



ROGER MOOKING



ERAN MAROM

THE NEW TORONTO CUISINE

A generation of chefs under 35 emerges to bring Toronto's multiculturalism to the plate

by EDWARD KEENAN photography by KOUROSH KESHIRI

Under the angular cathedral ceilings of Daniel Liebeskind's "Crystal" addition to the Royal Ontario Museum, four chefs are talking shop, waiting for the photographer to set up. Two of them are expecting children (one is already a father) and they weigh the toll the restaurant business takes on family life. They talk about the difficulty — and the illicit possibility — of finding real game meat in Toronto. They share notes about experiences working in New York and invitations to visit each other's restaurants.

One of them is a former Canadian R&B star who shared a stage with James Brown; another was once an aspiring punk rocker who still hits Sneaky Dee's for nachos at the end of a hard day. One of them is less than a decade out of the Israeli military. Among them, they have studied under some of the

best chefs in Canada, the United States and France. All of them are under 35, and each describes, in his own way, how a new Toronto cuisine is emerging from their kitchens, rooted in established culinary traditions but reflecting local ingredients and inspired by the global village of their city.

The photographer calls to them and they head to the washroom to change into their uniforms. A new generation of elite-level Toronto chefs is ready for their close up.

THERE'S AN ESTABLISHMENT in the Toronto food world — a hall of fame full of active chefs who, for varying lengths of time over the past two decades, have put Toronto on the culinary map. You know their names: **Susur Lee, Mark McEwan, Jamie Kennedy, Marc Thuet, Chris McDonald, Michael Stadlander, Claudio**

Aprile, David Lee, Anthony Walsh. Those are the men in white (and in Toronto, for some reason, they are all men) whose creative energy fills the food-porn pages of glossy magazines, who make international best-chef lists, who show up on the Food Network.

But as they see their tall hats elevated to the rafters even as they're still racking up points, another younger group of chefs has slowly but steadily emerged from the prep line to begin defining a new school of local cooking.

"I GREW UP IN TORONTO, I've lived here my whole life, so what I try to do with food — I don't know whether I call it 'Toronto Cuisine,' but that's my approach," says **Ted Corrado**, the 33-year-old chef de cuisine at C5. "Growing up in Toronto, you can't help

but be exposed to all the different cuisines, all the cultures we have here. These are things we take for granted — Chinatown, Little Italy, India Bazaar, Koreatown, there are so many options for us. It's what we know and personally it's what I know, and it's how I relate to food."

The child of Italian immigrants, Corrado says he blends the traditions he learned at his mother's knee with the eclectic internationalism of his hometown. He blends local ingredients, makes everything in-house (he's starting a cheese program at C5) and is happy to experiment with the latest international trends.

When Restaurant Associates, the company that runs C5, went looking for a chef to run the signature restaurant at the reopened ROM, Corrado, the one-time punk, was a surprise choice. The previous

THE HONOUR ROLL

We've been watching (and tasting) the rise of Toronto's best new chefs for years. Here's our selection of favourites not yet elevated to the hall of fame and what we've had to say about them. For a complete archive of restaurant reviews, visit eyeweekly.com/food



ROGER MOOKING
(Kultura, 169 King E., 416-363-9000; Nyood, 1096 Queen W., 416-466-1888)

"Tapas-sized, global-fusion food is still all the rage, but none will bless your belly like that of Roger Mooking, who demonstrates cleverness without preciousness, and his plates deliver on all fronts."



ERAN MAROM
(Marron, 948 Eglinton W., 416-784-0128)

"Yarmulkes off to Marron for shattering stereotypes about Jewish cuisine and pointing out that kosher cooking doesn't only have to be about brisket and bagels. And you certainly don't have to be Jewish to enjoy Marron, either. Any foodie would be happy to fork out big bucks for Eran Marom's kick-ass kosher."

