

CELEBRATING
SEATTLE FOR

40
YEARS

INSIDE SEATTLE'S GUN CULTURE

»»» PLUS: TACKLING THE
GUN CONTROL ISSUE

seattle

THE PREMIER SEATTLE MONTHLY

DECEMBER 2006

THE BEST OF 2006

MORE THAN

**226
WINNERS**

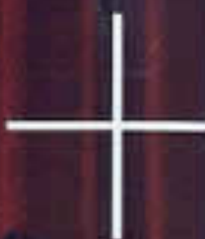
FOOD, ARTS,
DATING, PETS,
SHOPPING
AND MORE

♦♦♦♦♦
**THE BEST
OF THE WORST**

THE YEAR'S MOST
GRINGE-WORTHY EVENTS



SEATTLEMAG.COM



**MEET THE
GEEKS**

THE CREATIVE
MINDS BEHIND
OUR VIDEO
GAME INDUSTRY

ALSO:

CAN SDOT CHIEF
**GRACE
CRUNICAN**
KEEP SEATTLE
MOVING?

**WINTER STORM
WATCHING**
ON THE COAST
(TRUST US, IT'S
WORTH THE TRIP)

BONUS INSERT:
**BEST
REAL ESTATE
AGENTS**

(SEE PAGE 223)



Clockwise from top left, BOKA lures cocktailers and diners alike; the restaurant's warm dining room; "husky" beef tenderloin with purple potatoes and gold chanterelles; opposite page, Gorgonzola-topped flap

DOING THE TWIST

AT LUXE NEW RESTAURANT BOKA, CLEVER TOUCHES SHAKE UP CLASSIC AMERICAN DISHES—BUT THEY'RE NOT ALWAYS HITS **BY SARA DICKERMAN**

IN A YEAR OF VERY personal restaurant debuts from a string of chef-auteurs, including Scott Emerick's *Cremant*, Matt Dillon's *Sidka and Spruce*, and Maria Hines' *Tilth*, BOKA, the restaurant at the new Hotel 1000, tells a rather different story, one that's more strategic than spontaneous. Owned by an investment group, BOKA has a need to please a broad clientele that's paired with a deep-pocketed swagger (thus the name, which is actually an acronym for what I suppose is the restaurant's ideal review: Bold Original Kitchen Artistry).

BOKA shoots for a luxe-eclectic look to entice cocktailers as well as diners. There is bamboo glass art from J.P. Canlis, a gor-

geous floor of reclaimed oak and serious decorator fabrics in tones of gunmetal, bone and faded persimmon. Toward the back of the room, lighted panels shift the color of the dining room's walls from blue to orange to magenta. It's a distracting—and kind of juvenile—effect for such an ambitious space, one that keeps the room from settling into a single mood.

Running the kitchen is my old colleague Seis Kamimura, who I've admired since ages ago when he was a sous-chef at Spago Beverly Hills and I was but a peon. (More recently he ran the now Web-only gourmet gift store *Les Cadeaux Gourmets* with his wife, Pia, and before then, the *Bada Lounge*.) His menu at BOKA is what I'd

call "clever American," straightforward dishes realized with a twist or two: "husky" beef tenderloin garnished with purple potatoes and gold chanterelles, say, or gazpacho made not with tomato, but watermelon. Sometimes clever is very good indeed, as with the BLT soup: a trembling tomato flan, surrounded by a moat of puréed lettuce soup and little rafts of lush bacon confit. The same goes for desserts, like an outstanding poached cheesecake graced with Eastern Mediterranean flavors—pistachios, candied fennel and honeyed peaches—or a fruit "napoleon," essentially a stacked fruit salad, made with late-summer tomatoes, plums and Concord grapes and topped with a dollop

COORDINATES

BOKA
1818 First Ave.
206.357.9000
bokanew.com
Branch, Sat.–Sun., 10 a.m.–2:30 p.m.; lunch,
Mon.–Fri., 11 a.m.–2:30 p.m.; dinner, Sun.–Thu.,
5:30–10 p.m., Fri.–Sat., 5:30–10:30 p.m.