



Union Square Cafe

21 EAST 16TH STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10003

www.unionsquarecafe.com



SPRING 2007

Dear Friend of Union Square Cafe,

Since 1994 I've occasionally used this newsletter to communicate with you about a new restaurant we've created and would soon be launching. To date, Union Square Cafe – where it all began in 1985 – has lovingly provided the “mother yeast” for a flourishing family of offspring: Gramercy Tavern (1994); Eleven Madison Park and Tabla (1998); Blue Smoke and Jazz Standard (2002); Shake Shack (2003); The Modern and MoMA Cafes (2004); and Hudson Yards Catering (2006). While our restaurants, jazz club and catering company are all unique from one another in terms of how they look and taste, they've each been conceived and raised with a generous dose of Union Square Cafe's original DNA – which instills in them a striving determination to become leaders within their very diverse respective categories, as well as a never-ending quest to provide the most caring possible sense of hospitality and welcome to all. We aim to create excellent restaurants with meaning that, like Union Square Cafe, have what it takes to earn a good name, contribute value to their communities, and to endure over time, irrespective of the ephemeral styles and trends of the day.

The trick each time we've opened an establishment – and this part is challenging – is not only to make sure that it will add something significant and fresh to the dialogue on whatever its niche – but also to assure that even as we grow, each of our existing restaurants, beginning with Union Square Cafe, continues to improve and to delight our guests more than ever. To accomplish that, each new venture itself must itself provide us with rich opportunities for learning – not just as those lessons relate to the new place, but also by supplying a fresh set of ideas that we can apply to our existing places.


Which brings me to our newest offspring, **Union Square Tokyo**. For years we have passed on generous opportunities to replicate Union Square Cafe in places outside New York. In fact, for 22 years, any restaurant we've ever opened has been built on the same island, if not in the same *precinct* as Union Square Cafe. We'd always concluded that any new restaurant would be of and by Union Square Cafe, but would not be another *de facto* Union Square Cafe. So it would be quite natural to wonder why in the world our first venture beyond New York – opening in April 2007 – is not only a world away, but is also named for the first restaurant we ever opened. We're in it for the learning, and we are as excited as can be.





Situated at the base of the **Tokyo Midtown Project** (Tokyo's newest and tallest tower, in Roppongi Hills), overlooking a verdant park with dense groves of cherry trees, and adjacent to the new Suntory Museum of Art - Union Square Tokyo is an original, modern offshoot of Union Square Cafe. In the seasonal, Italian-inflected soul of its menu, UST bears a strong relationship to its forbearer, but is in no way a replica. A warm, comfortable place that strives to become both a highly regarded culinary destination and a favorite among residents of Tokyo, Union Square Tokyo has already begun to reward us with a rare opportunity to learn and grow through an enriching cultural exchange with Wondertable - our Japanese business partners. Over the past year and a half, members of our team have collectively made eight information-gathering trips to Tokyo, and we've also hosted our new Japanese chef Yoshichika “Yoshi” Matsuda, and general manager Hideo Mogi, for several weeks in New York as they studied and absorbed Union Square Cafe in a collective and ongoing spirit of shared knowledge. We are energized to be learning about Tokyo's local, seasonal ingredients (many of which are brand new to us) and a host of fascinating, distinctly Japanese approaches to doing business. In exchange we're sharing everything we know about our New York brand of hospitality. Union Square Cafe service director Kellie Brooks has moved to Tokyo for a year to help open UST, and Chef Michael Romano will be there for nearly two months before returning home, having harvested, we hope, all kinds of wonderfully fresh ideas to bring home to USC. Our goal is that for years to come, Union Square Cafe and Union Square Tokyo – international culinary cousins – will consistently find compelling ways to strengthen, enliven, and support one another. We eagerly hope that you will visit UST if you travel to Tokyo for business or pleasure, and then let us know how you liked it. USC is now embarking on its 22nd spring season, and we are thrilled to have found such a wonderful way to renew ourselves for our *next* couple of decades!


DIARY OF AN AMERICAN CHEF IN TOKYO *by Michael Romano*

From time to time while he's in Tokyo, Michael Romano will be filing updated reports of his culinary adventures, which you can read by going to our website: www.unionsquarecafe.com/ustokyodiary. Following are his entries from his first days on this most recent journey. Michael has dived headfirst into learning to speak Japanese – and has made impressive progress. (This, in addition to his pre-existing fluency in French, Spanish, and Italian!)

