



## Molly Hawks & Mike Fagnoni

Molly Hawks

### A Family's Love Affair

by Stephanie Riley

**A**t the new Hawks restaurant at the Quarry Ponds Market Hall in Granite Bay, the chef/proprietors and husband-and-wife team of Molly Hawks and Mike Fagnoni will tell you their venture is all about the love of tradition and family. The gregarious pair, who met while working in the kitchen of the award-winning Village Pub restaurant in Woodside, California, looked to their roots for inspiration when establishing Hawks. From the country elegance of the décor to some of their home-style recipes beautifully presented with a chic twist, the restaurant bears their family's imprint.

Hawks designed the patio's reflecting pool and fire pit, the sophisticated bar and

dining room's color palette right down to the fixtures. Hawks father, Gerry, a contractor and co-proprietor, built the restaurant with the assistance of her five brothers, and just like his daughter's penchant for details, he oversaw everything right down to the perfect crown moldings. It's only natural that several of the Hawks family's favorite recipes appear on the menu throughout the year. This holiday season, an heirloom squash soup will be on the menu and the family's favorite corned beef, which is prepared in beer, is poised for its debut in the spring. As with all families, there have been a few wrinkles to iron out. Imagine needing the approval from all five of your brothers-in-law when making the family's favorite, traditional meals?

"Mike required quite a bit of coaching before he got the family's go-ahead on the corned beef," Hawks says.

Fagnoni is from New York where he attended the Culinary Institute of America and became a chef at New York City's Oceana and later a sous chef at San Francisco's Jardiniere. Hawks studied at the California Culinary Academy in San Francisco and was a chef at Pisces in Burlingame, as well as Lapis in San Francisco.

"We're committed to cooking from the ground up," says Fagnoni. "We rarely stop short of a fully homemade menu, and we begin with local and regionally grown ingredients as much as possible such as wild-caught fish and a focus on natural flavors."

Hawks and Fagnoni hand select their produce, which is delivered by local growers they know by name – many of whom are featured prominently on the restaurant's walls in vintage black and white photos. The respect for the ingredients and their origin shines through the menu where creativity abounds. Even the Hawks burger gets the star treatment. The pastry chef prepares the buns daily, the pickles are made on site, and the produce is local – naturally.

With their preference for organic products and attention to detail, Hawks and Fagnoni are already gaining a loyal following. Shortly after the restaurant's opening in late August, they began taking holiday orders for specially prepared brined turkeys, Hawks' impossibly smooth mashed potatoes, and traditional sides such as Brussels sprouts with bacon. Fagnoni's stuffing recipe already bears the stamp of family approval, even if it's not quite the way he likes it.

"Molly's mom won't let me put duck gizzards in the stuffing," Fagnoni laments.

When the family gathers together around their own dining table for the holidays, the focus will be much like it is at the restaurant – fresh and simple food with a focus on tradition. Owing to the considerable demands of operating a bustling restaurant, Hawks and Fagnoni are just looking forward to entertaining at home for a change – even if they are a large crowd.

Hawks, 5530 Douglas Blvd. Granite Bay; 916-791-6200. ●



### HEIRLOOM WINTER SQUASH SOUP WITH GLAZED PINE NUTS

- 6 lb Heirloom squash (whole)
- 4 Yellow onions, peeled and thinly sliced
- Chicken broth, enough to cover soup
- 1 Bunch sage, tied with butcher's twine
- 1 Whole nutmeg, 1 microplane
- 2/3 Cup maple syrup
- ½ lb Butter
- Salt
- White pepper

**Preheat oven to 350 degrees.** Cut the squash into quarters, remove all seeds and arrange squash pieces in a deep baking dish. Place a thin layer of water in each baking dish and season the squash liberally with salt and white pepper. Cut ¼ lb butter into small cubes and divide among the squash pieces. Cover the squash, and roast in the oven until tender, approximately 45 minutes. Once tender, allow the squash to cool and separate the flesh from the rind.

**Melt the remaining butter in a medium pot over medium heat.** Add the onions and sweat with tied sage until translucent and tender. Add the cooked squash to the onions and cover with hot chicken broth. Using the microplane, grate about ¼ of the nutmeg into the soup. Add the maple syrup and bring to a simmer. Season with salt and white pepper to taste and blend for

several minutes in a high speed blender until smooth. Remember to remove the sage bundle before blending. Pass through a fine strainer (we use a chinois) and serve hot.

#### Note:

The heirloom squash can be exchanged for butternut squash or pumpkins. If using pumpkins, Hawks recommends the rouge d'eternes.

#### Glazed Pine Nuts

- 1 Cup pine nuts
- 2 Tablespoon water
- ¼ Cup sugar
- 2 Teaspoon butter

#### Method:

Combine the water and sugar in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Continue to cook until the mixture turns a golden caramel color. Add the pine nuts and stir vigorously to coat. Once the pine nuts are coated, add the butter to the pot and stir (this will help to separate the nuts into individual pieces). Empty the contents of the pot onto a cookie sheet lined with wax paper and allow to cool. Break apart any chunks. Once cool, sprinkle the nuts over each soup.