

GOTHAM JOURNAL

A MAGAZINE OF MODERN AMERICAN FOOD CULTURE





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WELCOME

At the heart of Gotham Bar and Grill is the integrity of our ingredients, making them the perfect theme for the premiere edition of the *Gotham Journal*.

When Chef Alfred Portale joined Gotham in 1985, he brought with him New American cuisine, and in time helped articulate an American dining sensibility—diverse, adventurous, approachable, and revolutionary.

One of the primary contributions American chefs have given the dining public is a demand for quality ingredients. The insistence of these chefs on local, seasonal, and prime products has trickled down, and might just be the spark that led to our culture's current food fever, from organic to molecular to *Top Chef*. Though the New American cuisine movement is no longer new, it began a conversation that has allowed the American diaspora to articulate a distinctly American cuisine.

Twenty-seven years and many food fads later, Gotham's commitment to product continues as we strive to create the most delicious seasonal compositions with the best ingredients possible.

Gotham's main ingredients, however, are people: our farmers, purveyors, patrons, and employees. We highlight a few of our favorites in this issue, including the James Beard Foundation at its 25th anniversary, our brush with President Barack Obama, and our ongoing work with the kids of GrowNYC. Our wine director, Eric Zillier, talks candidly about California cabs, while mixologist Rick Pitcher stirs things up and Alfred unveils new recipes for spring.

It's been a good couple of years for Gotham. In May 2011, we were awarded our fifth consecutive three-star review by *The New York Times*. And the *Zagat New York City Restaurants 2012* guide recognized us as the number-two American restaurant in New York, reassuring us that we can continue to improve, even after nearly 30 years!

With so much to toast, we dedicate this publication to our 114 team members who tell the Gotham story each and every day. It is a testament to their dedication, passion, and commitment that New York diners continue to choose Gotham.

Bret Csencsitz

General Manager
Gotham Bar and Grill

5 A CAPITAL AFFAIR

Our recipe for success when it comes to hosting the president.

6 A SILVER ANNIVERSARY

Gotham's general manager talks shop with the vice president of the James Beard Foundation.

9 PLATING SPRING

Chef Portale shows us how to cook with spring's first offerings.

14 IN THE MIX

Mixologist Rick Pitcher shares what he's shaking and stirring for spring.

15 HAILING A CALIFORNIA CAB

Wine Director Eric Zillier gives us a history lesson in the bold West Coast varietal.

17 CULTIVATING TASTE IN TEENS

A look at Gotham's partnership with GrowNYC to promote healthy eating in the Bronx.

18 ON THE FRONT BURNER

A look at what's coming up at 12 East 12th Street.



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RECIPE FOR A PRESIDENTIAL DINNER

Last November, Gotham had the honor of hosting President Barack Obama and his supporters. For weeks, the team worked with the Secret Service and the White House to plan a seamless evening that would be enjoyable (and safe!) for the president. This is Gotham's suggested recipe for success when it comes to hosting the president.

START WITH:

THE RIGHT LOCATION

President Obama was looking for a downtown restaurant in New York.



AN AMERICAN CHEF



CHARMING EVENT COORDINATOR

Brandon Lynn has planned hundreds of events for Gotham with the ability to conceptualize and execute the perfect dinner or event.

ADD:



BACKGROUND CHECKS

The staff at Gotham is all clear and thrilled to serve the commander-in-chief.



THE ROOM

One of the great dining rooms of New York

LET REST:



A PLEASED COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

PORTALE'S TIPS FOR COOKING A PRESIDENTIAL STEAK

First, you should select a cut of high-quality meat. For the president's dinner, we chose a 40-day dry-aged, bone-in strip from Niman Ranch. Before cooking, two important points: first, let the steak get to room temperature; this will promote faster and more even cooking. Second,

the pan or grill should be very hot; this will give the steak a nice char that adds texture, and seals in natural juices. After the steak is cooked to your liking, let the meat rest on a carving block for five to ten minutes before slicing or serving.

A CONVERSATION

Prompted by a quip from Julia Child, the James Beard House was founded in 1986 to provide a gathering place for people with a passion for food. Twenty-five years later, the Beard House is celebrating its involvement in the American culinary landscape with a new cookbook, its third annual Food Conference, the 22nd annual James Beard Foundation Awards Ceremony, and hundreds of dinners. These events spurred a recent discussion between James Beard Foundation Vice President Mitchell Davis and Gotham General Manager Bret Csencsitz about the evolution of food in America.