 *Picked up at the airport by Michio-san, the director of operations for Wondertable. We speak in English, his halting and mine mushy after a 13-hour flight. On the subject of language: been studying diligently with an audio course I purchased, and have downloaded to my iPod, and I'm slowly acquiring a useful, if somewhat limited vocabulary. It's been a tremendous help, and well worth the strange looks I'd gotten from fellow NYC straphangers who would sidle away cautiously as I would repeat my lessons. So whenever Michio lobs a question that's been covered in the course, I try to answer him in Japanese. This has the interesting effect of triggering a quick conversational re-boot, where he absorbs the answer, realizes it was not in English, forms his answer in Japanese, but then thinks better of it, not wishing to tax my ability, and responds in English. And so we shuffle and bump our way through the traffic, into Tokyo.*

 *Culture gap—so invigorating. My head is filled with thoughts of Bushido and the Samurai code, and Michio is telling me about how much he enjoys American Idol and “24”. We're listening to a rock station that is broadcast half in Japanese, half in colloquial American. (A young Japanese female voice teaches listeners to say, “I'll catch up with you guys later!”) So many thoughts and sensations swirling through my sleep-deprived brain as we approach the gorgeous skyline. I well-up with tears when it occurs to me that this is an opportunity to re-live the 1985 opening of Union Square Cafe, in which I did not participate, having first arrived in 1988. I am so close to that restaurant, it is such a part of my life, and yet I was not a part of its inception. I've been given another chance. After dropping off my bags at the apartment, I head over to see the restaurant with Michio, Hideo, and Yoshi. I am quite pleased to note that UST is a very short walk from my place, a real boon in a town where people think nothing of 1-2 hour train commutes. No matter how much one has participated in the design of a project, poring over blueprints and drawings, or how keen one's mental image of a space might be, there is nothing to replace that first glance at the finished work. Absolutely thrilling, to say the least. I immediately think of the words Danny used to introduce The Union Square Cafe Cookbook, “Twenty Five minutes before the mahogany door to Union Square Cafe swung open for the very first dinner on October 21, 1985, I broke into sobbing tears ...” The front door of Union Square Tokyo may slide rather than swing open, but I have the feeling just the same.*

 *I'm enjoying using local seasonal produce (what a concept!) and re-creating dishes with what's around. Did our first rotisserie chicken today (LOVE THAT MACHINE!) and paired it with a warm salad of frisee, shiitakes, butter-braised URUI – a gorgeous, endive like plant, actually in the onion family – with which I fell in love at first sight, delicious house-smoked bacon, blanched and sautéed fresh bamboo shoots, tarragon, chervil and a warm poached egg. Thinking of trying an alternative to USC's Black Bean Soup. Have not yet found an equivalent to our black beans, and so I consider trying my hand at Red Bean Soup, with Adzuki beans, which I love. Finding graham crackers may be a challenge, though the calamari (and all of the fish I've seen so far) are exquisite. Teaching our Mashed Potatoes and Garlic Chips recipes – sure do miss the Idahoes!*

 *Here's an interesting side story to today's kitchen work: Ever sit down in the quiet of your office (or wherever) to do some creative work, and enjoyed the luxury of feeling your way through your own personal process, content in the knowledge that when you are good and ready, you can show your work to those you trust for input? Yes? Well imagine this: Here in Tokyo, when I'm getting ready to try out some new ingredients or a new take on a dish, the chef or sous-chef loudly proclaims to the kitchen staff that Chef Romano is about to do such-and-such. At that point each cook immediately drops what they are doing and gathers around, with pads and pens in hand. Every reached-for ingredient, every grab for some salt, every twist of the pepper mill has the cooks scribbling furiously in their pads, documenting choices that may change at any moment. (Today I grabbed a pinch of sea salt to toss into a tomato sauce, and out of the corner of my eye saw a cook grab a similar pinch, put it on a scale, and record the amount in his notebook) A movement on my part from work table to stove-top engenders a migration not unlike a swarm of bees hot on the honey trail. When, finally, the finished product is plated (which may or may not be what I'd hoped for or intended) the chef or sous-chef once again loudly proclaims the fact, and in a flash, fifteen cell phones emerge and pictures are snapped, celebrating the arrival of a new-born dish. Gotta love it. Updates at www.unionsquarecafe.com/ustokyodiary.*

