

oren

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Join us Tuesday - Saturday for Dinner, Wednesdays for wine specials, and Sundays for Brunch

Located in Center 1 at 3509 S Peoria Ave Suite #161 / (918) 764-9699 / orenrestaurant.com



Chef Matt Amberg, Owner Oren

Tulsa trusts Oren's Matt Amberg to take them someplace wonderful

by: Jeff Thompson

Sitting in Oren with Matt Amberg today, you would not get the sense that he's facing adversity. Matt has a direct and matter-of-fact demeanor that is comforting and surprising. It's the focus that becomes possible when you truly know yourself, and that could be said to be the defining quality of Oren Restaurant on Brookside: a restaurant that knows itself.

I had not been inside that space since it had been Montrachet, and it was remarkable to see the "bones" of the old place intact. Matt came out of the kitchen and warmly greeted me, and his staff continued to make the restaurant ready for service. What started out as a small plumbing problem has morphed into a full-blown jackhammer situation, which has given Matt a chance to tweak his kitchen layout a little bit, and to pause momentarily. It was in this

window of time that I was able to capture a few moments and learn about the origins of Oren, and what's next.

Matt said Oren was not begun with a bold vision to change the dining palate of average Tulsans, but it was rather a chance to focus on what Matt considers the most interesting part of a meal. While most Oklahoma restaurants put emphasis on the protein or "the main course", Oren emphasizes and deepens the culinary impact of the sides - with an emphasis on fruits and vegetables. Or as Matt said, beautifully, "Their afterthought is our primary thought." It's bold and innovative to create a dining experience that pushes people outside of their comfort zone, and then leaves them wanting "just a little bit more."

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 COCONUT WASHED VODKA,
 SUNFLOWER ORGEAT, LIME,
 PINOT NOIR, MINT

dining. “We do ask for a little extra trust from the customer,” said Amberg, in response to that delicate balance between maintaining an artist’s vision and responding to the preferences of the public.

Matt was five days away from his upcoming homage to the amazing New York Fine Dining Restaurant, Eleven Madison Park. For the first selection of his “inspiration series”, Oren uses the opportunity to shout out to some luminaries of the global culinary scene, while inspiring his staff to push the envelope of creativity, and create multi-course meals which give Tulsans a taste of another place without having to leave the 918. Another restaurant he’d love to add to the inspiration series is the famed Mugaritz, a well-known restaurant in Guipúzcoa, Spain, which opened in 1998 under Chef Andoni Luis Aduriz.

What is perhaps most refreshing about Matt Amberg’s approach to cuisine is his emphasis on no pretense, not appearing stuffy or fancy. In a very non-threatening way, it feels like Matt is challenging us to think of well-crafted and beautifully presented cuisine as our human birthright. “I feel like we are becoming a special occasion restaurant,” he said, with a lift of kind questioning in his tone.

He then followed with, “We want to be a every day restaurant. This was always meant to be the place to come in and get a broccoli, get a risotto, and a glass of wine.”

Oren continues to make amazing food and drink accessible to everyday Tulsans, with events like Wine Wednesdays, which offers a rotating incentive to encourage pairing wine with cuisine, and even exploring Sephardic Jewish cuisine. Like their philosophy indicates, they are a restaurant that moves fluidly and organically with the seasons, and challenges us all to reset the clock of urgency to stop and bask in the moment. I’ll see you at Oren sometime soon! 

One of my favorite things we discussed about Oren’s beginnings was when Matt boldly and proudly said, “We are an American Restaurant!” It was surprising, because I consider what they do to be so bold, fresh and alive, that my brain thinks of it as exotic, or other-worldly. In an odd way, it made me proud to be an American for that moment, to identify with America’s place in the global culinary conversation. In that sense, Oren is a quintessentially Tulsan restaurant as well. Tulsa is fundamentally an American city, with a rightful place among Paris and Rome, as well as Branson and Nashville. Another way Oren creates a memorable experience is by eliminating the traditional method of splitting an entree. They absolutely encourage sharing, but it’s two or more people eating from the same plate; a truly intimate experience that reflects the sincere desire to remove the stuffiness that can accompany fine



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