

Top from left: Chefs Andy Hollyday, Brad Ball, a sous chef (center), Matt Pietsch and Randy Weed review plans before the dinner begins. **Below:** Marc Jonna emcees the pop-up dinner for 50 guests at his Plum Market location in West Bloomfield.



GANG OF

6 POP UP



Unexpected culinary delights.

BY SUSAN KEHOE, PH.D.
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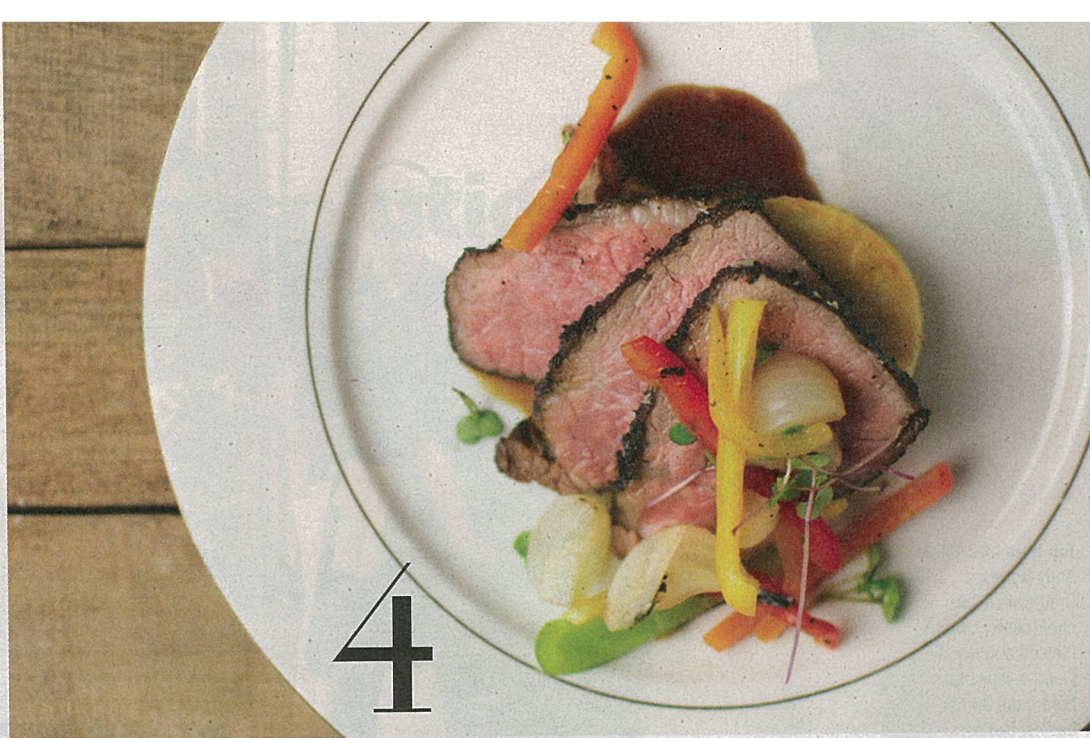
WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU COMBINE some of the finest chefs trained by Michael Symon, the Plum Market's great kitchen facility and a tented space filled with tables dressed in white linen and laid with a full set of wine glasses, silver and plates? You get a pop-up, in this case a Gang of 6 Pop-Up — a five-course dining event with wine pairings.

For this extraordinary event, five rock-star chefs, all Symon alumni, decided to get together for a cooking reunion. Detroit chefs included Chef Andy Hollyday, executive chef of Selden Standard and 2015 and 2016 James Beard semi-finalist; Randy Weed, VP of culinary and executive chef at Plum Market; Norman Valenti of Plum Market, who previously worked with Michael Symon at Roast; Chef Brad Ball of the Michael Symon Group; and Executive Chef Matt Pietsch from Salt of the Earth in Fennville.

To round out the gang, the chefs brought in master sommelier Madeline Triffon, *Wine Spectator's* "World's Best" in 2011, to pair the

Editor's Note: *Pop-ups are popping up everywhere.* A pop-up is an unexpected event in an unlikely place that may only last for a few hours. In this case, the Gang of 6 Pop-Up was a reunion of chefs who came together to cook and give back to support Forgotten Harvest.

course 1



From Top Left: 1. Fresh Mussel Escabeche by Valenti; 2. Parsnip Casonsei by Hollyday; 3. D'Artagnan Duck Breast by Weed; 4. Aged New York Strip by Ball; 5. Pumpkin Bourbon Vanilla Smoke by Pietsch. **Wine Pairings by Madeline Triffon:** 1. Ferrari Brut Rose, Italy; 2. Cave de Tain Hermitage Blanc, France; 3. Moric Blaufrankisch, Austria; 4. Marques de Grinon Cabernet Sauvignon, Spain, and Wine & Soul "Pintas Character" Douro, Portugal; 5. Buffalo Trace Bourbon. **Plum Market | 6565 Orchard Lake Road | West Bloomfield | www.plummarket.com. All wines reflect Plum Market prices.**

perfect wine with each one-of-a-kind recipe.

At Plum Market, Marc Jonna, co-founder and owner with brother Matt, carved out a space in his food and wine market that joined an outside dining area with an inside coffee shop. This tented space accommodated tables and chairs for 50.

The chefs decided the event should also give back, and 30 percent of the invitation-only ticket proceeds were donated to Forgotten Harvest to help families fighting hunger.

As each course was served, the chef came out to explain the dish; and Triffon explained the wine as it was being poured before each course. Jonna served as the informal emcee.

The starter course of Fresh Mussel Escabeche included nudja and celery on grilled bread, a recipe by Chef Valenti. Triffon paired it with Ferrari Brut Rose from Trento (\$24.97).

The second course, prepared by Chef Hollyday, was my favorite. Named Parsnip Casonsei, it was a homemade pasta pocket for wild mushroom, parsnip, sage and brown butter. It had one of the most complex yet inviting flavors of the evening. Hollyday said he was "just making pasta." Triffon served 2010 Cave de Tain Hermitage Blanc from Rhone (\$69.97) to enhance the ingredients.

D'Artagnan Duck Breast, prepared by Chef Weed, was served very rare with butternut squash, cranberry and bitter green and orange salad. A piece of crisp duck skin that accompanied it was better than the Peking duck I tasted in China. To bring out the flavor, 2013 Moric Blaufrankisch from Burgenland, Austria (\$29.99), was poured with this course.

As the array of wine glasses dwindled, Chef Ball prepared a 90-Day Aged New York Strip along with potato celeriac gratin, cipollini onion and heirloom carrot. Nothing but 2012 Marques de Grinon Cabernet from Spain (\$39.99) was hearty enough to accompany the flavor, but Triffon also poured 2013 Wine & Soul "Pintas Character" Douro from Portugal (\$36.99).

"Everyone is familiar with Cabs although this one may be less familiar because it's from Spain," Triffon said of the Marques de Grinon. "The Douro is an outlier to add interest and introduce guests to a wine they may not have otherwise tried. Chef-centric dinners often include two wines for each course, just for that reason."

The dessert course by Chef Pietsch was Pumpkin Bourbon Vanilla Smoke. A small glass of Buffalo Trace Bourbon (\$26.99) was added by the chef at the last minute; it was from a barrel bottled specifically for Plum Market.

Be on the lookout for pop-ups at Plum Market — they can appear and disappear in a single day, but the memories of excellent food and wine linger. **NS**



Clockwise from top: Madeline Triffon and Andy Hollyday discuss a wine. The table is set for a delicious five-course meal. Guests munch on cheese and fruit before the meal. Attendees heard from five extraordinary chefs and a master sommelier.