UNION SQUARE CAFE'S 2007 SPRING CULINARY EVENTS

Wednesday, May 23rd ~ SHARE OUR STRENGTH'S TASTE OF THE NATION

We warmly invite you to join us for our 18th consecutive year of participating in New York's premier tasting event to fight hunger. **Share Our Strength's Taste of the Nation** is moving to a new location this year: **Roseland Ballroom on West 52nd Street**. In addition to **Union Square Cafe, Gramercy Tavern, Eleven Madison Park, Tabla, Blue Smoke, and The Modern**, you'll taste dishes from nearly **60 of NYC's top restaurants** while you meet and greet their talented chefs. There are a dozens of tasting events out there these days, but this one remains our favorite. Advance tickets are available now by calling (877) 26TASTE or by logging on to www.newyorktaste.org. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. for a VIP Preview (\$375) and at 7:30 p.m. for the main event (\$250) with chefs serving until 10:30 p.m. 100% of ticket proceeds benefit local hunger-relief organizations, which means you'll be doing good while having fun. Dress for the festive occasion is business attire.

Wednesday, May 23rd ~ MORNING MARKET MEETING – “PEAS PLEASE”

How ephemeral and versatile is the spring pea! We adore peas in chilled soups with *crème fraîche*, cooked and pureed with bacon lardons, freshly shelled and tossed with mint, or coddled in *beurre blanc* to grace a main course. Peas and pea shoots are showcased extensively on the USC menu each spring. As our special guest, we'll welcome **Paulette Satur** from **Satur Farms** in Cutchogue LI, whose first name, after all, begins with a capital Pea! **Danny Meyer** will kick off the morning with restaurant talk over hot coffee and muffins. **Chef Carmen Quagliata** will demonstrate how to work with both fresh and dried peas as he prepares a favorite recipe and USC's GM, Christopher Russell, will uncork a pea-worthy wine to accompany the recipe. The morning begins promptly at 8:00a.m. and will end by 10:15 a.m. The per-person cost is \$60, all-inclusive. To reserve, please call Stephanie McLellan at (646) 747-0581. Space is very limited and will be filled on a first-called, first-served basis.

Sunday, June 3rd ~ SPRING WINE AND FOOD DINNER – THE LOIRE VALLEY

Muscadet, Vouvray, Chinon, Bourgeuil, Sancerre, Saumur Champigny. From “The Garden of France” to The Greenmarket of Union Square! Join Chefs Michael Romano and Carmen Quagliata as they lovingly prepare a multi-course feast featuring the best of the region's wine and cuisine, including radishes, escargots, *fritures* de loire, salmon, eels, and trout, *rillettes*, pork, potato pie, and *crottin de chavignol*, while Christopher Russell culls some of the finest *ter Tries* (the best growth from a producer's site) to drink. Since space is extremely limited for the evening, we'll conduct a lottery to fill the event. To be entered please email info@unionsquarecafe.com and put LOIRE in the subject line. Let us know how many seats you would like and include a daytime phone number by Friday, May 18th. We'll notify you by phone beginning May 21st if your name has been selected. The all-inclusive cost for the multi-course dinner is \$195.

USC SIDE DISHES

- Thank you to our many friends who have read, reflected upon, and responded with such enthusiasm to Danny's new book, ***Setting the Table: the Transforming Power of Hospitality in Business*** (HarperCollins). We're proud to report that the book - equal parts memoir, restaurant stories, business and life lessons - is already in its 10th printing, and has become a bestseller on **The New York Times, Wall Street Journal, and Business Week** lists. Signed copies are always available at USC.
- **Congratulations** to USC's assistant general manager **Jill Rowe**, who will be married in Rome this June. Jill came to Union Square Cafe in 2002, and she met her fiancé, longstanding USC regular **Barry Kaplan** soon thereafter.
- **You have a friend in Japan!** USC's genial service director **Kellie Brooks** will be enthusiastically welcoming guests to Union Square Tokyo through March 2008. If you know you are traveling to Tokyo, please email Kellie at kbrooks@unionsquarecafe.com so she might assist with your reservations.
- We remain grateful to our loyal friends who once again voted **Union Square Cafe** to the top of the **Zagat Survey's** ranking of Most Popular restaurant in New York, second only to our sister restaurant, Gramercy Tavern. As proud as we are that five Union Square Hospitality Group restaurants earned places in the top eighteen, we're even prouder that the older they get, the more popular they've become. That's an especially wonderful compliment in a competitive city whose first name is “New”!