BRET CSENCSTZ The James Beard House opened two years after and two blocks from Gotham. The '80s seem to have been a transformational time for American restaurants, with Alice Waters, Larry Forgione, and Alfred Portale pioneering the idea of chef-driven restaurants in an American setting. Was this the beginning of a real food movement?

MITCHELL DAVIS Absolutely. When the James Beard Foundation opened, this movement was in full swing. It was an important time, when the first generation of American chefs, many from the 1977 class of the CIA, were cooking at their own restaurants. These were American-born chefs with

serious European training trying to figure out something different and modern to present. As an institution devoted to food culture, the James Beard Foundation was a real part of those changes. The people who have come through both our kitchen and our dining room in the past 25 years have been instrumental in evolving food—long before the Food Network.

CSENCSTZ Besides the all-important ingredients and technique, there was also an American sensibility coming into the dining room. In our case, Alfred's vision of Gotham wasn't just in the kitchen—he wanted elevated cuisine in a comfortable setting, to keep the "haute" in the

food but relax the environment.

DAVIS True. Before, it was an elite class of consumers taking part in the movement. There has been a real democratization of culture in general, and our food culture has benefited from that. Now eating well is part of the underlying literacy of American culture. The foundation began as an organization dedicated to promoting and promulgating American cuisine, elevating the culinary arts to a bona fide art form. About six years ago we altered our course a little to "celebrate, nurture, and preserve America's diverse culinary heritage and future." More than ever, people are active and passionate and serious about food

MARCH 1985

Chef Alfred Portale takes the reins at Gotham Bar and Grill.

NOVEMBER 5, 1986

Inauguration of James Beard House.

SEPTEMBER 29, 1989

Second three-star review for Gotham by *The New York Times*.

MAY 6, 1991

First James Beard Foundation Awards.

AUGUST 27, 1993

Gotham receives three-star review from *The New York Times*.

1985

1986

1987

1988

1989

1990

1991

1992

1993

1994

1995

OCTOBER 4, 1985

The New York Times awards Gotham three stars.

1991

Mitchell Davis joins the JBF.

MAY 18, 1992

Time magazine calls the JBF Awards the "Oscars of the food world."

1993

Chef Portale wins JBF's Best Chef: New York City Award.



DAVIS

at every level. They see it as more of a cultural product, rather than simply nourishment.

CSENCSTZ Sounds like a good reason to organize a conference!

DAVIS Exactly. This is the third year of our Food Conference. The motivation to do it originated from the average consumer, who is now interested in not only how a chicken tastes but also how it was raised. Personally, I believe that the most ethical practices translate into the best-tasting food—and to that conversation about sustainable practices, we wanted to add the chef.

CSENCSTZ To this end, what role would you say the James Beard Foundation plays in discussions

about local, sustainable, and just better ingredients for everyone, from chefs to consumers?

DAVIS Chefs of the highest caliber have always been proponents of the best local, seasonal, even sustainable ingredients. And we realized through our conferences that some of the things we and our chefs know might come in handy to teach other leaders in the industry, besides consumers, to help them make better decisions about the food that most people eat.

CSENCSTZ What are current hot-topic areas in terms of the future of food?

DAVIS It seems fundamental, but definitely land and water: how we manage our water resources and the land we grow on. We now have technologies that help manage these resources, minimizing water consumption, improving land use, or even growing without soil. But I think, fundamentally, we have to treat these two precious resources better. Another issue is that we have to recognize food as a unique product, not just another commodity produced with total disregard for the process of production. Food is different from

screws or scrap metal. It needs to be raised and cared for accordingly.

CSENCSTZ I look forward to this year's conference and its theme, *TRUST*. Gotham is also proud to be in the new book *The James Beard Foundation's Best of the Best: A 25th Anniversary Celebration of America's Outstanding Chefs*.

DAVIS I believe this book really would have made James Beard very proud. These outstanding chefs are his legacy. He was the first to help encourage a new generation in the kitchen so that America could have its own cuisine and its own class of chefs. So we could have something to teach the rest of the world about food and food production, and essentially give back to those who have taught us.



