

Guerilla restaurant in town part of national trend

Chef Gavin Baker's world-class restaurant open for 10 days

By GREG MARSHALL

Of the Record staff

Food terminology flies across the kitchen as chef Gavin Baker ties thin white strings around racks of lamb and lops off excess string with a flick of his knife, a process he calls trussing.

Elsewhere in the kitchen at Rikka, a floral shop and event center near Kimball Junction, cooks Dawn Brockett and John Minichino wage battles on the stove, in the oven and sink. Vegetables blanch, coffee roasts and large silver fish called barramundi lose their heads.

The gourmards have been working 17-hours day in the kitchen to launch Mist, a makeshift restaurant with a deliberately short lifespan that is so exclusive, Baker says, it probably will have vanished by the time most people

discover it.

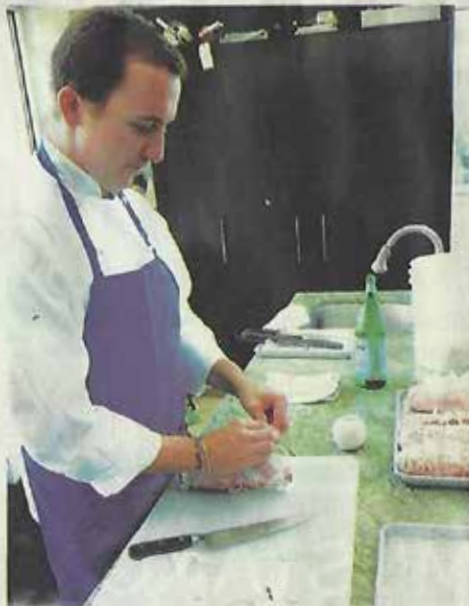
The concept, called guerilla dining, has gained popularity in big cities in Europe and the U.S. The quality and ambition of the menu at these restaurants sets them apart from traditional catered fare, Baker said.

A meal at Mist costs \$250 per person and the restaurant is sold out for the rest of the week. The hotspot closes its doors for good Saturday after being open for just 10 days. "I have to do it in the only way I know how," he said. "I have to do it as a chef, not a caterer."

It's all in a day's work for Baker, who has prepared food at big-ticket events such as the World Cup, The Masters golf tournament and the Superbowl. He has served as the executive chef at Washo Asian Grill nearly opened a restaurant of his own in Park City called Salt.

Mist, he says, is different from anything else he has ever done. "You have to take everything people think about restaurants and turn it upside down,"

Please see Gourmet C-2



On the chopping block: Chef Gavin Baker trusses racks of lamb in preparation for the 11-course meal he served to 20 people at Rikka Studio in Park City Monday as part of his restaurant of the moment Mist.

Gavin, who has worked for Wahso Asian Grill, plans to leave for England in the next month where he will assume a temporary post at the Fat Duck, considered the second-best restaurant in the country.

GREG MARSHALL/PARK RECORD

The Park Record

Wed/Thurs/Fri, September 10-12, 2008

Gourmet meals minus bricks and mortar



PICTURES BY GREG MARSHALL/PARK RECORD

Chef John Minichino prepares one of the courses for Monday's meal by stuffing eggshells with seasoning.

Continued from C-1

Baker explained. "You take the restaurant to the ingredients, not the ingredients to the restaurant."

Baker chose to keep his menu secret from the 20 people who plan to attend

the 11-course meal each night that showcases fish, cheese, meat, desserts and nine different wines. "This is the first chance I've had to do my own food my way," he

said. "I can no longer wait for someone else to build me a restaurant."

Baker plans to move to London and work at the Fat Duck, considered the second-best restaurant in the world. "It's important for me to work at one of the best restaurants in the world," he said, "work and earn."

Chefs Briar Handley of Finn and Clement Gelas will also be on hand to prepare the meals.

From Marine Corps to chef After graduating from high school, Baker enlisted in the

Marine Corps. He spent the next three years in the service before moving back to Asheville, North Carolina, to attend culinary school.

He has worked in kitchens from Thailand

"This is the first chance I've had to do food my way. I can no longer wait for someone else to build me a restaurant."

- Chef Gavin Baker, head cook for Mist

to Los Angeles, where he ran the kitchen at Justin Timberlake's restaurant. He says he stills "gets down with country food," he says, but prefers French and Southern Asian cuisine when it comes to high-end meals.

He said the trick of cooking en masse is to feed off the energy of those enjoying your work. "Once you start cooking and get into that rhythm you feed off their energy and they're part of that journey of food."

As far as consuming 11 dishes



Dawn Brockett said she jumped at the chance to cook for Mist, which has been touted as one of the first guerilla diners in Utah.

in one sitting, Baker said diners should pace themselves. "You need to build up slowly like any good novel or piece of literature," he said. "When you're done you're supposed to feel complete."

Interest in Mist has been high, Baker said, but that doesn't mean it's for everyone. "Some people don't know what to do with the concept of a guerilla restaurant," he said. "Some people would never pay that much for a meal and other people wouldn't miss it."

The uniqueness of the project attracted Brockett to the kitchen of Mist. "[Baker] has a good attitude and he's always setting himself up to learn," she said.

For more information on Mist at Rikka Studio, call 435-659-6455 or visit guerillafoodnetwork.com or rikkafloral.com. Redstone Gallery contributed art work to decorate the space and artist Fred Spencer provided bronze sculptures for table centerpieces.