WE WISH YOU AN UPLIFTING SPRING AND HOPE TO SEE YOU FREQUENTLY throughout the warm season. Thank you so much for your continued friendship, enthusiasm and loyalty to Union Square Cafe.

With Gratitude,

Danny Meyer
and the Staff of Union Square Cafe

USC SPRING RECIPE

Sugar Snap Pea Salad with Pancetta, Pecorino and Mint

(SERVES 6)

1 tablespoon kosher salt	1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
1 pound sugar snap peas, trimmed at each end	2-3 tablespoons finely sliced mint
1/4 pound pancetta, cut into 1-inch x 1/8th inch lardons	5 tablespoons grated Pecorino Romano cheese
2 tablespoons minced red onion	2-3 teaspoons <i>Fleur de Sel</i> (Sea Salt)
1/8 cup lemon juice	1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1/8 cup Champagne, or white wine vinegar	

1. Bring 3 quarts water to a boil in a large pot and add the kosher salt. Have ready a large bowl of ice water to stop the cooking of the peas. Cook the peas to the water for just 10 seconds. Drain the peas in a colander and immediately add them to the ice water. Remove the peas from the ice water after about 2 minutes. Drain well in the colander and gently pat dry with a paper towel. Julienne the peas by cutting them in on a sharp diagonal. Set the sliced peas aside in the refrigerator.
2. Place the pancetta and 1 tablespoon of water into a 10-inch sauté pan set over low heat. Stir the pancetta gently with a wooden spoon to separate while it heats up. The water will eventually evaporate and the pancetta will begin rendering its fat (approximately 4-5 minutes). Turn the heat up to medium and cook, stirring and scraping the pan often until the pancetta is completely rendered and crisp (another 4-5 minutes). Drain the pancetta in a colander set over a bowl. Set aside the crisped pancetta at room temperature.
3. Place the minced onion in a non-reactive bowl large enough to mix the pea salad. Pour in the lemon juice, vinegar, and olive oil, and stir to combine with the onions.
4. Place the peas, pancetta, mint, 4 tablespoons of the pecorino, the fleur de sel and ground black pepper into the bowl with the vinaigrette. Mix the salad, taste, and adjust the seasoning to your liking. Sprinkle the remaining tablespoon of Pecorino over the salad and serve.

WHENEVER WE MAKE A SEASONAL MENU CHANGE, our chefs are responsible for providing a detailed written menu description so that our servers can knowledgeably answer our guests' questions. For the sake of accuracy, we use the spell check function, which, as you'll read below, has its limitations when applied to certain Italian ingredients and culinary terms.

Tagliarini with Peas and Prosciutto: Replacing the **Stringhetti with Clams** is this delicious dish, which hints of spring things to come. **Housemade tagliarini** (egg noodles cut more narrowly than fettuccine) are cooked to order and tossed with a luscious sauce made with **prosciutto**, onions, white wine, a small amount of garlic, cream and **Parmigiano Reggiano**. The dish is garnished with fresh English peas (as the early spring variety is called), thin strips of **prosciutto** and more **Parmigiano Reggiano**.

Spell Checked Version:

Tailgating with Peas and Prostitutes: Replacing the **Serengeti with Clams** is this delicious dish, which hints of spring things to come. Housemaids tailgating (egg noodles cut more narrowly than fettuccine) are cooked to order and tossed with a luscious sauce made with prostituted onions, white wine, a small amount of garlic, cream and Ptarmigans Regina. The dish is garnished with fresh English peas (as the early spring variety is called), thin strips of prostitutes and more Parisian Regions.

*If you'd like to add your e-mail address to our mailing list, are currently receiving more than one newsletter,
or have moved, please let us know by e-mailing any changes to:*

info@unionsquarecafe.com

Would you like to receive this newsletter 2 weeks early?

If so, you can opt to receive future editions online, rather than by mail. Please send your name, current mailing address and the email account to which you'd like the newsletter sent to info@unionsquarecafe.com.