

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2016

LEADER'S

# edge

## Health Care Reform

Is it fixed yet?



WASHINGTON, D.C.

Top Chefs

**At Marcel's**, perhaps Washington, D.C.'s most exquisite French restaurant, the bespoke jacketed waiter lifts the top off the "Magic Box," revealing the contents—lobster, Hamachi, octopus, crème fraîche with caviar, avocado cream and shredded ginger in each petal of the flower-shaped white porcelain container.

At Masseria, a fresh and original Italian eatery in the gritty Union Market neighborhood, a waiter in tie and jeans opens a box of white truffles and shaves slivers onto the tagliolini with anchovies. These magic moments define two of the most talented chefs in the city, Robert Wiedmaier of Marcel's and Nicholas Stefanelli of Masseria. While their visions may differ, they share a devotion to flavor and a flair for presentation.

Wiedmaier and Marcel's have a long list of honors, testament to the longevity of the restaurant, which opened in 1999. If



Nick Stefanelli of Masseria



Robert Wiedmaier of Marcel's

you haven't dined there recently, a reason to do so is to enjoy the redesigned dining room and lounge. The use of brushed golds and silvers, ivory hues and modern crystal lighting have created an elegant and inviting atmosphere. But the décor is the icing on the cake for the cuisine. No one can extract more flavor from a single ingredient than Wiedmaier, a self-proclaimed "old-school saucier."

While Masseria is Stefanelli's first restaurant, his résumé (which includes an externship under chef Roberto Donna) is impressive. It's no surprise that after a handful of months he has the open kitchen running like a well-oiled machine while racking up accolades. The earthy but cosmopolitan vibe—smoked mirrors hanging on the cinder block walls; wood tables and

metal and leather chairs on concrete floors—could also describe his cooking, a nuanced approach to the earthy dishes he learned from his Italian grandparents and while living in Puglia. Even in a simple dish like Linguini Aglio e Olio, he elevates the flavor by substituting Chinese XO chili paste, a distillation of varied ingredients and spices, for the traditional dried chili flakes.

Top left and right: Scott Suchman

Top left courtesy Russ Nichols; top right: American Express; center right: Victorinox Swiss Army, Inc.

SEASONED TRAVELER

RUSS NICHOLS

My London, England

Russ Nichols, Joint CEO, Besso Limited



**Vibe** » London City these days is unbelievably upbeat. If only I were 21 again.

**Culinary Scene** » We are awash with talented entrepreneurs and chefs cooking up culinary delights. New restaurants are continually springing up, ensuring diversity and the highest standards. Within walking distance of our office alone, we have **Galvin La Chapelle**, **Angler** and **City Social**, all Michelin-starred restaurants. For regular haunts, but quality food all the same, there is **Rajasthan 2CK** for Indian, **Sinh Le** for Chinese, and **Thai Square** for Thai. We even have traditional fish and chips at **Vintage Salt**.

**New Restaurant** » **Smith's Wapping** is excellent for fish, is a good value for money, has a friendly staff and is easy for me to get home from.

**Established Restaurant** » **Le Pont de La Tour** French restaurant is a great place to lunch and casually watch the world go by. The service keeps flowing with nobody seemingly bothering you, and it has spectacular views of Tower Bridge at night.

**Cocktails** » Our American clients enjoy a visit to a proper pub, so **The Angel**, run by Sammie at America Square, is a favorite venue for pre-dinner drinks. In the summer, a stroll down to **St Katharine Docks** never disappoints with plenty of options for a cocktail or two.

**Stay** » Hotel-wise it is down to ease of use, with the luxury **Grange Tower Bridge Hotel**, **Apex City of London Hotel** and **Double Tree Tower of London Hotel** all just a stone's throw away from our office.

**Off-the-beaten-path thing to do** » It was only three years ago that I was introduced, physically, not mentally, to **Primrose Hill**, a trendy village in the center of London with panoramic views across the city where you seemingly see all the most influential London structures painted in a straight line. A lovely date out with the family recently was Primrose Hill in the morning, early lunch at a Greek restaurant there called **Lemonia**, and then off to **London Zoo** in the afternoon.

SLEEP/ EAT/ DRINK

WASHINGTON, D.C.

SLEEP

> ARTY

FOUR SEASONS

WASHINGTON, DC

» The place to stay for heads of state and celebrities for 36 years, this Georgetown landmark is wrapping up a \$13 million renovation of the east and west wings.

» **ART OF SLEEP:** Surveyed regulars revealed that what they most want is a blissful night's sleep. To ensure they get one, rooms now have distinct areas for work, relaxation and sleep, and guests can choose their comfortor, pillow and bed topping in advance.

» The décor was inspired by D.C.'s cherry blossoms, which are in the design of the hallway carpets, as pops of the color in the rooms, and



Four Seasons Washington, DC

as a motif on the drapes in the suites. Original art enhances the clean, contemporary look. With a spacious living room, bedroom, dressing room, and one and a half baths, the Capitol Suites are like staying in a posh apartment.

» The hotel's outstanding art collection—1600+ pieces—includes Andy Warhol's Indian Head Nickel, one of the few he signed on the front.

» Spend downtime at the spa and three-level fitness center (cardio, weights and lap pool), both renovated last year, or by a fire pit in the courtyard sipping a cocktail.

