

Platter: New Restaurant: Lucier

by Christina Melander, Oregonian
Friday May 23, 2008



The Oregonian; Chef Pascal Chureau

Walking through \$4 million [Lucier restaurant](#), on the South Waterfront, it's clear that owner Chris Dussin means to deliver a dining experience heretofore unseen in Portland.

With custom leather furniture from Italy and high-polish marble on bar tables; with true Kobe beef and a cart full of caviar on offer from the kitchen; with a wine list that spans \$25 to \$10,000 for a single bottle, Lucier aspires to be swankier than [Bluehour](#), more contemporary than [El Gaucho](#) and as food-obsessed as [Genoa](#) during its heyday.

Whether Portlanders are of a mind to hold up their end of the bargain and shell out for luxe good times remains to be seen.

But you can't fault Dussin, his wife, Tyanne, and partner-chef Pascal Chureau for aiming high.

The restaurant they have created, with design direction from industry pros Alvarez + Brock, is supermodel stunning. Situated in a single-story standalone building about 10 feet from the riverbank, Lucier is wrapped in windows and handsome African hardwoods. Inside, a tasteful water channel snakes around the dining room, echoing the nearby Willamette. A reflective gold pod faceted like a gemstone conceals the bar and its noisy presence. Overhead, bronze tube chandeliers lend a bit of edge to the classy decor.

Will the food rival the trappings?

Chureau, who also is executive chef at Fenouil (the Dussins formed a business alliance with Chureau a year ago and bought out Fenouil founders David and Susan Regan), tapped his classic

French training and assembled a brigade-style kitchen for Lucier. In this model, two cooks command each station -- garde-manger, salad, saute, etc. -- and handle every aspect of the dishes for which they are responsible. The goal is consistency. "It allows us to control the product from when it comes in the door to when it goes out on a plate," Chureau explains. "In other kitchens it's more typical for management to do the butchering. Here, when a tuna comes in, the fish station butchers, prepares and plates it. If there's a problem, you know where to go."



Chris and Tyanne Dussin of Lucier

Preview menus were not available, but Chureau describes Lucier's food as modern European cuisine, pulling flavors from Morocco, Italy and Portugal as well as from France, and borrowing techniques from Japan. Menus comprise a la carte, bar and a seven-course chef's tasting menu that emphasizes a few ingredients -- tomatoes and the red mullet fish rouget, for example -- throughout the entire meal. To encourage diners to try luxury items like Kobe beef and live scallops in the shell, the kitchen will prepare them in tiny portions, coupling, say, an ounce of Wagyu beef with a New York steak to demonstrate the difference. Similarly, wine director Scott Calvert will pour several of his 200 Champagnes by the glass.

Champagne and caviar are a world apart from the Virginia Cafe, founded by Dussin's grandfather in 1914, and the Old Spaghetti Factory, opened by Dussin's father in 1969. The third-generation restaurateur has longed to open a high-end place for a decade and felt the time was right despite the shifting economy. "Things go in cycles," Dussin says. "People always find a way to go out and celebrate special occasions."

Lucier opens for dinner on Monday, May 26. 1910 S.W. River Drive; 503-222-7300