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SOMETHING TO SAVOR

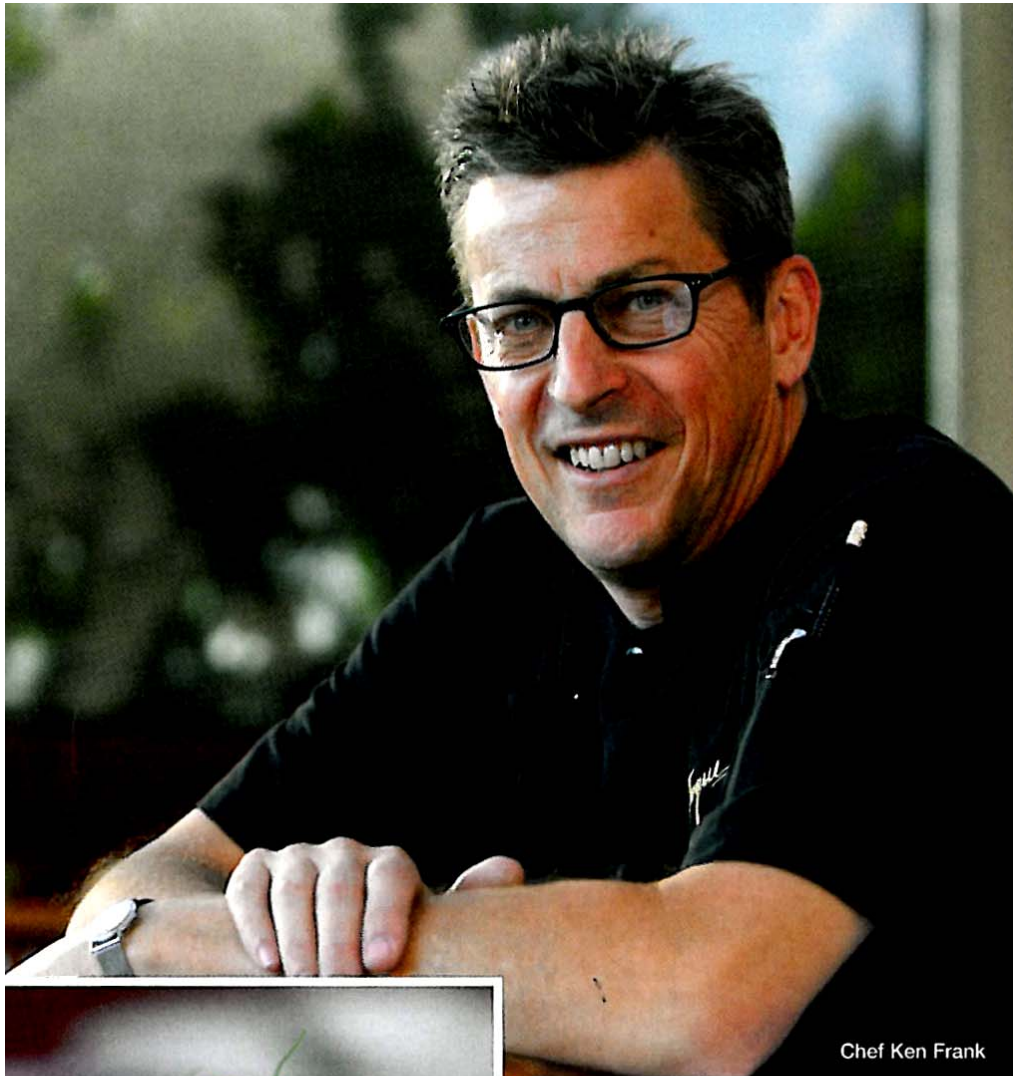
Celebrity chef Bradley Ogden, Auberge du Soleil's Robert Curry, La Toque's Ken Frank, and Blue Stem's Sean Canavan discuss food, wine, life, a universal affinity for ice cream, and some delicious entertaining ideas for the holidays.

