

FRESH FIND

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Photos by Andrew Harnik/Examiner
 Chef Jamie Leeds at Hank's Oyster Bar located at 1624 Q St. NW, Washington.

A way with seafood

By Alexandra Greeley
 Special to The Examiner

Leaning comfortably against the bar midway down Hank's Oyster Bar's dining room, Jamie Leeds wears seafood-printed chef's pants, but looks more like a young woman prepping for a doctoral thesis in, maybe, marine biology. Instead, she's passionate about cooking and a noted cook about town — nominated as the "Rising Culinary Star" from the Restaurant Association of Metropolitan Washington's Capital Restaurant & Hospitality Awards in June 2003, and also named a "Rising Star Chef" by StarChef for Washington, D.C.'s 2003 awards program—having scored big as the Executive Chef at 15 ria.

Now she is chef/owner of a new venture: managing and cooking for a quirky seafood restaurant in Dupont Circle. But it seems she takes all the kudos and fuss with a grain of sea salt.

Certainly no novice to the culinary world, Leeds has worked in numerous kitchens in New York and Washington, and readily credits her father with inspiring her to become a chef. Her tribute to him? Naming her restaurant, Hank's Oyster Bar, after him.

Landing a job in D.C. was unex-

pected, and initially, Leeds thought, temporary. "I came down here to 15 ria right after 9/11 happened," she says. "But I saw lots of potential in Washington," she says, and after cooking at 15 ria for 3 1/2 years, she decided it was time to step into a new niche market by opening a casual seafood restaurant.

By all accounts, Hank's has been a roaring success since it opened in spring 2005. "Mostly the neighborhood people stop me in the dining room to thank me for filling a void," says Leeds. "People are excited to find that they can get real New England-style lobster rolls here." But that's not all, of course. Leeds is noted for her way with seafood, and patrons have plenty of primo choices: freshly shucked oysters, seafood pasta topped with a salad and her signature popcorn shrimp and calamari are just a smattering of the menu options. And for meat-eaters, she offers a nonfish entrée nightly: Keep an eye out for her knock-out short ribs. No wonder Hank's is often packed.

"We are so busy at night," Leeds says. "Last Saturday night, we fed 360 people." No mean feat in a restaurant that seats 65 people, including the alfresco terrace.

Small restaurant, smaller kitchen. "We don't have enough space to make desserts," she says. But no one minds: The bill comes with gratis chunks of dark chocolate.



HANK'S OYSTER BAR TUNA TARTARE

This very simple recipe makes a nice accompaniment to an entrée. Or you could decide to offer this as an appetizer. Serves 4

- 8 oz. sashimi-grade ahi tuna, diced
- 2 tsp. minced garlic
- 1 tbsp. minced jalapeños
- 2 tbsp. diced Bartlett pears
- 2 tbsp. mint chiffonade
- 1 tsp. chili powder
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. white pepper
- 4 tbsp. sesame oil

Mince tuna, and mix all ingredients together. Put mixture into a 2-inch heart-shaped mold. Invert mold onto a 10-inch dinner plate, and remove mold.

MEET THE CHEF

Q: What inspires you about cooking?

A: There's not any one thing. It's a combination of the excitement of being in the kitchen and the real immediacy of it. The whole feeling on the line; it's like a dance; the coordinated timing must be perfect. Then there's the family feeling of being in a restaurant, and the satisfaction of creating food that people like.

Q: Which is your favorite cookbook?

A: Chris Schlesinger's book, and then the first few ones by Paula Wolfert. I also like Jamie Oliver; I like his attitude.

Q: What is your most-needed ingredient?

A: Eggs; we use a lot of them. And then butter and garlic.

Q: What is your comfort food?

A: I'd have to say chocolate chip cookies. Or chicken cacciatore—my Mom used to cook it all the time. My dad used to make steak pizzaoili and clams casino.

Q: How do you spend your leisure time?

A: I spend time with my family. My son, my partner and I go to the zoo or the park.

Q: What is your favorite restaurant?

A: That's really dictated by our son. With him, it's Buca di Beppo. When my partner and I eat out, we always want to try something new, but we love ethnic food, Thai food and sushi.

VINE GUY

A family affair: Wines of Joseph Drouhin

By Scott Greenberg

Running a family business can be tough. Throw in the added stress of the annual agricultural roulette associated with growing grapes and making wine, and it is nothing short of a miracle that any family-run wine enterprise can survive one generation, let alone four. But when that family is the Drouhin family of Burgundy, it becomes easy to see how they have turned their family name into a household name.

