

ANDREW HARNIK/EXAMINER  
 Chef and owner of Eola,  
 Daniel Singhofen.



## Fresh plus creative to reach delicious

By Alexandra Greeley  
*Special to The Examiner*

If you check out Daniel Singhofen's Facebook page, you'll find plenty there that tells you who and what he is: a color shot of a coddled farm egg with smoked steelhead roe, braised black truffle, potato and assorted greens as a garnish plus a list of favorites that includes bacon and Sriracha sauce, a Thai condiment. Since young Singhofen is a foodaholic, that should not surprise friends, family and friends-to-be. He is, after all, the chef and owner of a newly revamped and opened restaurant on 20th Street in Dupont Circle called Eola.

As it turns out, native Floridian Singhofen has been a dedicated foodie since about the age of 3, when, he said, he first started scrambling his own eggs for breakfast. In his early teens, he already was hired on at a friend's restaurant to make sandwiches. By the time he was in college, he was working in kitchens as a cook.

But even before he graduated, he said, he paused one day to ask himself what he really, really wanted to do with his life.

"What am I going to do with a literary degree?" he said. "I left college even before I graduated and went to the Culinary Institute of America in New York. I have always loved cooking."

While there, he spent his externship at Gigi Trattoria in the Hudson Valley, and gives it due credit for really, really teaching him to cook and giving him an appreciation for local ingredients and seasonal eating.

"I went to school in the morning and to the restaurant where I worked for the rest of the day," he said. "It was all passion-driven. The chef and sous chef really taught me to cook."

After graduation, Singhofen returned to Florida, where he worked in the kitchens of the Ritz-Carlton in Orlando, and later at the K Restaurant Wine Bar. Then in a career move that benefited himself and his family, Singhofen chose to move to D.C., where he opened his fledgling enterprise in the

### What is your comfort food?

Fried chicken and arugula salad. I am not into desserts, but a good apple or pumpkin pie is real comfort food.

### What are your kitchen essentials?

A good set of knives, pans and a decent blender. Many types of salt, pepper and whatever's in season.

### What is your favorite place?

In the Ritz-Carlton in Naples, Fla.

It's a flat area, with a beach and fishing. It's so peaceful and quiet. I would also like to travel to South America. I've been to Venezuela.

### What's in your fridge?

Leftover chicken and dumplings.

### What has been your luckiest moment?

Opening this restaurant. This is the luckiest I have ever been and to create it according to my own whim.

### IF YOU GO

**EOLA**  
 2020 P St. NW  
 202-466-4441  
**Hours:** 5:30 to 10:30 p.m.  
 Tuesday to Saturday

fall of 2009.

Where does all this food passion arise? Not, he said, from his family, who have never been much into cooking. But, he said, "I do have fond memories of food while I was growing up.

"Food was always present [at gatherings]," he said. "My mom really was a great cook."

As it turns out, the restaurant has become a family affair: His parents are his partners.

"My family is my backing," he said. "So they love it. We are a close-knit family."

Though they may be his backing, Singhofen said, the restaurant and its menu are true expressions of his own personality. "My style is modern American, and I see all that I was taught in the past," he said. "It's simple, but slightly complex. I enjoy playing with off cuts of meat — jowls, tongue, pig's head — and make them to become edible. We like to challenge our patrons."

Though he has no signature dish, he does take traditional recipes and spins them his way. For example, consider how he treats the traditional Italian custard dessert, panna cotta.

### FROM THE CHEF'S KITCHEN Arugula salad

Serves 1

*To this simple spring salad, the chef says, you can add your favorite seasonal ingredients.*

1 lemon wedge  
 1 Tbsp. high-quality olive oil  
 Salt to taste, preferably Fleur de Sel brand  
 1 large handful of arugula  
 Freshly grated Parmesan cheese to taste

Squeeze the juice from the lemon wedge and whip together the juice with the olive oil in a bowl until the two liquids are emulsified. Add salt to taste to the liquid. To ensure taste, use a high-quality salt. Fleur de Sel is recommended for its top flavor and quality as one of the best sea salts available. Fold the arugula into the mixture, coating the arugula. Plate the salad. Shave the Parmesan over the salad as a garnish to your taste.

"I am in love with a savory panna cotta," he said.

