato compote, goat cheese panna cotta, grilled beef tenderloin with apple potato gratin, Moroccan red snapper with couscous

and risotto. A terrific wine list and excellent service make this a great choice.

**LING & LOUIE'S** (Northfield) has a second location in LoDo at 1201 16th St. The Asian-fusion restaurant features dishes such as mango chicken, sizzling salmon, pad Thai and stir-fry options. The decor is great, portions generous and prices right.

**INDULGE WINE BAR** in Highlands Ranch Town Center is adding more fun to dining in the area. Contemporary and warm with earthtones, chocolate brown, orange and red accents, the concept is friendly and comfortable. Featuring great tapas and desserts, and of course, excellent wines, Indulge boasts a master sommelier to head the program. Open for lunch and dinner, a special treat is live music on some nights.

**TWELVE RESTAURANT** opens on 22nd Avenue and Larimer Street. This funky spot, with very casual decor and a lovely focal bar, seats 28 in the small room. The menu features "nouvelle" style upscale food with emphasis on organic and sustainable. Prices are on the high side.

**TAG** in Larimer Square is set to open. The space is great with a wine cellar going from the basement through the floor of the restaurant. Chef/Owner Troy Guard will have an amazing menu to match the 1,200 wines on display in the two-story adeg.

**CLOSINGS:** French 250 at 250 Steele St. has shut its doors, as has Mel's on Sixth Avenue and Downing Street, Denver. Also on the list of departures is Via on 19th Avenue and Wynkoop Street, Denver.

nine75 at 975 Lincoln St., Denver, closed and then was bought by the group that owns the Jet Hotel. The name remains the same, but a new menu and lower prices bring new interest to the place. **CE**

Pat Miller, aka The Gabby Gourmet, hosts The Gabby Gourmet Restaurant Show on KHOW, AM 630 on the dial, every Saturday afternoon from 1-3 p.m. On air for 29 years, Pat writes the very popular *Gabby Gourmet Restaurant Guide*. The new 23rd edition for 2009 is available throughout the Denver area.



**ZWIEBEL CENTER**  
*Plastic Surgery  
& Skin Care*

**Paul Zwiebel, MD, DMD**

Certified:

American Board of Plastic Surgery

Member:

American Society of Plastic Surgeons,

American Society of Aesthetic  
Plastic Surgeons

**303.470.3400**

206 W. County Line Rd #210, Littleton

[www.drzwiebel.com](http://www.drzwiebel.com)