



East End Market founder John Rife



Skyebird Organics



Coffee being brewed at Lineage



Whisk and Bowl



Tonda Corrente, owner of La Femme du Fromage



Gin and tonic sampling at Txokos

CALLING ALL FOODIES: THERE'S A NEW TOUR IN TOWN

Think you and your visiting friends and family have done it all in Orlando? Theme parks? Check. Water attractions? Check. Museums and galleries? Check. Mall and outlet shopping? Check. Foodie tour? What?

by **Christi Ashby**

A brand new activity has popped up — and it highlights Central Florida's emerging role as a food destination. A small group was selected to take a trial tour to give operators some feedback and constructive criticism. As one of those lucky few, I thought it would be an enjoyable way to spend an afternoon, but did not really know what to expect.

Jamie McFadden, chef and owner of Cuisiniers Catered Cuisine and Events, came up with the idea for a several-hour exploration of cooking, dining and wining, highlighting the best practices here. As he started his research, he not only did not find anything like it locally, but there was nothing really like his vision nationally either. He says it's more common in Europe.

Since Florida's second largest industry is agriculture, it made sense to begin with the area's only garden, retail and restaurant concept, East End Market in the Audubon Park Garden District (where Jamie opened Cuisiniers Celebration on the premises last year to host special events). Upon arriving at East End Market, the group was greeted by founder John Rife, who started with a show-and-tell in the garden before heading inside to continue the informative chat by stopping at each of the businesses inside.

Patrons were eating lunch at the Local Roots Farm Store counter as we passed by. Smells from Olde Hearth Bread Co. across the hall mixed with intoxicating scents from Fatto in Casa and stomachs were starting to rumble. And so it continued with each stop — Tonda Corrente, owner of La Femme du Fromage was at her front counter sampling some cheeses; Japanese food art was being created before our eyes at Kappo; and coffee was being cupped at Lineage.

At the end of the market is a 760-square-foot commercial incubator kitchen used by

East End Market's tenants, like Fatto in Casa, Skyebird Organics and Houndstooth Sauce Company, as well as burgeoning businesses that need a place to legally prepare, process, cook and store perishables.

After a quick trip up the stairs (some of us could not resist a peek into Whisk and Bowl, filled with baking and pastry goods for professional and home bakers) we were ushered into the special event space and demonstration kitchen. Tables were set with small plates of the dishes we would end up making (or learning to make) and the bar was filled with a summery cocktail with locals faves — Genius vodka by Winter Park Distilling Company and Bungalow 23's Blueberry Lemon Drop mixer.

Lunch was devoured quickly and then we were divided into two groups — one headed into the kitchen for a demonstration of the BLT with bacon and chorizo marmalade and quick pickled tomatoes; as well as Tuscan Bread Crunch with Feta goat cheese and peas.

The other group gathered around Chef Jamie's table in the main room. In teams of two, we tackled the Peruvian Ceviche — including proper knife usage, precise onion chopping and perfect grapefruit supremes (the naked sweet segments). Then the groups switched places.

Next we went to Txokos (chō-kōs) Traditional Basque Modern Kitchen, the new restaurant from Chef Henry Salgado and his wife Michele (well known to many as the owners and operators of Spanish River Grille in New Smyrna Beach). As Chef Henry explained the origins of the restaurant's name — *txokos* are male gastronomic societies in northern Spain. The first one was founded in 1843 in the coastal city of San Sebastian. Members of these clubs meet regularly to prepare meals together, eat, drink, relax and socialize. Chef Henry wanted to not only pay homage to the region, but present dishes that were worthy of the societies.

