



GRAEME JENNINGS/EXAMINER

Clyde's of Georgetown chef Adam Newton crafts his dishes to focus on locally grown ingredients.

Adam Newton's table at Clyde's

By Alexandra Greeley
Special to The Washington Examiner

If you find yourself as the executive chef of one of the city's most bustling restaurants, you'd surely be one busy person. That must reflect how Adam Newton faces the day as he commands the daily work routine in the kitchen at the always popular Clyde's of Georgetown. Old-timers know that this haunt's history stretches back to the mid-1960s.

Of course, like many of his contemporaries, this Connecticut native got his start in the restaurant world as a dishwasher and prep cook at the Somers Inn in Connecticut. But he explains that this first kitchen job played off his early passion for cooking. "I did a lot of home cooking and baking," he said, "and from there, with my interest in cooking, I enrolled in the Culinary Institute of America."

For his externship and later as a graduate, Newton spent a considerable period on Nantucket, first at the Seagrille Restaurant, where E. J. Harvey was chef-owner, and later at the Wauwinet Hotel's restaurant, Topper's. There Newton worked for chef Peter Wallace, his first real mentor. "He was no old-school chef who would always be screaming and yelling," he explained. "He came right up to you and talked nicely. I always keep that in mind."

Later Newton returned to the school for a bachelor's degree in culinary arts management with a possibility of pursuing restaurant management. But it seems that his 10-week program at the West Coast

What is your comfort food?

Pasta, as Connecticut has a huge Italian population, so my favorite is spaghetti and meatballs. Also a good New York-style sub.

Which is your favorite restaurant?

Central Michel Richard and Open Kitchen [in Falls Church]

What's in your fridge?

Milk, sparkling water, leftover quesadilla, greens such as mesclun mix

What are your must-have ingredients?

Water, salt, fat and good product. Of course, bacon or bacon products. Don't know that there is ever enough. Or pork.

How do you get your inspiration?

The seasonality of ingredients, especially from what fish vendors bring. I also look to my sous chefs; they are hungry and have ideas. And working in other restaurants and meeting other chefs.

If you go Clyde's of Georgetown

- » **Where:** 3236 M St. NW
- » **Info:** 202-333-9180; clydes.com/georgetown
- » **Hours:** 11:30 a.m. to midnight Monday to Thursday, 11:30 a.m. to 1 a.m. Friday, 10 a.m. to 1 a.m. Saturday, 9 a.m. to midnight Sunday

branch of CIA changed Newton's goals: He discovered unusual ingredients, such as abalone, and the art of perfecting simplicity in cooking.

Returning to the East Coast, Newton came to the Inn at Little Washington, where he worked in pastry and did all the line-cook positions. "I was even helping [Patrick O'Connell, the Inn's executive

chef] with his first cookbook," said Newton. "The picture of the bread I made for the cookbook is in it."

After working in several other area restaurants — from Mendocino Grille to the Oceanaire Seafood Room — Newton now directs this Clyde's kitchen, where he injects some of his passion for American regional cooking. "One of the best restaurants is American Seasons on Nantucket," he said. "It broke its menu down into regions. Taking traditional American cuisine has influenced me. You take what ingredients are around us and create local dishes."

That passion for local ingredients makes Newton a perfect fit for Clyde's Restaurant Group, the first in the nation to source local farmers' ingredients for its kitchens. Newton concludes, "I enjoy not only working with local products and their sourcing, but also it has become my passion."

The Vine Guy » Scott Greenberg

Handpicked grapes are the hallmark of Bianchi wines

Many New World wineries were founded by European immigrants. In South America — just as in Napa and Sonoma valleys — many of the wineries have been established by Italian immigrants who brought their agricultural heritage with them and planted vines in fertile soils abroad. Valentin Bianchi was one such immigrant. He came to Argentina from Italy in 1910 with a strong desire to succeed and a penchant for hard work.

By 1928, Bianchi had built a successful business empire in Argentina, and his ultimate dream was realized when he established his own vineyard and winery, originally called El Chiche. In 1934, his wines were awarded the Maximum Quality Prize at the Official Wine Exhibition and Contest, and the winery began to thrive.

In the mid-1980s, Bianchi's grandsons began to take on prominent roles in the company. In 1996, the winery hired noted California winemaker Robert Pepi, of Napa Valley's famed Robert Pepi Winery, as a consultant to introduce new techniques while maintaining the wines' Argentine character. Pepi's expertise in vineyard management as well as winemaking has played a key role in Bianchi's continued success and worldwide appeal. Today, the third generation is now running Valentin Bianchi S.A., where they continue to deliver quality wines that express the terroir of Argentina.

Here are a few of the New World wines with Old World charm from the extensive portfolio of Valentin Bianchi. Retail prices are approximate.

I would never have believed it if I had not tried it myself, but pouring the well-chilled nonvintage Casa Bianchi New Age White Wine (\$8) over ice and then adding a squeeze of lime makes an amazingly refreshing aperitif. A blend of 90 percent torrontes and 10 percent sauvignon blanc, the citrusy-based wine provides a wonderful backbone for flavors of peach and nectarine to shine through. The slight fizz gives a revitalizing boost to

the palate. **QPR 7.5**

All of the grapes for the 2011 Casa Bianchi "Elsa Bianchi" Malbec (\$11) are sourced from Bianchi's Dona Elsa Estate vineyard in Rama Caida, in the Mendoza region. The grapes are handpicked and hand-sorted before they are crushed and fermented in temperature-controlled tanks. Minimal oak treatment assures that fresh fruit flavors of black cherry, dark plum and rich chocolate come shining through on the supple, mid-weight frame. **QPR 8.5**

Malbec is not the only grape in Bianchi's vineyard. The 2010 Casa Bianchi Lacrado (\$11) is a blend of cabernet sauvignon, malbec and merlot. This robust red is one of the most popular traditional wines in Argentina, and it's easy to see why. With flavors of ripe plum, blackberry fruit and earthy red berries on a body of sweet tannins, it is capable of pairing with pork, game and fowl, or simply enjoyed on its own. **QPR 8**

The 2008 Familia Bianchi Cabernet Sauvignon (\$20) is a classic cab that can hold its own against

many offered at twice the price. Warm days and cool nights contribute to the wine's remarkable balance, and the rich soils provide depth and concentration. Flavors of black fruit, red currants, cedar and tobacco mingle beautifully on the textured palate all the way through to the long, lingering finish. A touch of vanilla on the end is wonderfully charming. **QPR 8.5**

If you're particular about your wine, then the 2008 Casa Bianchi Particular Malbec (\$30) is definitely worth a try. The grapes chosen for this reserve-style wine went through a rigorous selection process in the vineyard and winery. After vinification, the wine is aged in 100 percent new oak barrels and then bottled at the winery for an additional year. The wine explodes with gobs of black and red fruit, tobacco, pepper and savory notes. The long, powerful finish utilizes just the right touch of vanilla to bring it all together. **QPR 9**

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.

