



GRAEME JENNINGS/EXAMINER

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Malachi Broadnax: Rabbit, redux

By Alexandra Greeley
Special to The Washington Examiner

Tucked away on Clarendon Boulevard in Arlington is a small eatery that promises what it delivers: slow food fast. That is, the kitchen serves up dishes — sandwiches, salads and entrees — that are kicked up several notches beyond the typical fast-food offerings. Its name: Rabbit Salad and Grill. And behind the line is the young chef/manager Malachi Broadnax.

A native Californian who grew up in Marion, Ind., Broadnax gives full credit to his mother, who took him at the age of 7 and said quite firmly, "You will learn how to cook," he recalls. Great words of advice from a woman who had a catering service and then some restaurants. "She made really traditional American cuisine," he says. "Her foods were traditional style, and included chicken, steak and pasta."

The first food his mother taught him to prepare was fried potatoes, and he remembers her instructions to be sure the oil was very hot and to be very careful around the kitchen. "I learned [all this] very early," he said.

In college, Broadnax attended culinary arts classes, he says, a shift from his original intentions. "I went to college on a scholarship for track and football," he explained, "and then I dropped out to work as a fast-food cook in Muncie, Indiana. The restaurant hired me as a line cook after one year, and then to a

What is your comfort food?

Tuna and rice — steamed rice and canned or fresh tuna seasoned with salt and lemon. I could eat this every day. There have been times when I have done that.

What is your must-have ingredient?

Tabasco sauce. I have every kind they make ... and kimchi.

What is your signature dish?

I have been exposed to many different styles. A couple of things I do well, so maybe my ribs. I use a

dry rub, wrap in foil, then braise for 24 hours ... then to the grill.

What's in your fridge?

Soy and almond milks, three different kinds of juices, a bottle of wine, lots of lunchmeats, a lot of Korean food like kimchi and miso, eggs and venison.

What is your luckiest moment in the culinary world?

Being involved with Katsuya. He's taken me around town, introduced me to other chefs. I feel pretty lucky, actually.

If you go Rabbit Salad and Grill

- » **Where:** 3035 Clarendon Blvd., Arlington
- » **Info:** 703-243-5660
- » **Hours:** 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday to Thursday, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday

sous chef, and finally to the head chef. I was just 24."

With hindsight, he concedes he didn't realize at the time how lucky he was to get the chance to advance so quickly in his chosen profession. "I ran that kitchen for two years," he says. "I won an award for 'the best

new dessert,' and won second place for my ribs."

From there, he moved to a restaurant called Scotty's Brewhouse in Indianapolis, where he worked both in the kitchen and in the front of the house. After five years, however, Broadnax wanted to move to the D.C. area, and a successful interview with a restaurant placement firm netted him the job at Rabbit.

Doubly fortunate, Broadnax works at a restaurant that serves solely upscale meals. And, his mentor is none other than Katsuya Fukushima — formerly of Cafe Atlantico and other Jose Andres eateries — who is Rabbit's consultant. A wildly creative chef, Fukushima, aka Kats, has inspired Broadnax on to bigger and better cooking. As Broadnax notes, "He is the brains. I am the brawn."

The Vine Guy » Scott Greenberg

There's no place like Rhone

Many wine regions have their own distinctive personalities. Napa drips with big, rich cabernet sauvignon. Burgundy seduces with its pinot noirs. Tuscan wines demand cuisine. And Rhone wines wrap you in a warm blanket.

The Cotes du Rhone region is located in the southern part of France and is actually two distinct viticultural areas; the Northern Rhone Valley and the Southern Rhone Valley. Wine production in the region began with the arrival of Roman settlers a few centuries B.C., making the Rhone Valley the first area in France to produce significant quantities of wine. The oldest vineyards, Cote Rotie and Hermitage, are located in the northern end of the Valley, where the hearty syrah grape grows on steep, sun-drenched slopes and accounts for the majority of the wine production from this area.

The southern half of the valley has a distinctive Mediterranean influence and is home to the famous Chateaufort du Pape appellation where red wines are blended from a variety of grapes, including grenache, mourvedre, cinsault and carignan, to name a few. In addition, aromatic white wine varieties, such as viognier, marsanne, roussanne, bouboulenc and grenache white are grown throughout the region.

The unique soil compositions found in the valley is a result of ancient glaciers that deposited sediment and organic matter over thousands of years. The different soil combinations provide each grape varietal with its own specific characteristics. This diversity allows winemakers a veritable spice cabinet from which to create well-balanced, finely tuned wines.

The Cotes du Rhone region is home to 6,000 winemakers who are producing just about 38 million gallons of wine from the 85,000 acres of vineyards. Because of the volume, there are some terrific values that hail from this wonderful appellation. Retail prices are approximate.

A classic example of a white Rhone varietal blend is the **2010 Gonnat Cotes du Rhone Blanc (\$12)**. According to the winemaker's website, "The Gonnat family employs strict biodynamic and organic practices in their viticulture ... absolutely no chemical fertilizers have been used." And, no oak either. This wine has been vinified in "neutral" oak barrels, which allows the pure flavors of apricot, peach and orange peel to shine all the way through, from start to finish. **QPR 8.5**

The **2007 Santa Duc Vieilles Vignes (\$13)** is a blend of grenache, syrah and mourvedre that hails from four villages in the Northern Rhone Valley that neighbor the region of

Gigondas and delivers a lot of wine for the money. The average vine age is more than 40 years old and the mature fruit produces a wine full of ripe raspberry and black cherry flavors on a dense, medium-bodied frame. It has nice balance and a long spice-laden finish. **QPR 7**

The Vacqueyras appellation is located next door to Chateaufort du Pape and is known for value-oriented hearty red blends. The **2009 Arnoux Pere & Fils (\$18)** is chock full of fruit, including blueberry, black cherries and red currants. There is the slightest hint of cedar on the back end of the finish. **QPR 6.5**

One of the most prominent producers in the Northern Rhone region is the Chave family, and their **2007 Jean-Louis Chave Crozes-Hermitage (\$20)** is one of the best values in red Rhone wines. It features a distinctive bouquet of candied cherries and dark plum on the nose, leading to flavors of ripe cherry and blueberry on the tongue. Hints of tobacco and cedar buoy the medium-bodied finish. **QPR 8**

Of course, no review of Rhone wines would be complete without mentioning at least one from the Chateaufort du Pape appellation, and the **2009 Pere Cabocche Chateaufort du Pape (\$25)** is a solid value worth considering. This multi-varietal blend is supple and rich, with scents of berry fruit and cedar on the nose. Luscious flavors of black cherry, tobacco and Asian spices glide over the tongue on their way to a smooth, smokey finish. **QPR 8.5**

Note: QPR is a rating system that compares the quality a wine delivers relative to the price. A QPR of 10 is considered an excellent value.



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