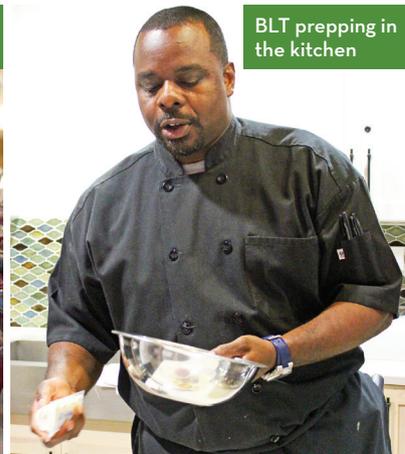
Since gin is the top liquor served in Spain, Txokos bartenders illustrated how to make the perfect gin and tonic. We would sample our own after moving over to savor some Pintxos (small plates) in front of the open-flame grill.

We then boarded the coach for a short drive to Quantum Leap Winery where we were met by co-owner Jill Ramsier. Everyone was given a glass of wine and we headed into the barrel room and production area for an informative guided tour of the bottling machinery and cooling room. Jill explained the winery's sustainable principles and how the company started, along with updates on how they are using wine kegs.

We returned to the tasting room to try another white wine as well as Kaley's Rescue Red (a blend named for Jill's dog) and a Cabernet Franc. While we tasted, we also learned the proper



Genius vodka by Winter Park Distilling Company and Bungalow 23's Blueberry Lemon Drop mixer



BLT prepping in the kitchen



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way to assess a wine, from swirling and sniffing to slowly swishing and swallowing. The winery offered us a great discount if we wanted to buy anything — and there was a line to do so.

The day was done. We had started at 1pm and it was 5:30pm, by now all the attendees had become acquainted, so we had to board the coach again to head back to the Cuisiniers headquarters. We all had learned new skills, experienced new tastes and gotten great insider tips.

Tours can be customized based on group interests and each tour has a guide who delivers pertinent and interesting information during the coach rides. Pick-ups at locations around Central Florida can be arranged as well. For more information or to book a tour, contact Lora DeLorenzo, Over Easy Events, lora@overeasyevents.com or 407-492-4048.

PERUVIAN CEVICHE

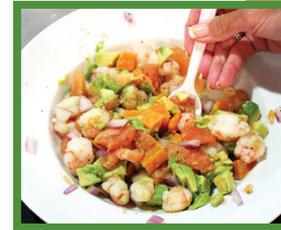
INGREDIENTS:

- 20 shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 1 small sweet potato, cut into medium dice
- 1/4 red onion, finely sliced or diced
- 4-5 sprigs fresh cilantro
- 1 avocado, peeled and diced
- 1 red grapefruit, cut into supremes
- 1/2 cup Corn Nuts
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 tbsp. olive oil

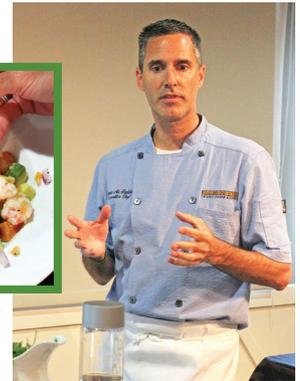
PREPERATION:

1. Pour water into two large pots and bring to a boil. Add sweet potato to one, cover and cook until just fork-tender (about 30 minutes). Transfer to a plate and let cool.
2. In the other pot, add the shrimp and poach for 1-2 minutes or until the shrimp is cooked through. Take the shrimp out of the boiling water and put them into an ice bath.
3. Place the shrimp, onions and sweet potatoes into a glass (or non-reactive) bowl and pour the lime juice over the ingredients. Sprinkle with a little bit of salt. To minimize the acidity of the limes you can put a few ice cubes in the mix.
4. Cover and refrigerate for about 15-20 minutes.
5. Remove the cilantro sprigs from the mix. Taste the ceviche and add salt and pepper if needed.
6. Use a slotted spoon to remove the shrimp and onions from the lime juice mix and place in a serving bowl. Sprinkle with olive oil, avocado, grapefruit, Corn Nuts and finely chopped cilantro.

If using fish, soaking it in cold saltwater helps it keep a firm texture. Rinsing the onions with salt and cold water helps remove bitterness. Adding ice cubes to the ceviche mix helps neutralize the acidity of the limes.



Jamie McFadden, chef and owner of Cuisiniers



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