

Dining

Intrinsic value

Chef brings out the very best in his quality ingredients

By **DOTTY GRIFFITH**
Restaurant Critic

The restaurant George puzzles yet pleases.

Although the space hasn't been reconfigured since the Inwood Road address belonged to the Riviera, the country-French interior has been transformed into *Metropolitan Home* white noise.

Cozy corner banquettes remain, covered in fashionista white leather. Walls are white. Everything feels white, almost antibacterial, save for strategically placed contemporary art that adds color, as do the logo and menu in grape, lime, cobalt, hot pink, tangerine and turquoise.

Described as "clean and modern" in restaurant press releases, the decor, as intended, reflects the culinary style. The very short menu changes a couple of times a week, although some dishes remained through two visits.

Quality ingredients with minimalist preparation make for some very good dishes. But more than with many restaurants, one's affection for the food at this, the new restaurant by acclaimed chefs George and Katie Brown, is personal.

For example, a table of four shared all the dishes (typical on review visits), but invariably each diner preferred the one he or she had ordered. That's not typical. Often a diner or two finds the food tastier on others' plates.

Though simple, the options are distinct, as with bacon-wrapped quail (\$25). I adored the salty, smoky bacon juxtaposed with the cilantro-marinated pale white game-bird meat, and a sauce of charred jalapeño had just the right punch against a soothing corn pudding.

Another diner thought it was salty, almost crude in execution, preferring the blended flavors of pan-seared wild salmon (\$26) with a subtle wine butter sauce, young but softly starchy succotash and snap pea shoots. The flavors were wan, like a family of colors on the pale end of a paint chip.



Beet and ricotta salad

George
★★★★

Food ★★★★★
Service ★★★★★ ½
Atmosphere ★★★★★

Price: \$\$\$ (entrees \$22 to \$34)

Address: 7709 Inwood Road

Phone: 214-366-9100

Hours: Tuesday-Saturday 5:30 to 10 p.m.

Credit cards: AE, D, DC, MC, V

Wheelchair accessible: Yes

Smoking area: No

Alcohol: Full bar

Perhaps the most emblematic "love it or leave it" dish is warm wild mushroom tart (\$12). Sounds like it will have a custard base. Instead the assortment of brown, beige and salmon-red meaty fungi are grilled then sau-



Photos by DARNELL RENEE/Staff Photographer

Flowers and artworks highlight the otherwise stark interior at George.

téed and piled into buttery, flaky pastry. A tangle of micro greens lends a touch of peppery crunch.

"Perfect!" declared the one who ordered it. Disappointing without a creamy component, said another.

A \$30 piece of bone-in pork almost 3 inches thick and the diameter of a softball satisfied, along with the simplicity of sautéed spinach and a subtle mustard-laced demi-glace. It was closer to medium rare than me-

dium: The interior was very soft and translucent though warm. In contrast, a prime fillet (\$34) looked more like a medallion than a steak. Blue-cheese scalloped potatoes were comforting with a port wine and raisin sauce that sounded as if it would be on the sweet side but instead tasted rich and refined through depths of flavors developed by sun, soil and time.

Integrity of ingredients and technical expertise are evident in just about everything,