



World Chefs: Oringer's travels reflected in restaurants

By Richard Leong
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(Reuters Life!) - Ken Oringer owns five restaurants in Boston and each serves a different type of cuisine, ranging from his flagship Clio with high-end French food to recently opened Coppa and its casual Italian fares.

The 45-year-old chef said the choice of foods reflects his experience working and traveling around the world.

He spoke to Reuters about the Boston's lively dining scene, his many restaurants and why he wants to cut down on travel.

Q: How would you compare Boston's dining scene with other U.S. cities like New York and San Francisco?

A: "I think Boston has come a long, long way. In the last five years the city has made it a whole lot easier for some of the smaller operators to open some really funky mom-and-pop places. There are some really interesting places like Senegalese, Tibetan, all sort of Asian, Polish. It's such a young, international city. It works to its advantage. The population is so small compared to New York, but there is a huge variety. Boston is pretty darn good and I would put it up against anybody."

Q: Each of your restaurants serves a different kind of cuisine. Why?

A: "With Clio, which is over 13 years old, I didn't want to become typecast for one type of food. When people had associated my name they had thought I was only into high-end, contemporary French cuisine. When I was looking at opening up other kinds of restaurants I would spend so much time traveling around the world and cooking around the world and obviously eating and loving all different kinds of cuisine. I was looking at the types of food I cook for friends, family and my staff."

Q: What is the next cuisine you want to tackle?

A: "I would like to expand on the Japanese a little bit. I love ramen. It's a dream of mine to own a ramen shop. It will be a down and dirty, Japanese style. There are so many Asian college students in Boston. There is also the taqueria, which I have outside of Fenway Park. I wouldn't mind expanding on that. I love the food of Mexico. I love the casualness of the taqueria."

Q: Would you open up a restaurant outside of Boston?

A: "I love Boston. I have had opportunities to go to New York, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Miami and other places. I'm kind of a control freak. I would like to have my hands in a project on a daily basis. I also just had a baby. I don't want to be traveling too much at this point."

Q: You own so many different types of restaurants. What do you eat when you go out?

A: "The types of restaurants I like going to tend to be ethnic. I would much rather have Korean barbecue and some Vietnamese crepes with mung beans and dried shrimps. The more flavorful, the more spice, the more ethnic the better."

Recipe

Cassolette of Sea Urchin and Lobster

2 cups milk

1/2 lb parsnips, peeled and cut into 1/4-inch discs

2 tsp honey

3 oz water

2 tsp lemon juice

1 lb butter, room temperature

Salt to taste

1 cup sugar

1 cup water

1 ea lemon skin

8 oz sea urchin roe, cleaned

4 oz cooked lobster meat, chopped

1 tsp sea beans blanched and finely chopped

1 tsp jalapeno pepper, diced very small

1/2 tsp anchovy filets, chopped very fine

Espelette pepper to taste

Soy sauce to taste

Lemon juice to taste

Salt to taste

Chives, hopped for garnish

Korean long pepper threads for garnish

Fried shallot for garnish

Espelette pepper for garnish

1. Make parsnip milk

In a small pot combine the milk, parsnips and honey, and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Allow the flavor to infuse in the warm place for 2 hours. Strain into a medium bowl and cool.

2. Make beurre monte

In a small saucepan, bring water and lemon juice to boil. Remove from heat and slowly add butter. Emulsify with hand blender. Season with salt and reserve in a warm place.

3. Make preserved lemon

In a small saucepan, combine sugar and water. Bring to boil. Turn heat to low. Add lemon skin. Cook slowly until lemon is semi-transparent, about 10 minutes. In a medium-size pot over very gentle heat, combine 6 oz parsnip milk. Add sea urchin roe, lobster meat, sea beans