

## There's Something About Carrie

This month, Naha chef and co-owner Carrie Nahabedian becomes the first female inductee into the Chicago Chefs Hall of Fame, joining the ranks of culinary celebs like Charlie Trotter, Rick Bayless and Jimmy Bannos. After 10 years on top, she shares how it all began. —*Michael Nagrant*

**What's Naha's secret?** We're like a pride of lions. If somebody is a weak link, we'll strengthen them. But it's like a herniated disc. If you can't be fixed, you gotta go.

**You once said if you could cook for anyone living or dead, it would be Babe Ruth. Why?** He ate and drank

and partied like a fiend, then got up and hit 'em out of the ballpark. I love an individual who is happy to be alive.

**You worked with a young Trotter and Suzy Crofton. Did you sense how successful you'd all be?** Suzy came in looking for a job and I asked if she had a resume. She rips out this piece of legal paper written front and back with every dessert she knew how to make. Charlie had incredible hands, but he was a mess on the floor. He didn't know how to cut bread for the guests, so we brought him in to the kitchen. Did we know where we were going? No, but you could sense something in the air. 500 N. Clark St., 312.321.6242, naha-chicago.com.

Q & A



Naha's entrance.  
Inset: Chef Carrie Nahabedian.

## NOSH NEWS

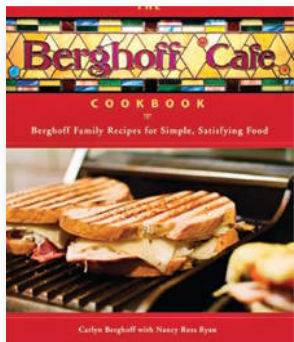
**ON THE BOOKS** In stores this month: *The Berghoff Café Cookbook*, an album of classic Berghoff recipes with avant-garde twists; and *The Bryant Family Vineyard Cookbook*, a national collection featuring local love from Gale Gand, Charlie Trotter and Rick Tramonto.

**JAM SESSION** At Jam, a new, cash-only Ukrainian Village brunch spot from Chickpea's Jerry Suqi, chef Jeffrey Mauro (Trotter's, North Pond) rises and shines with dishes like braised pork cheeks with scrambled eggs, and house-made jams. 937 N. Damen Ave., 773.489.0302, jamrestaurant.com.

**TOP CHEFS** Rick Bayless, Stephanie Izard and others hit Millennium Park for Chicago Gourmet, two satiating days of seminars, sips and samples. Sept. 26-27. \$150-\$250. 201 E. Randolph St., chicagogourmet.org.

**HOG WILD** Pig out on Sunday nights at Sepia with chef Andrew Zimmerman's spin on porchetta: pork loin wrapped in pork belly. 123 N. Jefferson St., 312.441.1920, sepiachicago.com.

**INN-TICING** Room at the inn? You better hope so at the new Cedar Hotel, where Manor owners have taken over the Melvin B's and Cactus spaces with cushy leather barstools and upscale pub grub. 1112 N. State St., 312.944.1112. —*L.S.*



The Berghoff Café Cookbook, available at major bookstores or theberghoff.com



CLUB SCENE New Jerry Kleiner restaurant 33 Club.

## Old Town, New Tricks

With two of fall's top new restaurants holding court near North Avenue and Wells Street, it may be time for Old Town to reconsider its name. Next to boutique Nicole Miller you'll now find **33 Club**, a white-tablecloth dining room inspired by the private clubs that dotted Europe in the 1930s, complete with a sweeping grand staircase, 20-foot-high mahogany ceilings and a bevy of bright artwork, some from owner and über-restaurateur Jerry Kleiner's (Carnivale, Red Light, Marche) personal collection. Despite the lofty décor, Kleiner has kept 33's prices down to earth, including a \$26 lobster-stuffed chicken and \$14 grilled baby lamb chops from former Avenue M chef Daniel Kelly's Midwestern-focused American menu. (For the record: The bacon-studded popcorn on the \$3 bar snack menu is well worth the inevitable greasy fingers.) On North Avenue look for **Old Town Social**, a 10,800-square-foot space with hand-blown glass fixtures, an ebonized black marble bar, a vintage shoe shine station and house-made charcuterie, all from nightlife vets Chris Dexter (Stone Lotus, Elm Street Liquors) and Chris Freeman (Kirkwood, WestEnd). Glam-meets-grit design aside—credit designer Brian Willette for that—the duo wants the vibe at OTS, a former audio repair shop/warehouse, to be unpretentious and packed with a neighborhood crowd. “We’re trying to avoid the hyperbole and hype that goes into a new place,” says Dexter. Fair enough—but with its seasonal cocktails, hard-to-find Belgian beers and dishes like crispy duck wings and cornmeal-bacon waffles from Jared Van Camp, a former Blackbird sous chef, we think it may be hard to keep the fervor in check. *33 Club*, 1419 N. Wells St., 312.664.1419; *Old Town Social*, 455 W. North Ave., 312.266.2277. —*L.S.* ■