



Erin Wade - farmer & salad genius

"Salads are the perfect vessel for bold flavors and appealing textures paired in thoughtful ways."

SANTA FE - Since opening her chic, very green salad bistro **Vinaigrette** in the Fall of 2008, Erin Wade has created more tantalizing salads than restaurant-savvy Santa Feans have seen or tasted in decades. A self-taught restaurateur, Erin graduated from Harvard with a degree in English, spent a year studying fashion design in Italy and then moved to New Mexico and started a 10-acre organic farm. She cleared the land, prepared the soil and started growing lush arugula, heirloom tomatoes, tender peas, amazing beets, and a whole slew of other organic produce.

These gorgeous farm-raised vegetables and greens are the foundation for her restaurant menu, and most of her innovative chopped and tossed salad entrées were created in her farm's test kitchen before they wended their way to Vinaigrette's kitchen. And her delighted customers – responding to her Michael Pollan-inspired maxim of "eat more greens" - keep coming back.

Clearly, Erin has a genius for conjuring up dazzling flavor and textural combinations like:

Cherry Tart Salad - dried cherries mingled with feta, peppery baby arugula and roasted pecans with a Champagne vinaigrette.

Eat Your Peas - fresh baby lettuce and sweet green peas with bacon shards, savory mushroom sauté and Assiago cheese finished with a tart blue cheese vinaigrette.



Arugula Duck Salad - duck confit tossed with baby arugula, creamy goat cheese, balsamic grilled pears, and hibiscus vinaigrette.

The Nutty Pear-Fessor - tender organic greens, grilled Bosc pears, bacon crumbles, toasted pecan halves, tangy Maytag blue cheese, and ruby port vinaigrette.



And, if you'd like your Vinaigrette salad paired with some healthy protein, the menu offers delicious add-ons like:

Divine Diver Scallops served atop baby spinach tossed with sautéed field mushrooms, bacon, hardboiled egg pieces, and red onion with a honey balsamic vinaigrette.

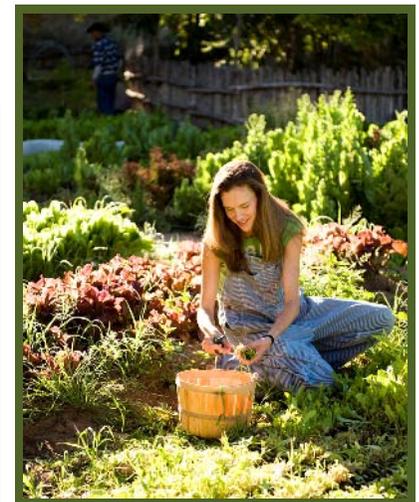


Or Hibiscus Duck Confit served on organic French frisee greens, poached egg, bacon lardons, and a warm shallot vinaigrette.

Or grilled Hanger Steak with the roasted bell pepper and goat cheese salad.

Erin's playful and delicious pairings come naturally, filtered down from a diversity of inspirations. The Apple/Radish/Marcona Almond Slaw with whipped feta dressing that popped up on the menu recently was created after a prolonged craving for Greek food met with an abundant supply of radish in the garden. And, Erin gives the same attention to her salads as any chef does to his or her prized entrée. "Salads," says Erin, "deserve to be put in the limelight; they are the perfect vessel for bold flavors and appealing textures paired in thoughtful ways."

ERIN'S FARM – LOS PORTALES



NAMBE - Seventy percent of the organic produce served in Vinaigrette restaurant during peak season is grown on Erin's 10-acre farm in Nambé, New Mexico, about 20 minutes north of Santa Fe. A unique microclimate in an acequia-fed canyon leading up to the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, the Nambé valley has a long history of farming. To manage the extremes of the high desert and its short growing season, Erin installed a 1,200 sq.-foot greenhouse where she is growing micro-greens, herbs and other delights for the Vinaigrette kitchen.



The greenhouse arrived in 30 boxes, but fortunately it came with an expert who knew exactly how to fit everything together. "It was like a giant glass puzzle. It took him three days; I thought it would be three weeks!" recalls Erin, who is already featuring winter salads that incorporate the diminutive greens, sprouts and veggies grown in the greenhouse.



This dynamic connection to the farm and the land pervades the restaurant's philosophy and operations. Greens are harvested fresh every morning for the busy restaurant and all of Vinaigrette's organic wastes are composted daily at Los Portales and used to nurture the soil or to feed the farm pigs and chickens that range free around the property.



Erin hopes that Vinaigrette proves that being green and eating green can be hip and delicious, not just responsible. "There is this strange dichotomy in the American psyche that doing the right thing for the health of our bodies or the health of the planet is necessarily a sacrifice - that whole 'no pain, no gain' thing - and the pleasurable and fun stuff is a guilty indulgence. The concept of my restaurant is to turn this notion on its head."



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