



# In the Chef's Corner

## Elk River Inn and Restaurant

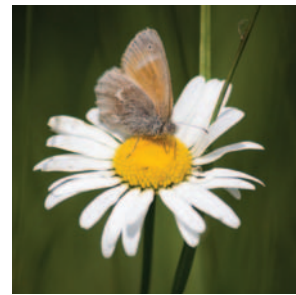
**THE ELK RIVER** Inn and Restaurant, located in the town of Slatyfork near Snowshoe Mountain Resort, had a simple start with owner Gil Willis offering rooms for skiers in 1980. Gil had moved to his family-owned farm from the Washington, D.C. area two years earlier, caught the skiing bug and never looked back. His future wife, Mary, was also a skier and had visited the area before they were married in 1984.

The couple offered breakfast to guests first, later adding weekend dining. It was a natural progression for them to build a five-room inn and 50-seat restaurant in 1988. Mary, a primarily self-taught chef who came from a large family that always loved to sample her cooking, tries to combine her passions of traveling and cooking by participating in cooking classes in as many places around the world as she can. Mary uses what she learns while creating delicious breakfast dishes for the guests at the inn.

As the Elk River Inn grew, the time came for the owners to hire a full-time chef. Gil and Mary were blessed to find Chef David Carte, a native West Virginian who was raised near the New River and spent many of his childhood summers along

the Greenbrier River in Pocahontas County. Carte's first job at age 15 was in his family's restaurant, The Burger Carte, in Smithers. After working two seasons at the Red Fox Restaurant at Snowshoe Mountain Resort, he decided to enroll in culinary school and completed his studies in culinary arts and nutrition at Johnson & Wales University in Rhode Island. After working in top restaurants in Charlotte, NC, for several years, Carte returned to the mountains of his beloved home state to share his talent and enthusiasm for great food with visitors and fellow Mountaineers. Carte describes the menu he has created at Elk River as "new American cuisine meets Appalachia." His classic training serves as a base for using the local ingredients he loves to work with, such as the West Virginia rainbow trout, and blending traditional recipes with 21st century trends and techniques.

Joining Carte and Gil and Mary's sons, Thurston and Gus, at the inn and restaurant are past and present Elk River staff that have played an integral part in helping Gil and Mary create a unique destination for outdoor lovers on a 150-acre former mountain homestead that is located on the headwaters of the Elk River.



Chef David Carte





## Crab Stuffed West Virginia Rainbow Trout

*drizzled with Old Bay-Meyer Lemon Buerre Blanc*

1 whole trout, head on

Preheat the grill to at least 450°. Place the whole fish on the grill, usually about two minutes on each side. Continue cooking in a 450° oven for seven minutes or on a higher rack on the grill. Let the trout cool, then filet by removing the head and making a one-half inch cut down the mid-line. Get hold of the bone at the tail and pull gently from tail-side toward the head.

### Crab Filling

2 oz. lump blue crabmeat  
(preferably Eastern Shore)  
1 oz. mayonnaise  
1 whole egg  
1 tsp Old Bay seasoning  
1 oz. crushed saltines  
1 tsp Dijon mustard  
1 tsp worcestershire

Combine the mayonnaise, Old Bay, Dijon mustard, worcestershire and one egg. Fold in the crab and saltines with a rubber spatula. When the trout has been filleted, fill the trout with the crab filling and bake for five minutes.

### Buerre Blanc

1 lemon cut in half  
4 oz. white wine  
1 tbsp shallots, peeled and diced  
1 tsp whole black peppercorns  
½ tsp paprika  
½ tsp Old Bay seasoning  
4 oz. heavy cream  
4 oz. butter

Combine all of the Buerre Blanc ingredients in a heavy bottom saucepan except for the heavy cream and butter and simmer at medium-high heat until two ounces of liquid remain. Add the cream and reduce by half. Whisk in the butter and strain.





# Strawberry Rhubarb Crisp

## For the Filling

- 3 cups rhubarb stalks, sliced one-half inch thick
- 1¼ cups sugar
- 3 cups strawberries, hulled and quartered
- 2 tbsp tapioca
- 2 tsp fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract

Preheat the oven to 375°. In a bowl, toss the rhubarb with three-fourths of a cup of the sugar and let stand for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. In another bowl, toss the strawberries with the remaining one-half cup of sugar and let stand for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the rhubarb to the strawberries and discard any rhubarb juice. Add the tapioca, lemon juice and vanilla to the fruit and stir well. Transfer the mixture to a 9-by-13-inch glass baking dish.

## For the Topping

- 4 oz. unsalted butter, softened
- 1½ cups light brown sugar
- 1½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1¼ cups quick-cooking rolled oats
- ¾ tsp salt

Combine all of the topping ingredients in a medium bowl. Using a pastry blender or your fingers, mix the ingredients together until large crumbs form. Sprinkle the topping evenly over the filling and bake for 30 minutes. Reduce the oven temperature to 325° and continue baking for 30 minutes until the fruit filling is bubbling and the topping is nicely browned. Let the crisp rest for 10 to 20 minutes before serving warm with vanilla ice cream.



# Grilled Filet Mignon

*with Crater Lake Smoky Blue Cheese and Cherry Wood Balsamic Reduction*

- 8 oz. center cut beef filet
- ¼ lb. fingerling potatoes
- 2 lbs. Vidalia onions, julienned
- 1 oz. Crater Lake smoked blue cheese
- ½ tsp fresh thyme, chopped
- ½ tsp fresh oregano, chopped
- ½ tsp flat leaf parsley, chopped
- ¼ lb. asparagus
- 1 tbsp butter

Preheat the oven to 350° and heat the grill to high. Sauté the onions over medium-high heat in olive oil, salt and pepper for one hour, stirring every 10 minutes, and then set aside.

Cover the potatoes, whole, and cook in the oven for one hour or until fork tender. Let them cool and then slice lengthwise. Blanch the asparagus in boiling water for 20 seconds and immediately cool in ice water. Reduce the balsamic vinegar over medium heat until it reaches a sugary consistency.

Season the beef with salt and pepper and grill on both sides for approximately eight minutes for medium-rare. Let the beef rest for three minutes before serving. Place the blue cheese on the filet.

Sauté the fingerlings in one tablespoon of butter over high heat with the caramelized onions, chopped herbs and salt and pepper. Grill the asparagus and season. ■

*Photography by Tracy Toler*