

food & wine

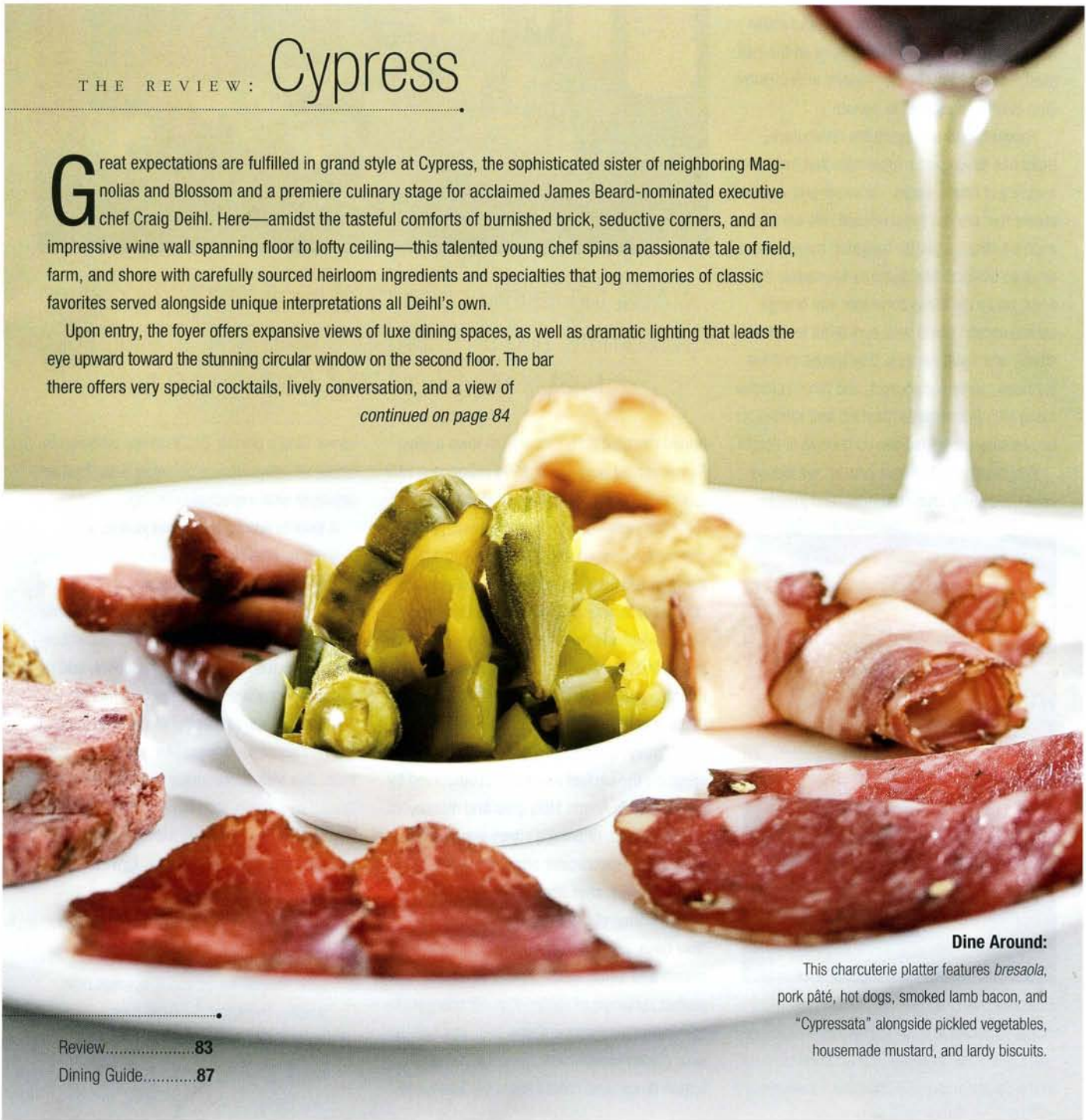
EAT, DRINK, & BE MERRY

THE REVIEW: Cypress

Great expectations are fulfilled in grand style at Cypress, the sophisticated sister of neighboring Magnolias and Blossom and a premiere culinary stage for acclaimed James Beard-nominated executive chef Craig Deihl. Here—amidst the tasteful comforts of burnished brick, seductive corners, and an impressive wine wall spanning floor to lofty ceiling—this talented young chef spins a passionate tale of field, farm, and shore with carefully sourced heirloom ingredients and specialties that jog memories of classic favorites served alongside unique interpretations all Deihl's own.

