

*“A recipe has no soul. You, as the cook, must bring soul to the recipe.”*

*~Thomas Keller*

# INSIDE

- The Zen of Pasta
- Personal chef’s authentic cuisine
- A taste of Israel
- Eugene Food Scene: Waffles
- Combining food and social activism
- Food fetish or pathway to holiness?
- Purim gifts of food and unity
- NW Nosh: Hidden Gems
- Who would you invite to dinner?

# The Zen of Pasta



Some of the staff from Sellwood Italian restaurant a Cena visited Italy two years ago. Enjoying the sights are Melissa Dolinsky (now Karman), Sous Chef Michael Karman and Executive Chef Gabe Gabreski.

*a Cena: 7742 SE 13th Ave., Sellwood | 503-206-3291 | acenapdx.com*

By Deborah Moon

Where does a chef in an Italian restaurant with more than 30 years of experience go to ensure the foods he is plating each night are authentic? Why Italy of course.

Michael Karman, sous chef of a Cena restaurant in Sellwood, joined Italian-born chef Gabe Gabreski, restaurant owner Chris Custer and other restaurant staff, family and friends for an August 2012 experience in Italy.

Michael came from Chicago to Portland to help Chris, his friend of some 30 years, prepare a Cena for its opening. In June 2008, he moved to Portland to cook at a Cena, Italian for “come to supper.” Since then he’s been a familiar face at some Jewish community food events, including a Jewish Federation women’s Impact event devoted to food and two Taste of Temple fund-raisers.

Though the Italian restaurant in Sellwood opened shortly before the Recession began, it has grown steadily, earned a loyal following and garnered heady reviews. Executive Chef Gabe Gabreski is from Bolgna, Italy, and serves up plenty of Bolognese sauces and lamb dishes at a Cena, but many others involved in the restaurant have roots in Chicago’s restaurant scene. So in 2012 they took a field trip.

“We went to Italy to see Italian life and Italian food, so we can make sure we can get that on the plate,” says Michael of the trip. The a Cena crew visited three vineyards, whose wine they serve, and sampled Tuscan foods near Florence.

For Michael, the trip is especially memorable. He took the opportunity to propose to Melissa Dolinsky, who was born blocks from his home in Chicago, but whom he didn’t meet till he joined the a Cena staff, where she was on the waitstaff. Melissa now works at another Italian restaurant in town. The couple married Sept. 1, 2013.

Professionally the trip was also a success in that it reinforced many of their ideas.