

THURSDAY DAILY TIMES-CALL

LONGMONT AND THE ST. VRAIN VALLEY, COLORADO

BOULDER — Mark Monette's copper cooking pots gleam in a mid-day sun that threatens to sizzle the skin.

It's a gorgeous autumn afternoon on the terrace at the Flagstaff House. Nestled in the Flatirons overlooking the city of Boulder, the venerable restaurant elicits a tranquil camaraderie among the 20 people who have come to watch executive chef Monette prepare a three-course lunch.

"This is an exciting part of several new adventures that we're beginning here at the Flagstaff," the chef's brother Scott Monette tells the visitors. "We're doing a series of cooking lessons, wine tastings and a lot of fun things."

The brothers, both of whom now own the restaurant started by their father, have grown up in the business. "We started out as kids pouring water at the tables," Scott says, before turning the reins over to his brother.

Mark, pristine in his chef's coat, begins an orange-pumpkin sauce that will complement a pork tenderloin wrapped in a crispy noodle.

As he melts butter and sweats some shallots, his brother tells how Mark created the recipe in his head, yet had not prepared it prior to putting it on the menu for the class.

"He finally decided that he should make it before this presentation, and it turned out great," Scott says.

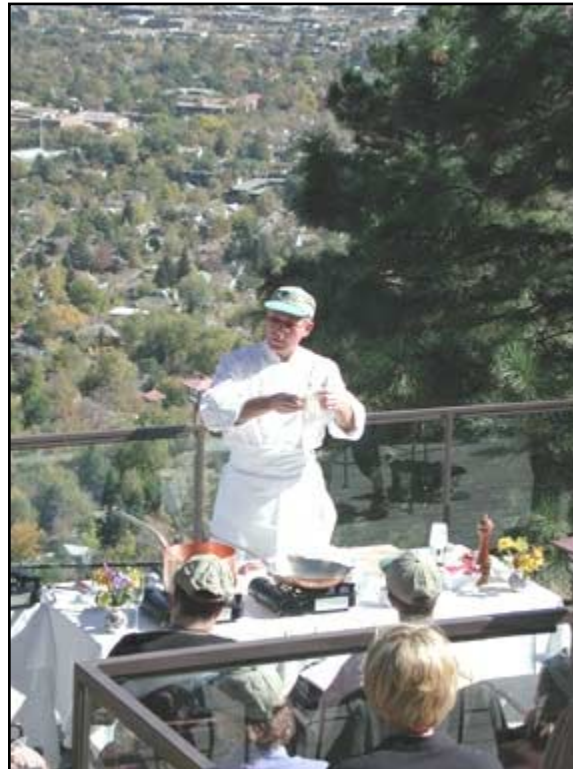
As Mark adds a cinnamon stick, clove, star anise, bay leaves, ginger and orange zest to the pot, a remarkable aroma wafts from the preparation table. It's a heady, divine whiff that promises a tasty entree to come.

With the pumpkin, white wine, orange juice and maple syrup added among other delights to the pot, Mark turns to address the fine filo dough that will encrust a pork tenderloin cut into medallions.

As he pulls apart the delicate strands of dough, Scott regales the audience with stories of Mark's early cooking enterprises.

"We suffered through a lot of his dishes

early on," the brother relates. "Once, out camping, Mark tried to make a fettuccine alfredo over a campfire. He threw in the garlic (whole) and then the cream and the cheese and served it up. Of course, it was uncooked and we all were up by



Flagstaff House chef Mark Monette gives a cooking demonstration to a small group from the deck of the Boulder restaurant.

Times-Call/Patrick Kramer

early morning suffering the after effects." The brothers tell how their father took them on camping trips that were like no other. "Dad brought a selection of wines, fine china and silver, plus steaks and fish," says Scott. "We'd ask, 'May I have a little more quail, please, and 'Is that triple zero caviar?' We were really roughing it."

Mark introduces the students to a white fish called John Dory. "It's a fish that keeps its shape beautifully and is tender with a wonderful taste." He pan-fries the fish, browning it quickly on both sides before sending it off to the kitchen to be dressed.

He then begins a delectable marriage of roasted sweet peppers and bananas that will, along with rice, will be served with the fish.

The pumpkin sauce finally turns to a spicy and syrupy texture, and the chef cuts a large, lean piece of pork loin into generous medallions.

He wraps them in the delicate filo and sautees them in olive oil, bring them to a crispy golden hue. He dispatches the medallions to the kitchen to finish in the oven.

Later, in the elegant dining room at the Flagstaff, his promise of a delightful fish is fulfilled. The John Dory is served over rice with the pepper-banana melange, creating a heavenly dish.

Later, the pork medallions arrive, tender and rare, the flavor set off by the mouthwatering spices in the pumpkin sauce.

Dessert is a Golden Egg Surprise — a cocoa sorbet atop a dense brownie with fresh raspberries. The sorbet, egg shaped, is draped with delicate gold leaf to nicely illustrate its name. Each course is accompanied by a fine vintage from the Domaine Carneros estate in California — Brut Cuvee and Le Rêve sparkling wines and a pinot noir with a fruit tone overlaid with spices of cinnamon, cola, cocoa and

clove that nicely complements the pork dish.

The Monette brothers have invited the students into their restaurant to pick their brains and learn some fine cooking methods.

Mark Monette easily takes away the fear of preparing delicate dishes, while the students adopt an "I can do it" attitude. It's a winner no matter which side of the table you're on.

If you go:

Cuisine lesson and wine tasting
Flagstaff House Restaurant
1138 Flagstaff Road, Boulder
Friday, Nov. 7

For reservations and cost, call 303-442-4640.

Classes are limited to 20.