In his nimble hands, Singhofen converts a sweet to a savory one composed of parsnips, blue foot mushrooms, pistachio, oil, radish and leaves, fleur de sel salt and espellette pepper. Interpretive cooking: Singhofen's formula for Eola.

## The Vine Guy

# Wines for a company town

By Scott Greenberg  
*Special to The Examiner*

OK, enough already. I get it. Everyone wants recommendations for good wines at a reasonable price. You can stop writing now.

I guess I have forgotten who my audience is (not really, but more on that later). During the last month or so, I have written about several wine themes in which the wines have ranged — key word, ranged — in price from \$15 a bottle all the way up to \$50. And many of you have let me know you want me to write a column about wines that are affordable.

Most of the e-mails I have received lately are from hard-working — and judging from the time the e-mails are sent — early-rising federal employees who have reminded me that the government employs a lot of people who make a decent, but not "Wall Street," living. Ann from Arlington summed it up by calling this "a company town."

The point was most recently — and unexpectedly — driven home when I called my attorney (and wine mentor) to discuss a legal matter. As usual, his wonderful assistant, Mencie, answered the phone in her polite, singsong voice, but as soon as she discovered it was yours truly on the other end of the line, her demeanor quickly changed.

"I have a bone to pick with you, Mr. Greenberg," she said. "I listen to you on the radio. I read your columns. I am a fan, but your recommendations are too expensive. You think everyone works on billable hours? What about me? Why don't you recommend a nice bottle of wine that I can buy and not worry about how I am going to retire?"

Since I had never heard Mencie howl, I suppose I should listen.

Now, in my meager defense, I do try to include a range of prices when I review wines from a region or winery. But yes, sometimes the recommendations do creep up the price scale a tad. The good news is that there are plenty of good — and even a few very good — wines that won't break the \$15 barrier and offer affordable enjoyment, even on a limited budget.

So, for those who have politely reminded me that this "company town" needs a good deal every now and again, I have dug through an assortment of tasty wines that retail below \$15. And Mencie, please tell your boss to bring in a bottle of wine

for you. I am sure that somehow, it will end up on my tab. Retail prices are approximate.

### ■ 2007 R.H. Phillips Toasted Head Chardonnay, California (\$12)

I don't normally think of California when I think of value-oriented chardonnay, but this one hits all the right notes. The palate expresses bright and tangy tangerine, nectarine and pear fruit on a medium-bodied frame. The abundant acidity provides a crisp and refreshing finish where just a hint of papaya glides in.

### ■ 2008 Willm Gewurztraminer, Alsace, France (\$12)

I really like Gewurztraminer for its wonderful versatility. This inexpensive French gem is sure to make a hard day a little easier when you get home and enjoy the comforting bouquet of lychee and honeysuckle and the lovely flavors of apricot, green melon and pineapple. The medium body has plenty of crisp acidity to keep it all in check, and the hint of honey on the bright finish adds just the right touch of sweetness.

### ■ 2006 Kilikanoon "The Lackey" Shiraz, Claire Valley, Australia (\$14)

Australia was once known as the land of wine values, but as demand crept up, so did the prices. But this massive fruit bomb is still a great value from the land down under. It features a concentrated nose of dark plum and black pepper, leading to flavors of ripe cherry, blueberry and plum on the expansive palate. Notes of dark chocolate and blueberry jam meld beautifully with hints of black pepper on the lengthy finish.

■ 2007 Bodega Alto 3 Malbec, Catamarca, Argentina (\$15)

There are a lot of great values coming out of South America. Argentina is home to this bold and rustic malbec, which offers loads of earthy dark fruit, including flavors of black cherry and dark plum. A touch of green pepper and notes of vanilla and cocoa shine through on the pleasant finish.

### ■ 2006 Cousino Macul Cabernet Sauvignon — Antiguas Reservas, Maipo, Chile (\$14)

Another gem from South America — this one from Chile — is not only affordable, it's collectable as well since it can be cellared and enjoyed for up to 20 years. If you drink it today, you will be rewarded with scents of black fruit and cigar box on the nose and flavors of black cherry, cassia, mint and chocolate. Notes of cedar and cherry liqueur play off of the soft tannins that provide a delightful finish.

