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P.S.

By Angela Pettera
Photograph by Gary Moss



NIGHTLY SPECIAL: BRADLEY OGDEN

James Beard Award-winning chef Bradley Ogden has been at the forefront of defining and popularizing New American cuisine for more than 30 years. And because he has opened most of his restaurants in California, including the legendary Lark Creek Inn in Larkspur (now called The Tavern at Lark Creek), he continues to contribute his talents to the ongoing design of California cuisine.

This month, Ogden helped the Santa Ynez band of Chumash Indians reinterpret Hotel Corque's restaurant in Solvang by turning it into restaurant Root 246 (see "Root 246: A Solvang Surprise," page 78, for more information). "This is my 22nd opening. This is fun. That's why I don't have any hair left," he jokes.

Ogden has taken up residence in Buellton while he continues to develop this project from scratch. Although he'll likely not become a permanent resident of the 805 anytime soon, he will be with us for a while. Unlike some chefs of his culinary caliber, Ogden prefers to stay at a new restaurant to ensure it runs smoothly well beyond the opening-night festivities. "It's a living entity—you have to care for it, nurture it, and make it grow," he says.

Part of Ogden's success is a result of building relationships with farmers, fishermen, and growers—and wineries. Wine is always central to Ogden's restaurants, and about 90 percent of the wineries on Root 246's list are local, including Sunstone Vineyards and Winery in Santa Ynez, where Ogden created his own Iron Horse Cuvée.

This time next year there's no telling where Ogden will be, although no doubt he'll continue working his kitchen magic for some lucky diners. But for the time being, he seems content to call our part of the Central Coast home. "I'm here five days out of the week. It's a great community," he says. "Mountains on both sides, the ocean a few miles away. There's so much potential for growth here it's phenomenal. You just want to have a great restaurant where people can come and eat. The rest will follow." ■

To follow chef Bradley Ogden—perhaps to his next culinary venture—go to www.chefbradleyogden.com.