

# Marin Independent Journal

## CUISINE SCENE

### Kuleto serves up two new S.F. restaurants at once

**I**N ONE DAZZLING swoop, designer and restaurateur Pat Kuleto and his teams of chef/partners will make Rincon Park — a small wedge of land at the base of Folsom Street across the Embarcadero and 20 feet from the bay — the epicenter of fashionable San Francisco dining beginning Jan. 28.

That's when Kuleto's newest restaurants, Waterbar at 399 Embarcadero and Epic Roasthaus at 369 Embarcadero, will open for daily lunch and dinner and weekend brunch after five years under construction.

Sausalito- and Napa-based Kuleto, his Waterbar business partners Mark Franz of San Anselmo, executive chef



LESLIE HARLIB

Parke Ulrich of Novato, Sausalito-based pastry chef and cookbook author Emily Luchetti and managing partner Pete Sittnick of Tiburon, all turned up last Wednesday for a hard-hat preview lunch of raw oysters, shrimp and paella at the seafood restaurant;

it was a culinary dress rehearsal. Kuleto's Roasthaus partner, executive chef Jan Birnbaum, was also cooking, dishing up two complex courses at meat-driven Roasthaus as part of the adventure.

The movable feast was a visual one, too, with miles of water and the Bay Bridge feeling touchably close, just

See **CUISINE**, page B3



IJ photo/Leslie Harlib

Waterbar's main players include (from left) Mark Franz of San Anselmo, partner and executive chef, Emily Luchetti of Sausalito, executive pastry chef; Parke Ulrich of Novato, executive chef/partner; and designer/owner Pat Kuleto of Sausalito and Napa.

From page B1

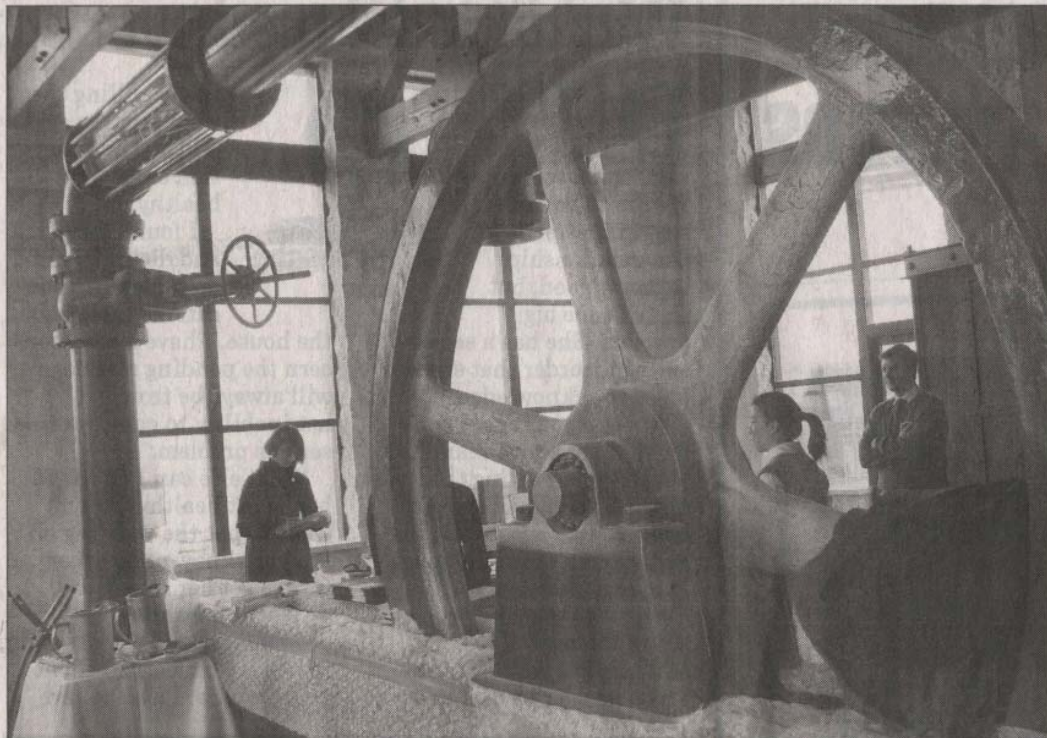
beyond both buildings' two-story windows.

In Waterbar, two 20-foot tall cylindrical aquarium pillars had just had their interior shell-covered piers installed. The West Coast fish, representative of local waters and that will inhabit the aquariums, will arrive from Seattle next week. Their more unfortunate cousins, edible fish who will have a brief sojourn swimming in two horizontal fish tanks from which guests can choose them for dinner, will arrive closer to the opening date.

"It feels great," Kuleto said, staring, as everyone did, at the complex world of shells and coral shapes inside the towering saltwater aquarium tubes. "I can't believe these just went in this morning."

Construction dust clung to Roasthaus' giant interior metal wheel and metal and glass pipes that look like something Willie Wonka might have created if he'd turned to meat instead of chocolate. But Birnbaum presented potent steakhouse chow: a prime roast of butter-tender beef presented on the bone. Cauliflower caramelized in ruffly circles under drizzles of truffle oil. Cornbread madeleines and popovers no bigger than marbles. A dessert parfait distinctive for its heart of house-made burnt chocolate ice cream.

The excitement doesn't come cheap. Some dishes at Waterbar start at \$75 (there are raw or roasted grand shellfish platters for \$90). Epic Roasthaus is also pricey, with wood-fired Lib-



IJ photo/Leslie Harlib

**A giant metal wheel and exposed metal pipings are a fantasy of industrial, ruggedly masculine chic at Epic Roasthaus, Pat Kuleto's new venture with partner/executive chef Jan Birnbaum.**

erty duck for \$32, 14-ounces of prime rib for \$48, a  $\frac{3}{4}$ -pound ground-to-order \$25 hamburger. It features an extensive bar menu, including skewered brandy-soaked duck gizzards and roasted marrow bones.

But Kuleto and his teams say they're producing accessible, not fancy food. Both establishments will trumpet ingredients-driven cuisine. Meats at Roasthaus will primarily be sourced from sustainable growers including Marin Sun Farms and Devil's Gulch. Seafood at Waterbar will be local or flown in fresh from the Amazon basin.

Celebrating eat rather than

being eaten, Kuleto extolled the deliciousness of piranha, one of the more exotic items on Waterbar's menu.

"These days you can get almost anything you want from purveyors," said Ulrich. "And it's amazingly fresh. You can get fish from Sicily that's still in rigor mortis."

For Waterbar reservations and more information, call 284-9922 or go to [www.waterbarsf.com](http://www.waterbarsf.com); for Epic Roasthaus reservations call 369-9955 or go to [www.epicroasthousesf.com](http://www.epicroasthousesf.com).