FEBRUARY 23, 1996

New York Times' Ruth Reichl again awards Gotham three stars.

2002

Gotham wins JBF Outstanding Restaurant Award.

2006

JBF presents Chef Portale with Outstanding Chef Award.

MAY 17, 2011

Sam Sifton of *The New York Times* awards Gotham yet another three-star review.

1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012

1998

Release of *Alfred Portale's Gotham Bar and Grill Cookbook*.

APRIL 2006

Susan Ungaro appointed president of JBF.

OCTOBER 2010

First JBF Food Conference held in Washington, D.C.

JANUARY 2012

JBF launches year of 25th anniversary celebrations!

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RECIPES

ALFRED ON ARTICHOKES

Artichokes typically first flower late in spring, but in sunny California one is fortunate to see them early in the season. Last year, I drove from San Francisco to Big Sur on California's coastal Highway 101 and was awed by the fields upon fields of artichokes, and all these quaint roadside shacks where you could stop for steamed or fried artichokes with aioli. That trip inspired me to create a new dish that really lets this great vegetable shine: the braised way.

See Chef Portale's artichoke recipe on page 13.

ALFRED ON RAMPS

Spring is to chefs what summer is to schoolkids—it seems to take literally forever to arrive. From a cook's perspective, the ramp means spring is here, but because its growing season is so brief—little more than a month—we at Gotham take full advantage, buying up as much as we can and even pickling a stash for later. Personally, I don't mind the limitation: while it would be tempting to have these divine ingredients all the time, part of their charm is the anticipation created by strict seasonality.

Ramps—also known as wild leeks—look like a hybrid of a scallion and a small leek and have a soft, sweet onion flavor. Because their tops are more delicate than those of regular leeks, the entire vegetable is edible. They are foraged in the wild and usually purchased in bunches, tied with a piece of twine. Ramps must be thoroughly washed to remove all grit, and the root end should be trimmed before cooking. They are good quickly steamed, blanched, sautéed, or—as in my new recipe—made into a pesto! For Chef Portale's ramp recipe, go to page 11.

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WINE SUGGESTIONS

Either a light, unoaked chardonnay or a crisp, fresh chenin blanc-based wine from the Loire Valley. Needs to be young, unoaked, and crisp.

ON GOTHAM'S LIST

2009 Domaine Guy Roulot
Bourgogne Blanc, Burgundy, France

VARIATIONS

When ramps are no longer available, substitute four ounces of any of the following: parsley, spring garlic tops, basil, or chives.

TAGLIATELLE WITH SHRIMP AND RAMP PESTO

Ramp Pesto

10 oz ramps
1/2 cup ice
1 cup olive oil
2 tablespoons heavy cream
Salt and pepper to taste

Method

Blanch the ramps in lightly salted water and then shock them in ice water. Transfer the cooked ramps to a blender and blend with half a cup ice. Slowly add in the olive oil and heavy cream. Season with salt and pepper.

Cherry Tomatoes and Shrimp

1 cup cherry tomatoes,
blanched and peeled
12 pieces ruby red shrimp,
peeled and blanched

Shrimp Stock

1/2 cup canola oil
Shrimp shells from peeled ruby reds
3 heads garlic
4 shallots
1/2 cup tomato paste
1 bottle white wine
2 quarts water

Method

In a small sauce pot, heat oil and caramelize shells until golden brown. Add in garlic and shallots until light in color. Add tomato paste and cook until lightly golden. Deglaze with wine and add in water. Bring to a simmer and cook for 45 minutes. Strain and set aside.

Tagliatelle

10 oz fresh or dried tagliatelle
1 oz butter
2 oz extra-virgin olive oil

Method

Cook pasta in lightly salted water, until just tender.

In a sauté pan, add in 4 ounces of shrimp stock. Bring to a simmer and mount with 3 ounces of ramp pesto.

Toss in pasta, and reduce the sauce until it coats the pasta. Toss in cherry tomatoes and shrimp. Toss pasta to incorporate all ingredients. Mount with butter and olive oil.

Top with toasted pine nuts.



