

2009

RESTAURANT GUIDE

The Post and Courier

FINE DINING

Fine dining is no longer a temple of haute cuisine. In fact, what it is more about these days is creating the future of food. It is a point of view. It is about raising awareness of the who, what, where, how and why of what we eat.

The purveyor has the power because every chef is only as good as the ingredients at his disposal. The synergistic circle of the restaurants

selected this year all have that in common.

These are chefs whose commitment and respect for those who provide them with the raw materials that allow them to spin culinary flax into edible gold will not be compromised. They honor a sacred trust, and at their table we share in that communion.

— Deidre Schipani



PHOTOS BY BRAD NETTLES/STAFF

(Above) Inside FIG. (Right) FIG's Fish Stew "en Cocotte," a casserole.

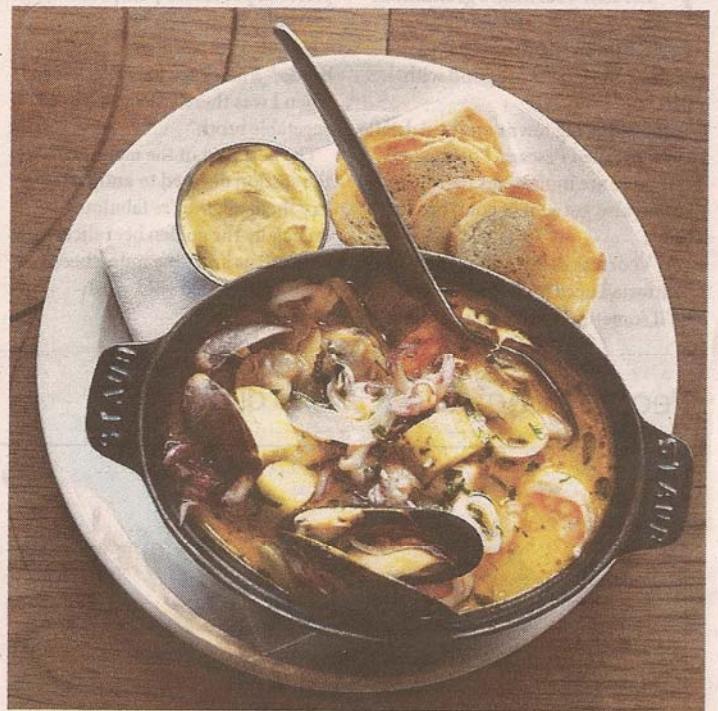


FIG Restaurant

232 Meeting St., downtown
805-5900
www.eatatfig.com
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We are living in the golden age of fresh and local and no restaurant does it better than chef Mike Lata's FIG (food is good).

On any given day, his menu is not planned until he has heard from his

purveyors. What's the catch from Raul's Seafood, what's ripe and ready from Rita's Roots, what's fresh from the fields of chef's personal Ceres, Celeste Albers?

FIG produces a market-driven menu without pretensions. Seasonal and sustainable are not buzz words at FIG but the canons on which Lata and manager and partner Adam Nemirow have staked their reputa-

tions and their restaurant. In Lata's hands, ingredients are distilled into primal components of aroma, texture and flavor. A modern esthetic has shaped the look and feel at FIG. Spare in appointments, strategically placed candles, flowers and art set a tone of concentration and comfort.

A silky puree of potatoes is sweetened with celery root; mustard greens and kale retain their

earthy, peppery spice; the signature pan-roasted cauliflower remains; Keegan-Filion Farm chicken tastes, well, like chicken; and the Caw Caw Creek pork shoulder is an homage to animal husbandry. Lata sees the demands beyond the perimeter of the plate. He has embraced the Japanese concept in which the true essence and identity of an ingredient blooms in the hands of a master.