

Anthony Lombardo: Kitchen hero

By Alexandra Greeley
Special to *The Washington Examiner*

Listening to Anthony Lombardo describe it, his multicourse try-out meal at 1789 Restaurant in D.C. came together in barely two hours.

Imagine making fresh artichoke soup, grilled vegetable salad with arugula and pecans, seared lamb loin with corn puree; roast veal with halibut and a corn consomme — and as a final addition, making and stuffing lamb sausages in such a short time. No wonder the savvy Clyde's staff hired him on the spot to be their new executive chef.

Raised in Sterling Heights, a suburb of Detroit, Lombardo says he comes from a very large Italian family that valued coming together to eat. "Every Sunday was a family feast," he said. "But I was always in the kitchen with my mom making gnocchi."

He took his first restaurant job when still an adolescent, washing dishes in a local steakhouse. But the job transformed him. "I loved food, and once in a restaurant, I started to love the business," he said. "In six months, I became the restaurant's main grill cook." No surprise then that after high school and working in several other local restaurants, he enrolled in the Culinary Institute of America.

Once again, Lombardo says he felt even more in love with his chosen profession, becoming such an adept and focused student. During his time at the CIA, Lombardo externed in Chicago at the Everest Room with chef Jean Joho, where he learned much about working in a fine-dining French restaurant.

After graduation, Lombardo enrolled in Slow Food Italy's cooking school, Istituto Superiore Di Gastronomia, in the Marche region of Italy. "It was a very international student body," he explained. "I took away from my time there many techniques, but especially how not to waste anything in the kitchen. Italians utilize everything more; they use all animals whole and use it all."

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GRAEME JENNINGS/WASHINGTON EXAMINER

"I took away from my time there many techniques, but especially how not to waste anything in the kitchen," Anthony Lombardo said of his time studying and cooking in Italy. "Italians utilize everything more; they use all animals whole and use it all."

What is your comfort food?

Italian red sauce, pasta... and bread.

What's in your fridge?

Eggs, fruit, Wegman's maple syrup, skim milk, cheeses, chunk of Parmesan, and always, bleu cheese. And beer.

Which is your favorite restaurant?

Ripple and Cafe St. Ex. Also Bar

Pilar and BLT Steak.

What has been the greatest influence on your cooking?

Probably the head-to-toe cooking that motivates me. You can't get lazy or you will lose money.

What would you do with a year off?

Travel through every continent in that year.

**If you go
1789 Restaurant**

» **Where:** 1226 36th St. NW

» **Info:** 202-965-1789

» **Hours:** Dinner, 6 to 10 p.m.

Monday to Thursday, 6 to 11

p.m. Friday, 5:30 to 11 p.m.

Saturday, 5:30 to 10 p.m.

Sunday

the United States, Lombardo moved back to Italy and worked and lived with a butcher's family in the town of Bra. After 16 months learning the fine art of butchering, Lombardo returned to the U.S. He

worked in the Bacco Ristorante in Michigan, where his mentor was chef/owner Luciano Del Signore. Lombardo then headed to D.C., where he eventually made his connection with the Clyde's Restaurant Group.

Lombardo is in his element at 1789, taking up the challenge of creating over-the-top cuisine in one of D.C.'s finest destinations. And he is very happy. So, too, are his parents. "My parents were not sure at first about my career choice," he said. "Long hours and all. But they are very proud of me," noting that they were coming to town soon to try out their son's cooking.

The Vine Guy » Scott Greenberg Argyle makes wines with Soles

Texas native Rollin Soles is not your average winemaker. He began his winemaking journey in Switzerland, on steep vineyards at the foot of the Alps. After attending the University of California at Davis, where he earned his master of science in enology and viticulture, he set his sights on producing wines in Oregon, well before the state was known for winemaking.

Soles believes that "if you love where you live, you will nurture the land and make the best wines the land can produce." His vision was embodied in 1987 when he co-founded Argyle Winery in the Willamette Valley in the northwestern region of Oregon. And from the beginning, Argyle has been dedicated to practicing sustainable agriculture and ecological stewardship. Soles insists, "Our biggest motivation is future generations and leaving behind vineyards and systems that are as healthy and strong as possible. At Argyle we try to think two generations ahead."

His philosophy has paid off. Over the last 20 years, Soles has garnered attention and accolades from wine critics and enthusiasts for his elegant pinot noirs and distinctive sparkling wines. He has made Wine Spectator's annual Top 100 Wines list 11 times, the only Oregon winemaker to hold this distinction.

Today, Soles is still at the helm of the winemaking team at Argyle. His sparkling wines continue to set the standard for domestic bubbly, and Argyle's collection of riesling, chardonnay and pinot noir represent some of the best values in Oregon. Retail prices are approximate.

Soles has a passion for proving that Oregon can make top-notch sparkling wines. His mission is accomplished with the **2008 Argyle Brut (\$27)**, a blend of pinot noir and chardonnay from the Knudsen and Lone Star Vineyards in Willamette Valley. The fine bubbles carry scents of pear, apple, vanilla and yeasty bread on the bouquet. The beautifully balanced wine displays precisely delineated flavors of ripe pear and apricot. The citrus-centric finish is delicate and crisp, and the

touch of toasted brioche adds a nice layer of richness. **QPR 8.5**

The term "Nuthouse" originated from Argyle winery's origin as a hazelnut processing plant. The **2008 Argyle Nuthouse Chardonnay (\$33)** has a prominent nose featuring hazelnuts along with peach and pear scents. The mouthfeel is filled with flavors of pear, green melon and white peach up front and notes of baking spices on the crisp finish. **QPR 7.5**

The entry level **2010 Argyle Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (\$25)** is actually a cuvee from some of Willamette Valley's finest vineyards, including Lone Star, Stoller and Knudsen. The nose features dark strawberries and ripe black cherries while the palate reveals flavors of dark raspberries, cherries and red plums. The medium-bodied frame is well balanced and has enough acidity to hold the flavors together on the earthy finish. **QPR 8.5**

Moving a notch up the pinot scale is Rollin's **2009 Argyle Reserve Pinot Noir (\$40)** which combines finesse with muscle. Scents of spice box, cinnamon and cedar fill out the nose. Flavors of dark cherries, plums and ripe strawberries soak the front and mid palate while lovely earthy notes of black tea fill in the superbly balanced finish. The touch of mineral-oriented black cherry on the back of the tongue definitely leaves a powerful impression. **QPR 8**

Legend has it that the spirit of Lena Elsie Imus, who died by her own hand in 1908 in the former Dundee City Hall building, still roams the halls of what is now the tasting room for Argyle Winery. I don't know about ghosts, but the **2008 Argyle Spirithouse Pinot Noir (\$75)** is frightfully good, with aromas of cedar wood, cigar humidior and spice box. The wine unfolds in layers on the tongue, beginning with dark plum up front, luscious red cherries in the middle and ending with a dominant mark of wild red berries. Notes of vanilla, bramble and earthy nuances highlight the charming, lush finish. **QPR 7**

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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