BEET SALAD WITH MANGO, FETA, ORANGE, AND MINT

2 large red and golden beets,
washed but not peeled

2 tablespoons olive oil

Coarse salt

Freshly ground black pepper

3 oranges, peeled and separated
into segments

1/4 cup coarsely chopped fresh mint

1 tablespoon minced shallots

4 ounces (about 1 cup) Greek feta
cheese, crumbled into large pieces

1 ripe mango, cut into medium dice

Microgreens, for garnish (optional)

Vinaigrette

4 1/2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil

2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

1 teaspoon freshly squeezed
orange juice

Method

Preheat oven to 400°F.

In a bowl, toss the beets with the oil and season with salt and pepper. Place the beets on a roasting pan, cover with foil, and roast in the oven until tender, about 1 1/2 hours. (They are done when a sharp, thin-bladed knife can easily pierce through to their centers.) Remove the pan from the oven, remove the beets from the pan, and set them aside to cool.

While the beets are roasting, make the vinaigrette. In a small bowl, whisk together the oil, vinegar, and orange juice. Season with salt and pepper. Set aside.

When they are cool enough to handle, peel the beets and cut them into 1/2-inch dice. Place them in a bowl with 1 cup of the orange segments, the mint, and the shallots. Add the vinaigrette, season with salt and pepper, and toss gently.

Transfer the salad to a platter.

Arrange the cheese, mango dice, and the remaining orange sections on top. Garnish with microgreens, if desired, and serve.

WINE SUGGESTIONS

**I like a Provençal rosé
with this salad.**

ON GOTHAM'S LIST

**2011 Chateau Miraval
Cotes de Provence,
Provence, France**

ARTICHOKE SALAD

Braised artichokes

1 cup olive oil
4 heads garlic, cut in half
1 carrot, peeled and cut in half
2 onions cut in large dice
10 large artichokes, peeled of any green, leaves trimmed, and chokes removed
1 bottle white wine
3 quarts chicken stock
4 lemons
2 bunches thyme

Method

In a small rondeau, add a splash of oil and add in garlic. Cook for 3 or 4 minutes until lightly golden. Add in carrots, onions, and artichokes. Deglaze with white wine, then add stock, lemons, and thyme. Bring to a light simmer. Add in olive oil and lightly season with salt. Cover and simmer until chokes are just tender. Remove from heat and cool.

Other Ingredients

5 cherry or plum tomatoes, tossed with olive oil and salt just enough to coat. Lay out on a sheet tray and baked in a 200°F oven until lightly dried, about 1 1/2 hours or more.
5 baby carrots, blanched
4 celery stalks, thinly sliced and blanched quickly in lightly seasoned water
5 thin slices of prosciutto, placed on sheer trays and baked in oven until crispy.

WINE SUGGESTIONS

This dish needs something that is crisp and light. Avoid oaked wines!

Lemon Aioli

2 egg yolks
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
1/4 cup lemon juice
1 cup canola oil
Salt to taste

Method

In a bowl with a whisk or in a food processor, mix together eggs, mustard, and lemon juice. Slowly add oil in a thin stream while whisking. Continue to add oil until the mixture thickens up almost to the consistency of mayonnaise. (This is a fresh version that I like to keep a bit lighter, especially for a salad.)

Lemon Vinaigrette

1/3 cup lemon juice
1 cup olive oil
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

Method

Whisk together in bowl.

To Assemble

In a separate bowl, take braised artichokes, cut in half, and toss with tomatoes, carrots, and celery. Season with lemon vinaigrette, salt, and pepper. Piece by piece, arrange on a plate or in a bowl. Intersperse the crispy prosciutto. Be sure to arrange the vegetables so that you can see the bright colors. Finish with a splash of olive oil.

Randomly dot the salad with the lemon aioli.

Finish with some beautiful microgreens or regular-size herbs. Fresh basil or a fresh chiffonade of parsley works perfectly.

ON GOTHAM'S LIST

2009 Weingut Knoll Riesling Federspiel "Loibner," Wachau, Austria





COCKTAILS

Gotham Bar and Grill's resident mixologist Rick Pitcher has been shaking and stirring for over 18 years. Arriving in 2007, Pitcher built the Gotham cocktail program from the ground up. Much like Chef Portale, for Pitcher, it's all about infusing fresh, seasonal ingredients into his bar recipes.

