

FRESH FROM MARKET TO MENU AT SYCAMORE

Trout fillets from Troutdale Farm. Pork loin from Patchwork Family Farms. Goat cheese from Goatsbeard Farm. Locally grown shiitake mushrooms. Fresh produce from The Root Cellar.

These and other ingredients from local farmers and purveyors are the heart of Sycamore's menu, which changes with the seasons and even day to day with unique selections that make the most of the fresh foods at hand.

"If I have the choice, I support local producers and independent farmers," says chef Mike Odette, one of Sycamore's four owners and founders. "It's part of our overall strategy."

Odette and his wife, Amy Barrett, and partners Jill and Sanford Speake all worked as either chef or server or manager at several Columbia restaurants before starting their own in mid-2005. They put a lot of thought into how to set Sycamore apart in a town full of wonderful places to eat.

Naming Sycamore for a regional tree was symbolic of both their seasonal menu and the roots they have in downtown Columbia, Barrett says. Renovating the space with an open kitchen in the back lets diners walk right up if they wish and lets Odette "be part of what's going on" with a clear view of people coming in the door and gathering at the bar.

With windows wrapping around the corner of Eighth and Broadway, sunlight warms the brick-colored walls by day, and streetlights add to the evening ambience. Black chairs that surround the white tablecloths echo the black of the original ornate plaster ceiling; personable servers tread restored hexagon floor tiles and hardwood floors as classic jazz fills the air.

"Our customers come for the food and the whole experience," Odette says. The Speakes manage the floor, where customers of all ages and walks of life, often including owners of other restaurants, are welcomed like old friends. Barrett, with daughter Elizabeth in arms, handles the books and marketing.

While reservations are not required, Sycamore does take them and can accommodate parties of all sizes. The restaurant has become home to the exclusive annual dinner with the directors of the True/False Film Festival and offers private parties held among the artwork in nearby PS:Gallery in any season.



Top: The Sycamore family: Sanford and Jill Speake; chef Mike Odette with daughter Elizabeth and wife Amy Barrett.

Bottom: The high/low contrast of Mike Odette's Lobster Pot Pie: "A humble dish made with a luxury ingredient." Find the recipe online at MissouriLife.com under Missouri Life Online Extras. For more great Columbia restaurants, visit www.visitcolumbiamo.com.

SYCAMORE

800 E. Broadway
Columbia, MO 65201

573-874-8090 • www.sycamorerestaurant.com
Dinner 5 PM to 10 PM Monday-Saturday
Lunch 11 AM to 2 PM Monday-Friday