



MAN WITH A PLAN: With Adour, Alain Ducasse brings sweetbreads meunière to the St. Regis.

CHEFTACULAR!

A tête-à-tête with the District's newest culinary luminaries

DUCASSE, ADOUR AND MORE

The culinary constellation is glittering with superstar chefs, and DC is poised for a shower of celebrity that includes Michael Mina, Gordon Ramsey and Todd English. But one supernova outshines all the others, and this month he brings Adour to the The St. Regis, following the New York opening of its luxe sister restaurant. We caught up with jet-setting über-chef **Alain Ducasse** just as he puts the final sparkle on his David Rockwell-designed inside-the-Beltway debut.

Say you're hosting dinner for the next American President... Let's revisit this in November to determine the guest list, the menu, the evening's thematics. *OK, so what's on your menu now?* My vision for Adour is to provide a different approach to pairing food and wine. I call it "cuisine designed with

wine in mind." It is a menu of contemporary French-American cuisine, and was designed so that each dish is able to be paired with both a red and a white wine. *Why Washington?* With DC being such an international city with an appreciation for the art of good living, this seemed like the natural choice. *How local will you go?* We take care to source the best in seasonal and local produce to present each ingredient on the plate at its freshest state, but also to draw inspiration from the local terroir. *Tell us about David Rockwell's design.* David's vision creates a perfect balance between contemporary design, the historic nature of the hotel, the menu and wine concept. *Any chance you'll open a bistro in DC?* Our main focus now is to ensure Adour is running at the right pace. *Adour at The St. Regis, 923 16th St., NW, 202.509.8000.*

FOOD DRINK BITES

BY GEORGE W. STONE

STATE OF THE ART

Oprah loves him. *Iron Chef America* is crazy for him. And the James Beard Foundation has honored this Chicago-based cook twice. Now it's DC's turn, as the comfort-food king **Art Smith** brings his Southern-accented eatery Art and Soul to The Liaison Capitol Hill. But this is not your typical celeb-chef flyby. Smith, who dazzled as Oprah's personal cook and founded the Common Threads organization to teach kids culinary and cultural lessons,

has a storied DC past. His aunt was a Redskins weather girl; his father was a congressional page; he came to the District as Senator Bob Graham's chef and cooked shrimp and grits for the first Bushes in the Oval Office. Even the stars augured Beltway success. "Years ago, an Eastern Market fortune teller said, 'Art, you'll return to Washington.' And here I am!"

What's cookin'? I refer to it as soulful southern. To me, food without a soul is pointless—and what gives food a soul is its story: How it connects with a region, how it expresses the essence and heart of an area through its flavor. We're living at a time when authenticity is as rare as money. I don't need any ahi tuna tartare! Instead we've got a traditional hoecake with shredded confit of Virginia pork on top. *So you're a soul man?* My soul is who I am. I am a Southern man who grew up on a farm and who appreciates food with a genuine deliciousness. A lot of my cooking is derived from family traditions and recipes. That said, my pistachio-crust chicken breast with coconut-ginger chili sauce and lo mein noodles was inspired by a trip to China with my mom. *Got a motto?* My motto is "Have biscuits, will travel!" And let me tell you, there's an art to making a great biscuit. *Why DC?* I want the people who run our country to be proud of the fact that what they're eating is real and regional. I love Washington, which I think of as a Southern city. It has a rich cultural diversity, amazing culinary traditions and a tremendous wealth of delicious local food. And Washingtonians have no problem telling you how they feel. *What is Common Threads?* It's an after-school program that teaches kids about food and diversity and I'm bringing it to DC. Something as simple as teaching a child a cooking lesson can really teach them about the world. I'm not trying to make them chefs, I'm trying to make them wonderful human beings. *Art and Soul, 415 New Jersey Ave., NW, 866.944.4278.* ■



Art Smith wears his culinary heart on his sleeve.

ALAIN DUCASSE PORTRAIT BY VANESSA VON ZITZEWITZ; ADOUR DISH IMAGE BY MICHAEL PIAZZA; ART SMITH PORTRAIT BY CRIS MOJINA, THE PHOTOGRAPHERS GALLERY