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Table Talk: Alizee quietly gets off to a fast start

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I'm so used to restaurants taking weeks, if not months, longer to open than originally planned that I was surprised to learn that the new Alizee (4 W. University Parkway, 410-235-8200) is up and running.

Alizee, a "boutique bistro" and wine bar, opened quietly last month in the Inn at the Colonnade dining room where the Spice Company used to be. (The Spice Company closed in early February.) When I spoke to the new owner, Joe Chen, a couple of weeks ago, he was planning a soft opening on March 1.

Chen has big plans for Alizee, including a sushi bar and a menu ranging in price from \$19 to \$65 for something "with foie gras." I like his thinking.

The new owner is one of the partners in the well-regarded bakery-cafe Moulin de Paris French Bakery in Severna Park. He's taken on as his chef Joshau Hill, who has a long and convoluted history in Baltimore.

Hill, formerly at Night of the Cookers, Tabrizi's and Red Fish, describes Alizee's food as "French fusion, having strong French roots with a wide traveling of Asian flavors and complementing ingredients."

Right now that translates to a small menu with nine items on it - four small plates and five entrees. These include, for instance, Thai-style mussels, a New York strip with braised bok choy, seven-spice grilled salmon, and coq au vin. Entree prices on this menu range from \$20 to \$28.

Because Alizee is the inn's dining room, it's open for breakfast, lunch and dinner seven days a week, and offers Sunday brunch. Afternoon tea will be starting in the next few weeks. There's also live music on the weekends.

Surprisingly, Chen is also planning to open another restaurant, Asiatique, in a few months downtown.

Raw news Sushi bars are so five minutes ago. Meet the next-generation raw bar: a ceviche bar. Baltimore will be getting its first when Talara opens in late April or early May at 615 President St. in Harbor East. In fact, says managing partner Nicholas Rizzo, it would have been called Seviche after its Pittsburgh sibling if the name hadn't already been taken in this area. Talara is a port city of Peru, the country that claims to be the birthplace of the citrus-marinated raw fish dish.

Rizzo describes Talara as a "Nuevo Latino tapas restaurant," with a dining room as well as the ceviche bar and outdoor seating when the weather gets better. He promises loud salsa music, fun and the "decor and attitude" of a South Beach (as in Miami) bar/restaurant.

"There will be a heavy bar scene," Rizzo says, with eight varieties of mojitos offered. The 40-bottle wine list will



include selections from South America, Spain and Portugal.

Talara's kitchen will be serving food from 4 p.m. to midnight seven days a week, but the bar will be open until 2 a.m.

New in Annapolis Robert Kinkead, a respected Washington chef and restaurateur, will be opening a new place, Hell Point Seafood, on the Annapolis city dock, in the space where Phillips was. (Phillips closed in January.) Plans for the "classic neighborhood seafood restaurant" call for an April opening.

The unusual name comes from the area, which was once a working-class district known as Hell Point.

The restaurant, which will be open for lunch and dinner daily, will offer entrees ranging in price from \$14 to \$24 for dinner. The menu, more casual than Kinkead's in Washington, features dishes such as seafood stew with tomatoes, saffron, garlic, basil and aioli croutons (\$22) and baked haddock with artichokes, olives and thyme, and a toasted barley risotto (\$17).

Hell Point will seat 90 in the main dining room and 34 in the downstairs bar area. There will be private dining rooms on both levels.

deal of the week

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