



## Garden of Earthly Delights

At Restaurant Eloise in Sebastopol, farmhouse fare picked fresh (as in this morning)

BY JEANNE STORCK | PHOTOS BY SHUNA FISH LYDON



**O**n a chilly evening in wine country, chefs Eric Korsh and Ginevra Iverson walk between the raised beds in their kitchen garden, pointing out crimson Bull's Blood beets they'll use to enrich a bordelaise sauce or a riot of green papardelle leaves that adds bite to a salad.

The young husband and wife team met while working at Prune, an award-winning French bistro in New York's East Village. They've since migrated to Sebastopol where, this past summer, they opened Restaurant Eloise. "One of the main things we were looking for in a space was that it have room for a garden. Now, when our waiters talk tableside about a dish, they're often describing ingredients we pulled from the ground a few hours earlier." They grow a quarter of their food on the property and the rest they source from local purveyors such as Three Ox Farms.

Restaurant Eloise serves up French farmhouse fare, with winter bringing an ever-changing selection of hearty dishes, such as cassoulet. Both Korsh and Iverson are trained in classic French technique. Iverson assisted Gabrielle Hamilton on *Iron Chef* last summer — and yes, they beat Bobby Flay. In European style, Korsh and Iverson see it as a challenge and a form of economy to use up every bit of the meat and poultry they serve; their menu is peppered with succulent sweetbreads, pâté, and confit.

For appetizers, we try the Mushroom Toast (\$13), a lovely stew of

king trumpets in a truffle-flecked bordelaise sauce topped with a snowy poached egg — and of course plenty of hearty bread to sop up every last bite. The Roasted Bone Marrow (\$14) is a classic dish the couple brought with them from Prune. We spoon the decadent richness onto crisp toast accompanied by a parsley salad with capers, slivers of cornichon and shallot.

For entrées, we tuck into the Roasted Duck Breast (\$29) topped with sweet dark huckleberries and served over a bed of tangy rutabaga sauerkraut simmered slowly in white wine. A plate of pillowy gnocchi (\$19) blends chard direct from the garden with ricotta from Petaluma's Bellwether Farms.

We finish off with a lemon crepe — its edges fringed with a crispy caramelized lace — and a medley of handcrafted cheeses from the recently opened Bohemian Creamery in Bodega. With a contented sigh, I wrap my hands around a warming cup of Rani tea, a blend created by Sebastopol-based artisanal tea company, Many Rivers.

Restaurant Eloise is offering a \$25 prix fixe lunch, which includes a glass of wine. Or you can bring your own favorite vintage to Wednesday's \$35 prix fixe Recession Special — no corkage fee applied. There's also a bar where you can stop in for an artisanal beer and a charcuterie plate, and a peek through the big picture windows to see what's growing in the garden beyond. 🍃

» Restaurant Eloise

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