

# Napa Valley Register

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A grilled Gruyere cheese and honey roast ham sandwich with oven-baked French onion soup created by Brix Restaurant Executive Chef Anne Gingrass-Paik for the new menu. *J.L. Sousa/Register photos*

## New chef, new direction

### Veteran Anne Gingrass-Paik breathes new life into Brix

By **L. PIERCE CARSON**  
*Register Staff Writer*

For a month of Sundays last year, the forecast for the future at the high profile Highway 29 restaurant, Brix, resembled the spikes in the Wall Street stock market.

A warm-weather remodel was overshadowed by the kitchen's revolving door. A name change did little to attract new business. The name change never caught on.

Well, that chapter closed late in December, when respected veteran Bay Area chef Anne Gingrass-Paik took charge of the kitchen, developing a menu featuring the simple, flavorful farmstead dishes she's brought to Bay Area diners for nearly two decades.

What's more, Don Kelleher, whose family owns and operates the Yountville eatery, felt changing the name of the restaurant to 25° Brix was ill-advised. Noting that customers still called the dining establishment by its original name, he reversed himself by once again calling it Brix.

Underscoring the creative but never fussy fare from the chef and her culinary team, Gingrass-Paik is instituting new diner-friendly programs in line with the current belt-tightened economy — efforts that focus on both food and wine.



Anne Gingrass-Paik is the new executive chef at Brix in Yountville.



For example, she's inviting locals to drop by the restaurant on Sunday afternoons with a favorite bottle of wine to share. The staff at Brix will pop the cork and furnish the glasses while you and the staff get acquainted. Although it's not required, Gingrass-Paik is hoping you'll then stick around for Sunday supper, served family style. And, as incentive, there's no corkage.

"I want people to enjoy our special Sunday afternoon wine soirees and then see what we're up to in the kitchen," the new Brix chef declared.

Gingrass-Paik is looking forward to bringing back brunch at Brix and also serving diners on the 60-seat patio overlooking the restaurant's spectacular garden and orchard once warm weather settles in.

"I guess we're reinventing ourselves again," the chef joked as she talked about the remodeled eatery and plans for its future.

"I want the menu to come off as fresh and seasonal, with vibrant flavors and subtle spices that are reminiscent of the styles of cooking that have come together (under the mantle of California cuisine)," she added.

For example, clams are roasted in a broth that incorporates rocoto chiles, smoky paprika, shallots and garlic. The batter for her fish and chips platter includes a little sugar and some turmeric "to give it a little color as well as added flavor. There's a

Today, Gingrass-Paik is sharing her recipes for three dishes on the current Brix menu — Pink Lady Apple Carpaccio Salad, Tangerine Chicken Salad Wrapped in Toasted Almond Crepe, and Fish Fry with Lettuce Slaw and Meyer Lemon Pesto.

Her new lunch menu features appetizers ranging from \$9 (Apple Carpaccio Salad) to \$24 (for a dozen oysters) — and includes several toothsome salads, like the Antipasto Salad with Fatted Calf Salami, Goat Cheese, Red Onions, Niçoise Olives and Arugula — plus main courses (\$13-\$18) that range from Shrimp Salad Sandwich or Grilled Gruyere Cheese and Honey Roast Ham Sandwich with Oven-Baked French Onion Soup to Baked Pasta Shells with Butternut Squash and Ricotta Cheese or Grilled Salmon with Butterbeans and Escarole.

Ranging in price from \$9 to \$17, dinner appetizers include Roasted Beet Salad, Butternut Squash Bisque, Oven-Roasted Littleneck Clams and Smoked Sturgeon Pizza. Entrees (\$23-\$39) include Five-Hour Braised Short Rib Ragu with Strozzapreti Pasta, Braised Lamb Osso Buco, Sautéed Petrale Sole, Roasted Striped Bass and Beef Tenderloin with King Trumpet Mushroom Ragout and Yukon Potato Sauce.

### Illustrious career

For more than two decades, Gingrass-Paik has been recognized as groundbreaking chef, successful businesswoman and role model for other women aspiring to head up commercial California kitchens.

A graduate of the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, N.Y., she came to the West Coast to cook under the tutelage of Wolfgang Puck at Spago in Los Angeles. Working closely with Puck, she became the restaurant's chef de cuisine, where she was not only a presence behind the stoves, but also was responsible for planning daily menus, coordinating with farmers and purveyors, managing celebrity catering and testing recipes for Puck's best-selling cookbooks.

In 1989, Gingrass-Paik was sent by Puck to open the groundbreaking Postrio in San Francisco. As co-executive chef, she created an innovative menu that set new standards for fusion cuisine by melding the flavors of America, China and Italy. She also further developed a passion for sustainable cooking, making weekly trips to Sonoma Valley and working closely with farmers to incorporate the freshest ingredients on Postrio's menu.

Gingrass-Paik and her then-husband, David Gingrass, left Postrio in 1994 to open Hawthorne Lane in San Francisco's flourishing SoMa neighborhood. There, Gingrass-Paik honed a personal culinary style, using primarily organic ingredients to craft a menu that combined classic French technique with refined Asian flavors. The restaurant became popular during the dot-com years and beyond, attracting diners with its cutting-edge cuisine.

In 2000, Gingrass-Paik opened Desiree Café, a labor of love that was the first public restaurant in the Presidio. The

cozy restaurant focused on market-driven, sustainable cuisine and developed a devoted local following. Gingrass-Paik even collaborated with the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy to establish green restaurant certifications.