Upon entry, the foyer offers expansive views of luxe dining spaces, as well as dramatic lighting that leads the eye upward toward the stunning circular window on the second floor. The bar there offers very special cocktails, lively conversation, and a view of

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Dine Around:

This charcuterie platter features *bresaola*, pork pâté, hot dogs, smoked lamb bacon, and "Cypressata" alongside pickled vegetables, housemade mustard, and lardy biscuits.

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the animated kitchen pulsing energy from below.

A recent evening began with exquisite aperitifs, including a luscious limoncello-based martini and the icy Cypress Pear, a St-Germain elderflower liqueur-based delicacy with fresh basil garnish. Both drinks were ideal companions for sashimi tuna and chilly New Brunswick *Beau Soleil* oysters on the half shell, “beautiful sunshine” indeed with cilantro lime glaze and pineapple wasabi.

Known for his unforgettable charcuterie, Deihl has developed a repertoire that includes a variety of house-cured, -smoked, and -cooked meats that are not to be missed. We savored each bite from a platter featuring cured salami; smoked bologna and summer sausages; hot dogs; and a delicious coriander and orange salami spread made with sun-dried tomatoes, olives, and fresh parsley. Dilly beans, pickled cabbage, garlic cucumbers, and fennel pickles along with housemade mustard and irresistible lard biscuits completed this cornucopia of delight.

Progressing to the next course, we discovered beautifully crusted fennel- and juniper-



Executive chef Craig Deihl is known for his house-cured, -smoked, and -cooked meats. In January, his “Cypressata” even won the Good Food Award in the Southern region’s charcuterie category.



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brined marbled pork sirloin from Iowa’s Eden Farms served with Anson Mills indigenous Sea Island red peas and multicolored roasted carrots. The peas—finished with tomato jam and caramelized onions and spices—along with the richly glazed pork translated as a luxurious version of the familiar pork and beans. Crisp smoked Keegan-Filion Farm pork shoulder was braised and pulled, cloaked in mustard-seasoned bread crumbs, pan-seared, and served over housemade hominy with amazing smoked paprika pork “gravy” and pork rind crackling. Pan-roasted snapper, the perfect foil, was accompanied by creamy white Anson Mills grits and mushroom and crab ragu, offering a clean, simple contrast to this spectacular array of flavors.

For dessert, chef Jonathan Pabst delivered figgy, jammy, sticky toffee pudding on a pecan *tuile* base, just right with brandied pecan ice cream and toffee sauce. Not to be outdone, a perfect rectangle of lighter-than-air cheesecake swirled with lemon curd was delicious with a sour cream cookie crust, *pâté de fruit gelée*, lemon drops, and *crème anglaise*. Thanks to

server Gina’s poised, professional attention to detail, all items were articulately described and delivered with impeccable timing.

A favorite among locals and visitors alike, Cypress received a notable accolade in January, as Deihl’s *soppressata* (or “Cypressata”) won the Good Food Award in the Southern region’s charcuterie category. Bestowed by a collaboration of farmers, food journalists, producers, and independent grocers to honor people making food that is delicious, respectful of the environment, and connected to communities and cultural traditions, this award was presented at a ceremony hosted by culinary icon Alice Waters. Sounds like all the more reason to visit this delectable fine dining spot. —*Patricia Agnew*

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167 East Bay St., (843) 727-0111,
www.magnolias-blossom-cypress.com
 Sunday-Thursday, 5:30-10 p.m.
 Friday & Saturday, 5:30-11 p.m.
 Average entrée: \$31