



CHEF PROFILE: BERNARD BRUNET AT GLOBAL RESTAURANT, BAR & LOUNGE

Chef Bernard Brunet knows how to work a room. He comes out of the kitchen every night to greet guests, weaving among the tables and stopping to make sure, as he says, “everyone is delighted”. His face-to-face approach is working; after six months in operation, many Global guests are already regulars. “Knowing who’s eating my food,” Bernard says, “that’s part of my job.”

Like any French-trained chef, Bernard has respect for the rules – no salt and pepper on the table is one of them – but he also has a zest for innovation. Growing up in Nice, Bernard began working in kitchens at the age of 15 and trained under three different Michelin Star chefs. But he yearned to see the world and after stints in England and Russia, he became chef on a cruise ship. He circled the globe from Alaska to Haiti to Japan, and also met his wife Shannon, who was on board as a professional singer and dancer.

Shannon was from Boone – which Bernard pronounces “Bo-nay” to make it sound more French – and the couple decided Charlotte was the right place to open their restaurant. Secluded among the offices behind Earth Fare in Ballantyne, Global requires a bit of a search, but the location doesn’t bother Bernard. “Some of the best destination dining restaurants in the world are hard to find,” he says. “Not places you’d bump into, but places you have to seek out. We say in France ‘It’s not where you are, it’s what you are’ and we want a clientele who plans to spend two or three hours at the table. They’re seeking an evening of entertainment, they’ve come here to dine.”

With its bright pumpkin and royal blue palette and bold bronze pottery, the restaurant is a fitting backdrop for a menu that Bernard promises will “let you travel the world without leaving Charlotte.” The cuisine of fourteen different countries is featured, from a Bombay Fried Oyster (\$13) to a Haitian Shrimp “Ooo La La!!!” (\$9.00). As Bernard says, with a broad continental shrug, “I’m eclectic. I like fusion. There isn’t one particular cuisine that

moves me.”

Popular entrées include the Nero Risotto (\$20), made with round rice, fish stock, squid ink, grilled calamari, and asiago cheese. The Tuna (\$26) is an artistically-presented orange pepper-crusted Ahi tuna with fresh pineapple cilantro salsa. Shannon says everyone loves the Escolar (\$23), served pan-seared and dressed with a pink peppercorn and fresh basil sauce. “Hush,” says Bernard, mock-seriously. “You’ll give away our secrets.”

Global offers two very different treatments of lamb. The signature Lamb Tenderloin (\$25) is Indian-style, served with spiced baked eggplant and drizzled with a cumin lamb reduction, while the French-influenced Braised Lamb Shank (\$23) rests on creamy polenta and is topped with lavender rosemary sauce. The dinner menu is rounded out with classics such a German Pork Chop, Spanish Paella, and American Meat Loaf. Global’s wine list is moderately priced and, as one would expect, showcases wines from around the world. They even have a sparkling wine from New Mexico, a Gruet Brut (\$6.30 glass, \$28 bottle).

At lunch, Bernard offers an always-changing Region of the Day menu with entrées (\$11) that might feature a stir-fry on Asian Monday or a deconstructed tamale on South American Tuesday. I tried the Sampler Platter (\$10.50) when I visited on North American Thursday and was served a delightful cold peach soup with curry, half of an open-faced crab melt, and a small mound of perfectly-seasoned pulled pork. For someone who loves to graze, this soup-sandwich-entrée combo was the perfect lunch.

Can a place be both elegant and eclectic? Absolutely. Bernard never lets his passion for variety overwhelm the delicate balance on his plates. Global has the potential to become one of the best chef-owned restaurants in Charlotte.

Global Restaurant. 3520 Torringdon Way. 704.248.0866. global-restaurant.com. ■

By Kim Wright Wiley. Photos by Brooke Thomas