Today, Brix represents a new chapter in her career — an opportunity for her to showcase the seasonal flavors of the Napa Valley and highlight the relationships she has cultivated with farmers and local purveyors in Northern California. Her contemporary farmhouse-inspired selections will make use of fresh produce from the restaurant's extensive gardens and orchards to create a farm-to-table menu rife with Mediterranean accents.

Lunch is served in the 70-seat dining room and 30-seat bar from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, starting at 10 a.m. Sundays. Dinner is served from 5 to 9 p.m. The restaurant is closed on Mondays in January and February, but will be open daily starting in March. For reservations, call 944-2749. Brix is located at 7737 St. Helena Highway, Yountville.



Anne Gingrass-Paik, executive chef at Brix Restaurant in Yountville, shows off her take on an old favorite, lightly battered filet of sole with lettuce slaw and Meyer lemon pesto. J.L. Sousa/Reg-



## Tangerine Chicken Salad with Mixed Greens Wrapped in Toasted Almond Crepe

Anne Gingrass-Paik, executive chef, Brix

### Vinaigrette:

- 1 egg yolk
- 1/4 cup tangerine juice
- 1/4 cup rice wine vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. Dijon mustard
- 1 Tbsp. dry mustard
- 1 Tbsp. sesame oil
- 1/2 tsp. soy sauce
- 2 Tbsp. yogurt
- 1 cup Canola oil or shallot oil

Place all ingredients except the oil in a blender and mix. Then, slowly add oil and season with salt and pepper.

### Almond crepes:

- 6 ounces melted butter
- 2 cups whole milk
- 6 eggs
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup almond meal

Combine all ingredients in a blender and allow to rest for 1 hour or overnight.

Using a 10-inch teflon pan, get the pan hot and spray with olive oil. Ladle 2 to 3 ounces of batter in the pan.

Swirl the pan around to coat and cook on medium heat until golden brown. Flip the crepe over and remove from the pan to a

plate and continue this process until the batter is finished.

If you have extra crepes, place them between parchment paper and refrigerate or freeze for another time.

### Chicken:

- 2 poached chicken breasts
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- Zest from 1 orange
- Salt and pepper

Shred the chicken breast and marinate in olive oil, orange zest, salt and pepper.

### To assemble:

- 8 cups mixed greens
- 1/4 cup toasted almonds, finely chopped
- 1 cup your favorite sprouts
- 2 tangerine segments with pith removed, sliced in half
- 3 green onions, thinly sliced

Toss the salad ingredients and sprouts with some of the vinaigrette and chicken to lightly coat the salad.

Portion the salad between 4 crepes and wrap the crepes around the salad and place on the plates.

Save some salad for garnish on top of the crepes and drizzle a little vinaigrette around the crepes. Garnish dish with toasted almonds, tangerine segments and green onions.

Serves 4

## Pink Lady Apple Carpaccio with Walnut-Parsley Vinaigrette and Reserve Sonoma Jack Cheese

Anne Gingrass-Paik, executive chef, Brix

- 1 bunch Italian parsley, finely chopped
- 2 Pink Lady or Sierra Beauty apples, cored
- 1/4 cup walnut oil
- 1 lemon
- 1/2 cup toasted walnuts, chopped
- 1/4 cup roasted, shelled cocoa bean nibs
- 1/4 pound Sonoma Reserve Jack cheese, thinly sliced
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Using a very sharp mandolin or an electric slicer, slice the apples into 1/8-inch slices across the core. Arrange the slices over four large plates.

Mix the chopped parsley with the wal-



nut oil and brush onto the sliced apples using a pastry brush. Quarter the lemon and squeeze one quarter over each plate.

*Sousal/Register*

Scatter the chopped walnuts and cocoa nibs evenly over the apples and sprinkle them lightly with salt and pepper.

Serves four

## Fish Fry with Lettuce Slaw and Meyer Lemon Pesto

Anne Gingrass-Paik, executive chef, Brix

- 1 pound filet of sole, cut into 3-inch pieces, seasoned with salt and pepper

### Lemon pesto:

- 1 clove garlic
- 1 whole lemon
- 1/4 cup agave syrup or sugar
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- Salt and pepper

Place all ingredients in a blender and puree until smooth.

### Batter:

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 Tbsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. agave syrup or sugar
- 1/4 tsp. turmeric
- 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
- 1 1/4 cups ice cold water

Mix the dry ingredients in a bowl and whisk in the cold water. Keep cold until ready to use.

### Vinaigrette:

- 1/2 cup rice wine vinegar
- 1 tsp. dry mustard
- 1 tsp. celery seeds
- 1 shallot, finely diced
- 2 Tbsp. agave or sugar
- 1 cup canola oil

Mix all ingredients together, except the canola oil. Whisk in the canola oil and season with salt and pepper.

### Salad:

- 1 cup spinach, fine chiffonade
- 1 cup escarole, fine chiffonade
- 1 cup Swiss chard, fine chiffonade
- 1 cup frisee

Combine the lettuces and keep cool and covered until ready to use.

### To assemble:

Heat 8 cups of canola oil to 350 F. Dip the fish in batter and place in hot oil. Cook until golden brown, about 2 to 3 minutes.

Toss the salad with vinaigrette to lightly coat the lettuce. Drizzle the pesto on the plate and place the salad in the center. Place the fish around.

Serves 4