EAT

> MASTERFUL FRENCH

MARCEL'S

» Choose a prix fixe tasting menu or order à la carte.

» Each course—premier, fruits de mer, poisson, foie gras, volaille, viandes, fromages—has three enticing offerings, e.g., Duck Breast with Blood Orange Gelee, Boudin Blanc with



Marcel's

Black Truffle or Squab Enroute.

» In dishes like a crispy Dover sole on butternut squash puree with sauce Meuniere, Wiedmaier has masterfully married flavors—savory, sweet and citrusy—and textures.

» **SERVICE:** Seamless and accommodating. [www.marcelcdc.com](http://www.marcelcdc.com)

EAT

> ELEVATED ITALIAN

MASSERIA

» Choose from three or five courses with or without a wine pairing. There are also seasonal chef's tasting menus like a four-course "Tartufi Bianci," which pays homage to white truffles harvested in Alba, Italy.

Bottom left: © Michael Kleinberg/Four Seasons; bottom right: Scott Suchman

Scott Suchman



Masseria

» While the courses may be typical Italian—antipasti, le paste, pesce, carne, formaggio, dolci—expect to be surprised by the flavors created by interesting combinations of ingredients. Thinly sliced wild mushrooms and honey-roasted turnips on a bed of greens is a perfect example.

» **DON'T MISS:** A signature cocktail in the courtyard. The easy arrangement of seating areas and planters of herbs will transport you to the Med.

» The wall of wine holds a healthy selection of Italian and Mediterranean wines, with many interesting varietals. [www.masseria-dc.com](http://www.masseria-dc.com)

DRINK

> COFFEE AND BEIGNETS

BAYOU BAKERY, COFFEE BAR & EATERY

» **NEW:** Chef David Guas is now dishing up his palate-pleasing brand of Louisiana eats in a carriage house on Capitol Hill that stabled medic horses during the Civil War.

» Bayou fare ranges from pour-overs and beignets to grilled pimento cheese and Jambalaya, which can be enjoyed in the iron-gated garden. [www.bayoubakerydc.com](http://www.bayoubakerydc.com)

BRIEFCASE

**FLY** American Express's new **Centurion Lounge** in Terminal D at Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport is generating superlatives from travel pros like Will Allen, who deemed it "impressive." Among the things you can do while waiting for your flight: Freshen up with a shower after a long international flight. Relax with a glass of complimentary Chandon Champagne and an enticing selection of eats. Do business—check email, work in one of the semi-private spaces, hold a meeting in a conference area. And get a free 20-minute massage. American Express Platinum and Centurion cardholders can also access lounges at Las Vegas McCarran, New York-LaGuardia, Miami, Seattle-Tacoma, and San Francisco airports. [www.thecenturionlounge.com](http://www.thecenturionlounge.com)



**PACK** There's a new breed of smaller carry-on bags for road warriors faced with shrinking overhead storage space. Topping the list is the light (seven pounds) and well designed **Victorinox Werks Traveler 5.0 WT 20 Dual-Caster CK**. The 14" w x 20" h x 9" d roller has five features. The main compartment has a divider, which keeps clothes organized and wrinkle free,

and X-shaped compression straps to, well, compress them for more room. The folding suit compartment is removable if you don't need it. But if you do need more space, you can unzip the bag to add 2.5 inches of depth. Finally, there's a strap for attaching another bag. [www.swissarmy.com](http://www.swissarmy.com)

**CHARGE** Billed as "the world's smallest, lightest, smartest laptop charger," there's a lot to love about the new **Zolt Laptop Charger**. The spherical column has three USB ports so you can power your laptop and two other mobile devices (smartphone, tablet, GoPro, camera, etc.) at the same time. If the outlet is in a tight space, you can rotate it up to 90° to more easily access the ports. It also includes a six-foot PC charging cord that wraps around the device, which is just slightly bigger than a Chapstick when the prongs are folded up. Power output is 70W. Voltage is 120V to 240V. [www.gozolt.com](http://www.gozolt.com)



DRINK

> COCKTAILS AND HAUTE APPS

THE LOUNGE AT BOURBON STEAK

» With white oak flooring, a marble-top bar and subdued lighting, this powerhouse watering hole at the Four Seasons in Georgetown is swish after a recent renovation.

» Locals and visitors pack the lounge for well crafted cocktails and haute appetizers like duck fat fries and lobster corn dogs.

» **SPECIALTY:** Mules made with all types of spirits. But try a Morning Dew, a surprisingly subtle mix of Herradura Reposado Tequila, fresh grapefruit juice and ginger. [www.bourbonsteakdc.com/the-lounge/](http://www.bourbonsteakdc.com/the-lounge/)

DRINK

> WINE AND FONDUE

ENO WINE BAR

» Two brick townhouses in Georgetown are the setting for this newish wine bar.

» **TASTE:** One of the Virginia wines, notably a luscious Breaux Vineyards Meritage custom blended for ENO, or a "bucket list" vintage by the glass.

» Rich cheese fondue, flights of charcuterie and cheeses, and local artisan chocolates are highlights on the small-plate menu. [www.enowinerooms.com/hotspots/georgetown-dc](http://www.enowinerooms.com/hotspots/georgetown-dc)