The Garden Party

2 lemon wedges
Mint
1.5 oz Double Cross vodka
0.75 oz fresh carrot juice
0.75 oz Domaine de Canton Ginger Liqueur
Rabarbaro Zucca Amaro

Muddle lemon wedges with fresh mint. Add the vodka, carrot juice, Domaine de Canton, and a splash of the Amaro. Shake well with ice. Strain through a tea strainer into a cocktail glass. Garnish with a thinly sliced Thumbelina carrot on the rim.

This drink is all about the color. The beautiful bright orange cocktail just screams spring. I like to use savory ingredients, such as carrot juice and mint, in creating vodka drinks. The end result is quite fresh and bright, and about as good for you as a drink can be.

Rhapsody in White

1.5 oz 1512 Barbershop Rye
0.75 oz Cocchi Americano
0.75 oz Dolin Vermouth Blanc

Combine ingredients in a mixing glass and stir until properly mixed. Strain into a martini glass and garnish with an orange twist.

This is our version of the classic Manhattan, tailored for the spring. All of the spirits are clear, and the texture of the drink is beautiful. The Dolin adds a beautiful floral note. As the drink is often called a White Manhattan, it's actually named after a Barry White album—specifically when he was in the Love Unlimited Orchestra and made an album called "Rhapsody in White."



FAVORITE INGREDIENT

COCCHI AMERICANO

A beautiful alternative to dry vermouth. The spirit has been made with the same recipe in Asti in Piedmonte since 1891. Made from a blend of herbs, fruit (grapes), spices, and citrus. Quite aromatic. Great just over ice.



HAILING CALIFORNIA CABS

More often than not, when people come to Gotham and ask for a California cabernet, they're looking for something distinctly Californian—a rich, decadently styled wine with lots of dark, smoky fruit and a bit of toast for good measure. Early examples of California cabernet were quite the opposite: they resembled their more restrained, structured Bordelais cousins. It wasn't until fairly recently that restraint turned to opulence, 12.5 percent alcohol became 14 percent-plus, and adjectives like “ripe” and “rich” took the place of “complex” and “age-worthy.”

The California wine tradition started to take root in the 1880s. Wineries like Charles Krug and Inglenook were poised to make some of the best California cabernets of the 1940s and 1950s. Despite this early promise, low-quality wines and an overall antipathy for any sort of socially acceptable intoxicant would dominate the American market for another century.

In the late 1950s, major change was under way. Joe Heitz, working under Andre Tchelistcheff of Beaulieu Vineyards, was perfecting his craft. By 1961, he was on his own. Robert Mondavi, after fisticuffs with his brother, left his family's Charles Krug Winery to form his own brand in 1966, joining a small group of winemakers committed to bringing quality wine to the masses. In 1964, Warren Winiarski, inspired by Martin Ray, started Stag's Leap, making the Silverado Trail famous and also playing a major role in California cabernet's imminent glory.

Everything came together in the 1970s. For the first time, international travel expanded to the middle class, exposing more people than ever to the gastronomic traditions of places like Bordeaux and Burgundy.

The scene was set for California cabernet sauvignon's grand entrance onto the international stage. On May 24, 1976, Stephen

Spurrier, a British wine merchant in Paris, coordinated a blind tasting that pitted California chardonnays and cabernets against French Burgundies (chardonnay) and Bordeaux (cabernet sauvignon). Of the 20 wines at the tasting, the two highest scores went to Chateau Montelena Chardonnay 1973 and Stag's Leap Cabernet Sauvignon 1973. Notwithstanding the validity of these results, California wines would forever more be part of the discussion when talking about the best wines in the world.

The tipping point occurred in 1994. The stylistic evolution toward “modern” California cabernet sauvignon was rapid and extreme. Joseph Phelps' Insignia, a 1970s classic characterized by a powerful balance of fruit and savory, transformed into a lush, opulent explosion of fruit and oak. This upward trend in extraction and opulence became even more dramatic after 1997, declared by some to be the vintage of the century.

This movement of modernization was felt not only in California. By the 2000 vintage, wineries throughout the world, most notably in Bordeaux, acknowledged this trend by making their wines in a richer, more immediately enjoyable style.



