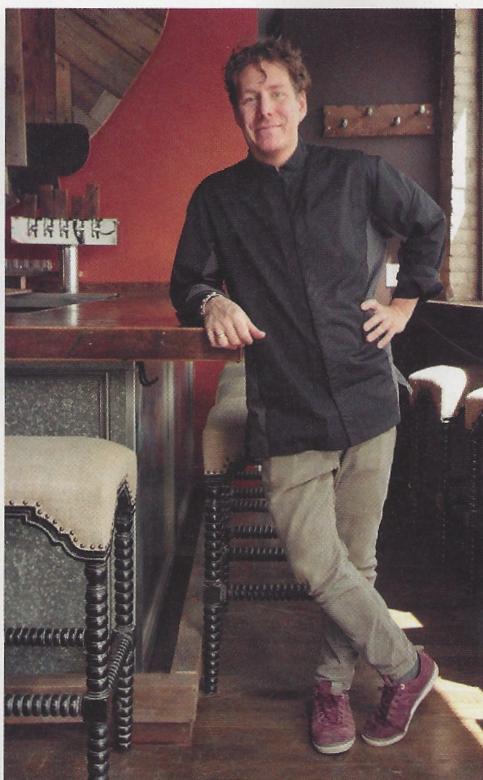


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BRONWYN
255 Washington St., Somerville
(617-776-9900) bronwynrestaurant.com



First Taste

BEST OF THE WURST

“This place is beer, sausage, bread,” says Tim Wiechmann of his latest venture, Bronwyn. Just opened in Union Square, the restaurant borrows its European focus from Weichmann’s German heritage, while its name is borrowed from his wife.

But this isn’t your kitschy, dirndl-clad concept. It’s classic European, with dark repurposed wood and antique Gothic chairs in the tucked-away dining room. Wiechmann used beams from an old farmhouse to build benches for two large communal tables that share a wall with the raised patio. He also repurposed rubble from the demolition of the old space to create the large wooden heart that hangs behind the bar. It’s an intimate, well-curated space, and you’d never guess it seats 100, which is exactly what Tim and Bronwyn wanted—a sense of barren elegance.

That sentiment carries over to the drinks list. Bronwyn stocks 10 drafts and another 25 bottles, from many European nations. But it’s the schnapps that are the main draw. “In Austria, schnapps is a serious thing,” Tim says. “Because they grow so much fruit, everybody handcrafts these great liqueurs.” The list that appears at Bronwyn takes the place of fine whiskeys at other establishments. These are meant for sipping.

The real craft, however, is apparent in the food. Bronwyn employs a full-time baker to make five breads in house daily. A dark, traditional pretzel is made fresh every hour and served with a housemade roasted apple mustard. There’s also challah with honey and oatmeal, German Roggenbrot and Baumbrot and a juniper cracker.

To accompany the breads, Wiechmann prepares a selection of six sausages. “But the sausage menu is not charcuterie,” he says. “It’s not dry aged, it’s not soppressata—it is German fresh sausage, like, we make them every day, cook them, sell them and that’s it.” Served atop bread and with a side of seasonal slaw, the Bavarian sausages—including the veal, turkey and pork currywurst—are Bronwyn’s staple.

Other menu items include sauerbraten, or German pot roast, which is similar to a corned beef but features more vinegar, and an asparagus salad in which the vegetable is roasted, shaved and topped with crumbled gingerbread and almond vinaigrette. There’s also grilled salmon, prepared with fresh hops—something that few chefs attempt as it’s hard to avoid the hops’ natural bitterness. But Wiechmann pushes on. “I want my salmon to smell like a glass of IPA,” he says, laughing, but is totally serious. “That’s a good idea, right?”

HANNAH LOTT-SCHWARTZ