PORTRAITS BY JACK HUTCHESON

Just down the road from Auberge du Soleil, Chef Ken Frank and his swoon-worthy restaurant La Toque have also added a Michelin star to the mix. Frank moved his famous restaurant from Rutherford to downtown Napa right on the cusp of the little town's culinary boom. Celebrity chefs have been popping up all over, but Frank has known that Napa was key to his creativity for years. He was one of the original celebrity chefs in Los Angeles in the 80s. A young Ken Frank wowed the culinary scene, owning his own restaurant, the original La Toque on Sunset Boulevard, by the tender age of 24.

He owes his love of great cuisine to an impressionable summer between the ages of 15 and 16 spent on the French side of Lake Geneva. "I begged my parents to let me stay as the summer wore on," he recalls. "They said if I could find a family to stay with and get a job, they'd let me do it." He did, and found himself washing dishes, which led to vegetable prep, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Frank left L.A. and moved La Toque to the Napa Valley in 1998, essentially leaving



Chef Ken Frank



picky, size O-obsessed stars and wannabes behind in search of a culture that celebrates great food and wine. The valley embraced him, and now with La Toque's newest location the adulation just keeps coming. His food and wine lists are consistently rated as some of the best in Northern California.

When asked about his upcoming menus for fall and winter, his eyes light up and enthusiasm resonates in his voice. "We are

just sneaking into truffle season. For me, it's always about great ingredients—truffle season—white truffles from Alba. It doesn't get any better!" La Toque features a truffle menu through January. (Note to self: make a reservation immediately.) Much like Chef Curry, Chef Frank likes to keep it simple at home. "I grill. I like being outside. If it's cold, you'll find me cooking a fish stew or a little fresh tomato sauce with papardelle." When eating out, he, too, sings the praises of Oennotori and Morimoto. In San Francisco, "I like Slanted Door. I love things that are different from what I do. I like everything, I just like it to be good." The chefs in his kitchen know to expect him for his afternoon dose of ice cream at 5PM each day. "My other food vice?" he says thoughtfully. "Bacon. We call it Vitamin P in the kitchen."

In honor of the bounty of truffle season, Chef Frank chose one of his favorite truffle dishes to share with our readers.

Chef Ken Frank's
**Fettuccine with Egg
and Fresh Truffle**

SERVES 4

One of the best ways to showcase the flavor of fresh truffle is with eggs. Whole fresh eggs stored in the refrigerator for 24 to 48 hours in a tightly sealed jar with a fresh truffle become infused with an incredible amount of truffle perfume. It is a gift of nature. Either Burgundy Truffle (tuber *Uncinatum*) or Black Winter Truffle (tuber *Melanosporum*) will work; use them fresh, at the peak of their season. Be sure to use good free range farm eggs if you can find them. This dish is utterly simple; its success depends on the quality of the truffle and the eggs.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 Fresh ripe truffle (20 to 25 grams, about the size of a large walnut, more is OK!)
- 4 Farm eggs
- 6 T Sweet butter
- 1/8 t Sea salt (1 large pinch per egg is nearly always perfect)
- 4 Nests of fresh fettuccine

METHOD:

Slice the truffle very thinly with a truffle shaver. Chop half of the sliced truffle and set aside, but save half of the nicest slices to cover the top at the end.

Bring a large pot of generously salted water to a boil. Melt the butter and 4 pinches of salt in a large mixing bowl over the boiling water. Add 4 eggs to the butter and whisk together over the boiling water until they are warm like a bath, not hot! Stir in the chopped truffle, verify salt seasoning and adjust if necessary. Keep warm.

Cook the fettuccine until tender, strain, and immediately toss with the melted butter and eggs. The heat from the pasta will thicken the egg so it coats the noodles nicely. Divide among 4 bowls, smother with remaining sliced truffle, and serve.