

HEARD & SCENE

Bringing Brooklyn
To the Borscht Belt

BY REBECCA ROTHBAUM

What happens when two local food-minded restaurateur couples throw a dinner party in the Catskills?

For starters, there are 12 courses, each one featuring wild edibles. Oh, and the proceedings stretch over five hours, not that anyone seems to mind, between the parade of plates and six different wines (all natural, of course).

That was the scene anyway last Saturday night at Table on Ten. The homey, year-old restaurant in Bloomville, N.Y., was the setting for a collaboration with Brooklyn's the Pines, which serves ambitious food in a chic, rustic storefront that feels like a little bit of country along the Gowanus Canal.

"It all came together pretty organically," said Carver Farrell, 38 years old, who owns the Pines with his wife, Sonya.

The couple met Table on Ten owners Inez Valk-Kempthorne and Justus Kempthorne, a model turned chef and carpenter, respectively, several years ago in the Catskills. The Farrells, who split their time between Brooklyn and Bovina, N.Y., quickly became regulars at Table on Ten, which has become a favorite among weekend city folks.

"We were all pretty excited to see what Angelo could do here," said Mr. Farrell, referring to Angelo Romano, the adventurous chef at the Pines, who approaches Italian and Asian influences with a locavore sensibility and previously cooked at Roberta's in Bushwick and Williamsburg's Masten Lake.

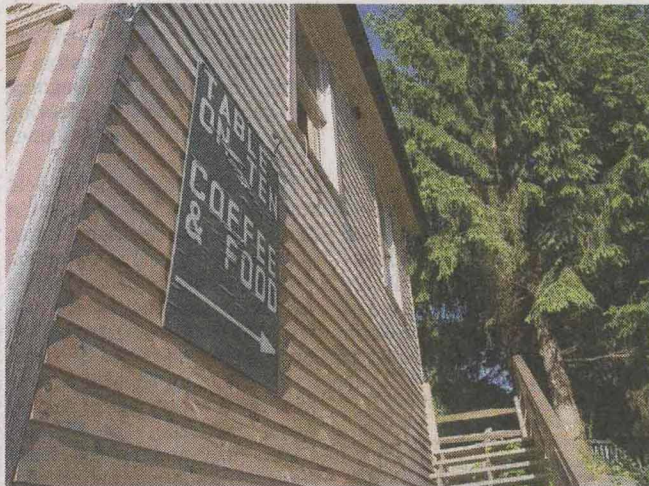
Almost all of the ingredients for the dinner were sourced from growers within 20 miles of Table on Ten, with the exception of the wines, which were from small, European producers.

"We're really in the middle of it here, which is really amazing," said Ms. Valk-Kempthorne, 30. "From hobby farmers to large-scale producers, we get people walking in



Jimmy LeBlanc for The Wall Street Journal (4)

Clockwise from left: Brooklyn chef Angelo Romano in the Catskills; locally grown leeks for dinner; Justus Kempthorne helps prepare bone marrow; and the exterior of Table on Ten, where the dinner was held.



here all the time asking if we'd like to work with them."

Although preparations began weeks ago, when livestock was selected and slaughtered, the menu wasn't finalized until hours before the meal began, as Mr. Romano experimented with his foraged goods.

"I hadn't never even heard of half of them before," he explained, ticking off a list of evocatively named plants like yellow dock and grassy poor man's pepper.

He spent Friday roaming the area around Table on Ten with Marguerite Uhlmann-Bower, an herbalist who works with the Pines, and returned full of ideas and arm-full's of plants.

"It wasn't really a chal-

lenge," Mr. Romano, 31, said. "This is such a beautiful time of year, it's the equivalent of the Santa Monica Farmers Market out here."

The results were often subtle but striking. Chickweed added a jolt of spice to a dish of raw and pickled turnips and yarrow mellowed a vinegar dressing. Even the dessert—a black-bottom custard pie from Brooklyn's Four & Twenty Blackbirds served with a millet-crusted gelato—was flavored with spruce.

Kristie and Steve Burnett, who run the certified organic Burnett Farms, in Bovina Center, N.Y., beamed like proud parents as three different cuts of pork, paired with rhubarb, morels and daisies, were set

before diners, who paid for \$75 each for the prix fixe menu.

"That's our pork," cried Mr. Burnett. Later, turning more serious, he said, the packed restaurant felt like a vindication of what he and his wife—along with farm-to-table restaurants like Table on Ten and the Pines—do. "This is a kind of proof that it can work," he said.

Other guests agreed.

"The food is simple and light, and it's very unpretentious," said Morten Solhberg, who along with his wife, Min Ye, owns the chain of Smorgas Chef restaurants in New York. Noting the unhurried pace of the evening, he said, "the imperfection is perfection."