

JUNE 2009

FOOD ARTS

AT THE RIS

FOREFRONT



THE BIG
WAKE UP!

OUR GREENER
SCHEMERS

MAKING OF A
FOODTOWN U.S.A.

SHRIMPERS
IN PERIL

trimmings, topped with a choice of sesame/chile salsa *roja*, cabbage in Korean chile/soy vinaigrette and cilantro/green onion/lime relish. Or the burritos filled with the same meat as the tacos, mixed with hash browns, scrambled eggs, shredded cheddar and Jack cheeses, chopped onions, and cilantro. You want tofu? They got tofu too—possibly better than any tofu you've ever eaten.

Actually, though it was an overnight sensation, that first night didn't begin all that well. Shin-Manguera, Manguera, and Choi (along with a steadily growing crew of friends and family) gave the truck a test run by taking it to stylish West Hollywood. Shin-Manguera says they parked the truck on a busy thoroughfare, started grilling, and the reaction was an unambiguous "what's this taco truck doing in West Hollywood?"

"Nobody would buy a taco," she admits. "So, we started giving them out for free. For weeks, we made no money at all."

Then they came up with the notion of parking next to the nightclubs and bars of Hollywood. They fed the bouncers for free. And when the trendies emerged from the clubs at the end of a night of Cosmos and Green Apples, they'd grab dishes like grilled asparagus in a peppery sauce topped with nectarines, along with the tacos and burritos. The buzz grew fast and loud. Suddenly, everyone wanted to have the Kogi experience.

And they were able to have it, thanks to the Internet—which the owners credit with making Kogi what it is. Shin-Manguera says, "If it weren't for the Internet, we'd be in the hole for who knows how much. We all had other jobs, which we held on to. After our day jobs, we went to the truck, worked till two in the morning. And then, we went viral. We don't try to control it. It has its flow, and we're along for the ride." —MERRILL SHINDLER

Ancestor worship Portsmouth, New Hampshire—Make a little room, Green Zebras, Brandywines, Cherokee Purples, and all you 600 other tomato seedlings hogging the garden limelight.

This year, exotic Blonde cucumbers, Sweet Siberian watermelons, Gilfeather turnips, Stowell's Evergreen sweet corn, and 12 other vegetables will be making their appearance on restaurant menus in the Northeast. Or that's what the people be-

hind the 2009 Grow-Out project hope as they've the Northeast thousands, maybe tens of thousand introduced them to chefs who have agreed to slip onto their menus.

Grow-Out is the brainchild of four groups: Slow Food USA, Chefs Collaborative, RAFT (Renew America's Food Traditions), and the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy.

The sponsors kicked off the pilot project in early March at purposeful receptions that brought together 30 chefs and 27 growers at three restaurants—**Black Trumpet Bistro** in Portsmouth, New Hampshire; **Craigie on Main** in Cambridge, Massachusetts; and **La Laiterie at Farmstead** in Providence, Rhode Island. There were appetizers (homemade sausages, artisanal cheeses, and smoked pork belly), schmoozing—and seeds galore, all of which were donated by Fedco Seeds (www.fedcoseeds.com), Seed Savers Exchange (seedsavers.org), and Old Sturbridge Village (osv.org), which offers historic horticultural programs that include researching, planning, and planting recreated kitchen and flower gardens and offering heirloom gardening programs to the public as well as selling nearly 100 varieties of their own heirloom seeds in their gift shop and online at www.shoposv.org.

Many of the invited chefs already had done business with some of the farmers and all were known for using natural local food as much as possible. "We need to make a path between harvest and plate, and we rely on all of you to help us," Black Trumpet's chef, **Evan Mallet**, told the Portsmouth gathering.

"Our goals are to raise awareness of the issues surrounding heirloom vegetables, build markets, and with this pilot project develop a template to do similar things throughout the country," says Leigh Belanger, program and communications coordinator for the Bos-



the New Jersey location to new digs in Stone Harbor (9628 Third Ave., formerly Henry's). • The new exec chef at Long Branch's **Avenue** is **Dominique Filoni**, recently of the **Four Seasons Hotel Washington, D.C.** He replaced **Antonio Mora** in March.

MARYLAND—Last month **Bob Kinkead** opened **Hell Point Seafood**, a casual and affordable New England-style seafood restaurant, in Annapolis (12 Dock St.). Partners are exec chef **James Huff** and **Jeffrey Gaetjen**, both veterans of Colvin Run Tavern. • Baltimore is getting the **Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants** treatment with the conversion of the historic downtown B & O Building into a **Hotel Monaco**, which will open next month. The property's signature dining spot will be **B&O American Brasserie**, with E.

Michael Reidt (last seen cooking in Southern California) at the helm. • **Michael Marx**, opening chef/owner of **Blue Agave Restaurante y Tequileria** and current chef/owner of **RUB Authentic Texas Barbeque** (both in Baltimore), is getting back in the regional Mexican game later this summer with a new place, **Miguel's Cocina y Cantina** (1200 Stuart St., Baltimore). • After several years of cooking around Boston, chef **Scott Sunshine** (formerly of much-missed Baltimore standby, The Neon Moon) returns to Baltimore. He is chef at **Maisy's** (named after owner **Matt Helme's** five year old daughter), which opens this month in Baltimore at 303 Charles St. (formerly Copra). "The menu is very Baltimore," explains Sunshine. "Crab cakes, burgers, brick oven pizza. We'll be pulling

our own mozzarella, but also serving things like venison chili and quail."

WASHINGTON, D.C.—**Nicolas Jammet**, **Nathaniel Ru**, and **Jonathan Neman**, owners of D.C.'s frozen yogurt and made-to-order salad mecca, **Sweetgreens**, unveiled their third location in May at 4831 Bethesda Ave. (Bethesda). In keeping with their commitment to sustainability, you can order your salad in a reusable plastic salad bowl (\$6) and reuse it at any location (plus get a complimentary vegetable topping for being green).

VIRGINIA—**Lemaire Restaurant** in Richmond's **Jefferson Hotel** reopens this month after a comprehensive renovation with a brand-new upscale farm-to-table menu by chef **Walter Bundy**, who has been with the