In the mid-1980s, Gotham was a strong supporter of California wines. Many of the producers that have become well known today were upstarts when Gotham opened their doors. Since joining Gotham in 2010, Wine Director Eric Zillier has increased the California collection, adding older vintages and verticals.

CLASSIC:

Diamond Creek “Volcanic Hill” 1993
Dunn Napa Valley 1984
Dunn Napa Valley 1991
Dunn “Howell Mountain” 1980
Dunn “Howell Mountain” 1982
Dunn “Howell Mountain” 1983
Dunn “Howell Mountain” 1987
Dunn “Howell Mountain” 1994
Dunn “Howell Mountain” 1996
Stag's Leap “Cask 23” 1995

MODERN:

Joseph Phelps “Insignia” 2004
Joseph Phelps “Insignia” 2008
Bryant Family Vineyards 2004
Colgin “IX” 2004
Colgin “Cariad” 2000
Colgin “Herb Lamb” 2000
Shafer “Hillside Select” 1998
Shafer “Hillside Select” 20007



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AND LIGHT, SUBTLE
BUBBLES SPARKLE LIKE
DELICIOUS MOMENTS
BETWEEN GOOD FRIENDS.



Elliott Erwitt

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Using produce grown by the teens themselves, the Gotham team made a caprese salad with fresh mozzarella, tomatoes, basil, and cucumbers as well as a simple yet delicious sautéed kale dish made with garlic, olive oil, and red pepper flakes.

CULTIVATING TASTE IN TEENS



In addition to teaching teens how to tend the garden, GrowNYC sponsors a farmer's market that takes place at McKinley Triangle every Wednesday from July through October. Ashante (left) and Yamilet work the farm stand while enjoying some of their hard work.

Gotham is proud to partner with New York City nonprofit GrowNYC on their Learn It, Grow It, Eat It program, which helps South Bronx teenagers grow and sell fresh produce and teaches them about healthy food choices.

"We want to empower teenagers to make healthier food choices because they are making more purchasing decisions related to food," said GrowNYC Project Coordinator David Saphire. "It also gives them the opportunity to explore and appreciate the natural world, which can be difficult to do in the fast-paced environment of urban living."

Gotham loves Grow NYC's mission to provide a hands-on experience for teens to help them to make the connection between food,

health, their community, and the environment. Last year, Gotham staff headed to Wishing Well Community Garden to help prepare the beds, which students then filled with seeds for tomatoes, onions, carrots, lettuces, strawberries, cucumbers, squash, and kale.

"The hands-on experience of the program facilitates a keen understanding of fresh food—not simply for its good taste and nutritional value, but also for all the hard work that goes into making it," notes Gotham General Manager Bret Csencsitz, who spearheaded the collaboration. "We are happy to sponsor a program that imparts such wonderful knowledge and an appreciation for fresh food to New York's teens."

ON THE FRONT BURNER



NEW CHEF DE CUISINE, LIVIO VELARDO

At the helm since November of 2011, Livio Velardo has returned to New York from a stint in San Francisco at Michael Tusk's Quince.

Before his move west, Livio was founding partner and chef for the New French on Hudson Street. At the New French, his innovative and eclectic menu earned New York magazine's Best Neighborhood Bistro and praise from Adam Platt for its creative brisket sandwich. Prior to opening the New French, Livio spent four years as a sous-chef under Chef Floyd Cardoz at Danny Meyer's Tabla.

GREENMARKET TO GOTHAM

12 weeks, 12 menus, 12 farms

Gotham offers a \$25 three-course lunch all summerlong, highlighting a greenmarket farm we work with year-round. The all-vegetarian menu is created weekly to feature the products of an individual farm.

**The lunch menu begins
Monday, June 11, and runs through
Labor Day, September 3.**

A TOAST TO OUR TOWN

**MONDAY, JUNE 18
BENEFIT DINNER AT GOTHAM**

ABC Kitchen's Dan Kluger, Telepan's Bill Telepan, and the Common Man's Adam Longworth join Alfred in the kitchen for an evening celebrating the city of New York and benefiting GrowNYC, making New York great for all New Yorkers. Learn more at **grownyc.org**.



Everything begins with great ingredients.
—Alfred Portale

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