Founded in 1880 by Joseph Drouhin originally as a négociant (shipper), Maison Joseph Drouhin is now more than 125 years old. Housed in ancient buildings in the heart of Beaune, this multinational winemaking enterprise is as young and innovative today as ever thanks to the uncompromising commitment of the new generation of Drouhins, who seamlessly blend innovation with tradition.

Today, four of Joseph's great grandchildren run the family business. The siblings, Frédéric, Véronique (Vero to her family), Philippe and Laurent, each share in the operations of the firm by applying their respective talents with verve and passion. Their legendary father, Robert, who headed the company from 1957 until his retirement in 2003, now serves as chairman of the board and guiding force, lending his vast knowledge to his children and the wine community.

But in Burgundy, terroir (the land) is what matters. And with more than 90 appellations covering 174-plus acres under their control, the four Drouhins have a single-minded purpose to make great Burgundy wines, be it a Grand Cru (first growth) or a well-crafted everyday wine. While many of the estate holdings are Grands Crus, Burgundy's highest classification, no vineyard is more precious to the family than the first parcel purchased by Joseph in 1918: Clos des Mouches. The firm now owns 32 of the 64 acres of the Clos des Mouches vineyard, from which it makes both a pinot noir and a chardonnay. Both of these wines have become synonymous with the Drouhin name and style.

Clos des Mouches is a Premier Cru vineyard in the commune of Beaune, just south of the small city. Situated on a hill, the vineyard has a south/southeastern exposure and soil composed of clay and limestone. It is this favorable combination of soil, exposure and microclimate that caters to both the finicky pinot noir and more amenable chardonnay grapes.

The name "Clos des Mouches" dates back to the Middle Ages, when the present-day location was ideal for keeping bees. The word "Mouches" was actually the local name for bees and so the area became known as "Clos des Mouches" (the enclosure of the honeybees).

I had the privilege of recently sitting down with Robert Drouhin and his daughter, Véronique, to taste several wines from the Clos des Mouches vineyard. Tasting wines with these two icons is a little like taking free-throw lessons from Michael Jordan ... with less sweat. Here are a few notes



Courtesy photo

from my wonderful encounter. Retail prices are approximate.

The reds - Approximately 16 acres are dedicated to pinot noir.

» **2003 Domaine Joseph Drouhin Clos des Mouches, Beaune, France (\$76)** Spicy nose of cloves and raspberries. This is a very forward wine with powerful fruit (strawberry and black raspberries) with excellent structure and well-defined finish. An excellent expression of terroir and a great companion to venison.

» **2002 Domaine Joseph Drouhin Clos des Mouches, Beaune, France (\$78)** Classic nose of perfumy red raspberries and elegant flavors of raspberries and ripe strawberries. The seductive finish ends long and clean thanks to a remarkable backbone of tannins. Perfect with duck.

» **1990 Domaine Joseph Drouhin Clos des Mouches, Beaune, France (\$125)** A mature nose with hints of barnyard and smoke. A beautiful wine with perfect balance between fruit, acid and tannins that carry the light-red strawberries a long, long way on the graceful finish.

The whites - Approximately 15 acres are dedicated to chardonnay.

» **2004 Domaine Joseph Drouhin Clos des Mouches, Beaune, France (\$70)** Complex nose of gardenias, honeyed apples and pears continue through on the rich palate, where they are joined by traces of tangerine. The citrusy finish plays well off of the long finish, featuring minerals, floral notes and outstanding balance.

» **2002 Domaine Joseph Drouhin Clos des Mouches, Beaune, France (\$91)** Nose of vanilla, spiced apples and ginger. The prominent acidity provides a crisp, clean finish with hints of toasted nuts at the end.

» **2000 Domaine Joseph Drouhin Clos des Mouches, Beaune, France (\$60)** Concentrated nose of buttered toast and honeydew melon with lovely flavors of roasted white fruit on the palate and gravelly notes on the rich finish.

These wines can be aged for 10 (white) or even 20 (red) years, depending on the vintage, or can be enjoyed in their youth.

So, if I did my math right, 2 varieties, 4 generations, 90 appellations covering 175 acres, and more than 125 years of producing and selling great Burgundies adds up to a well-aged family business. And just like the wines they make, they're getting better all the time.

Have a favorite Drouhin Family wine? Email me at scott@vineguy.com