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Restaurant O seeks swankier setting

By Carolyn Jung
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A tiny storefront in a tiny, nondescript strip mall, it's always been an unlikely location for a restaurant that serves such showy cuisine as foie gras sushi rolls, house-made duck sausage pizza, and braised lamb shank with apple curry chardonnay and mango chutney.

That's why chef-owner Justin Perez thought it was high time to find a more fitting locale to showcase the food he's been doing at Restaurant O, 2081 S. Winchester Blvd. in Campbell. So on Saturday, Restaurant O will close its doors. And sometime next year, Perez will reopen his restaurant at a new location. He's already scouting out sites in San Jose and Los Gatos.

Publicist Heather Henderson said the new spot will be larger, more glamorous looking, and a better fit for Perez's stylish and inventive cuisine. To reserve a table before the doors close, call (408) 871-3135. Meantime at the old site, Restaurant O will continue its catering service, (408) 871-3131, and will host special events occasionally.

GREAT PUMPKIN TIME AT MING'S: In honor of Halloween, Ming's Chinese Cuisine and Bar restaurant, 1700 Embarcadero Road in Palo Alto, has created mini orange pumpkin cookie-cakes that fit in the palm of your hand. The crumbly cookie shell is flavored with vanilla, tinted orange, and shaped to resemble a pumpkin. Inside is a sweet, dense center of crushed lotus seed, reminiscent of a Chinese moon cake confection. The pumpkin treats are available at the restaurant through Halloween, \$2.50 each or a gift box of four for \$8.

Kids 10 years and younger who come for dinner at Ming's through Sunday dressed in a Halloween costume get a free pumpkin cookie-cake for dessert. Children must be accompanied by an adult purchasing a dinner entree. For more information, call (650) 856-7700.

JULIA CHILD REMEMBRANCE: Share your favorite Julia Child stories among friends, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Nov. 4, at the City Club of San Francisco, 155 Sansome St. The American Institute of Wine & Food, an organization that Child helped founded, is hosting an evening of food and stories to honor Child, who died this summer. Bay Area restaurateurs and food industry experts Flo Braker, Jim Dodge, Stephanie Hersh, Gerald Hirigoyen, Maggie Mah, Roland Passot, Mary Risley and Martin Yan will speak. Chefs from San Francisco restaurants Absinthe, Bizou, Piperade, PlumpJack Cafe and the Grand Cafe will provide gourmet treats. Tickets, \$45 each, can be purchased by calling (415) 383-6070 by Saturday. Seventy-five percent of the ticket price will be donated to the AIWF Founder's Endowment Fund in Child's name.

AN ARTSY CUP OF JOE: Illy is renowned for its superb Italian coffee, as well as its collectible espresso and cappuccino cups designed by celebrities and artists. Last year, the coffee company introduced a colorful coffee mug addition to its collections. This year brings a second coffee mug design, this one by pop artist Jeff Koons.

His two mugs are decorated with whimsical animals, reminiscent of childhood parade floats or inflatable toy creatures (see photo). The two mugs come packaged in a gift box with a small can of Illy Caffe medium grind for drip coffee makers. The mugs, a limited edition, are signed and numbered. The mug set is \$50 and will be available starting in November at www.illyusa.com.

EXPERT TURKEY ADVICE: Join chef Mark Sullivan at his Woodside restaurant, the Village Pub, 2967 Woodside Road, for a class that will leave you ready to tackle Thanksgiving with no worries. On Nov. 6, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., students will learn how to select, brine, truss, season and roast the turkey, as well as how to make several side dishes and what wines to pair with the feast. The class is \$100. To reserve a spot, call Michele Mandell at (650) 851-6844.

FOR A SAUCY TIME: Dress up everyday chicken, duck, pork or seafood with two new robust Big Acres-brand sauces from Melanie's Fine Foods of San Carlos. Milagro *mole*, just the ticket to make a quick batch of shredded pork tacos or enchiladas, is a complex, flavorful blend of ancho and *pasilla* chiles, Mexican chocolate, bananas, raisins, peanuts and spices. Mango peach chile, perfect on shrimp, is a sweet-spicy sauce of mango and peach chunks with onions, serrano chiles and red bell peppers.

The sauces are ready to use. They sell for \$4.99 for a 13-ounce bottle, and are available at Cosentino's, Lunardi's, PW

Supermarkets, Shopper's Corner in Santa Cruz, Draeger's in San Mateo, Mollie Stone's in San Mateo and the Milk Pail Market in Mountain View. They also can be purchased by calling the company at (650) 593-9301. For more information, go to www.bigacres.com.

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