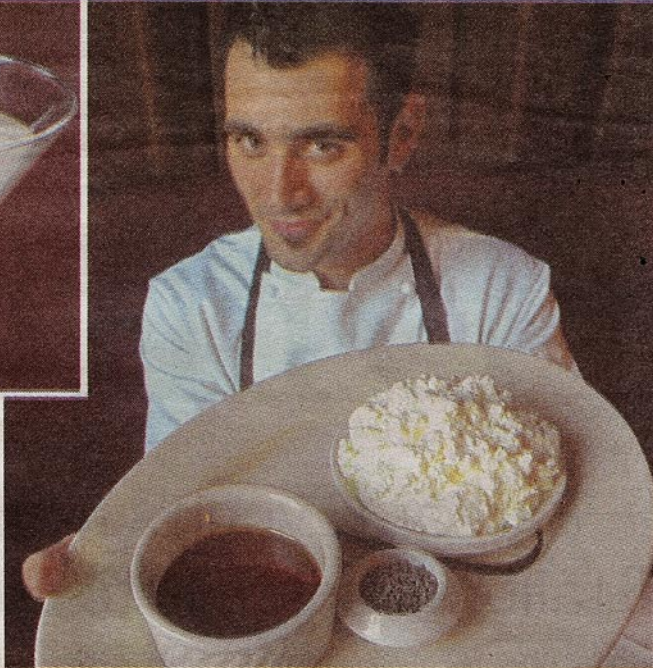


Wednesday May 27, 2009



STAFF PHOTOS BY PATRICK WHITTEMORE

CREAMY DELIGHT: Aquitaine's Barry Edelman with wildflower honey, dried lavender flowers, a vanilla bean and ricotta, right, and the delectable cream on fruit, above.

Aquitaine's Edelman: Big cheese

CHEF'S SPECIAL

Name: Barry Edelman
Age: 30
Title: Chef de cuisine, Aquitaine
Residence: Marblehead
Education: Left high school at age 14 to work in a restaurant kitchen

Career highlight: "Working at sushi bars for several years."

Family: Married, two children

Ingredient of the moment: "Fresh bay leaves. They impart a flavor like none other."

Favorite home dish of the moment: Roast chicken

Can't-live-without gadget: "My curved meat fork. I can't cook without it."

Best cooking tip: "Cook from your heart, not from a book."

Restaurant of the moment: "Given the economy, I've been cooking a lot at home."

Three refrigerator essentials: Dijon mustard, eggs, butter

AQUITAINE FRESH RICOTTA, HONEY AND LAVENDER CREAM

- ¼ c. wildflower honey
- 2 t. dried lavender flowers (or any spice or herb that complements honey)
- 1 lb. fresh ricotta cheese (Calabro if possible)
- 1 vanilla bean (split and scraped, save the pod for another use)

In a double boiler or microwaveable bowl, combine the lavender flowers and honey. Gently heat until honey is warm, cover and let steep overnight. The following day, reheat honey just until it liquifies. Strain the honey directly into the bowl of a food processor, add the ricotta and vanilla and process until smooth. Scrape down the sides of the bowl and repeat. Transfer to an airtight container and refrigerate. Use as a topping for fresh or poached fruit, waffles, French toast, crepes or as a filling for tarts. The cream lasts about a week.

Yield: 1 lb. flavored ricotta.

— MAT SCHAFFER

Aquitaine, 569 Tremont St.; 617-424-8577; aquitaineboston.com.