

Saying Goodbye to One of the Good Ones

My friend for more than 20 years. My editor. Just one of the good guys. And a one-of-a-kind force in the Baltimore/DC hospitality industry. Michael Birchenall. One day, my friend and fellow *Foodservice Monthly* contributor, Linda Roth called and asked if I wanted to write a restaurant column in her friend's magazine called *Restaurant Digest*. At the time, I was an event producer and, as Michael used to say, I knew everybody in B-more. So they asked if I'd write a column about the restaurant scene in and around B-more. When Michael left *Restaurant Digest* and started *Foodservice Monthly*, I followed him. When trying to come up with a name for the column, and I suggested Whining & Dining, he wasn't sure because he never liked people to write anything negative. After reading a few of my columns, he said, "Yeah, it kinda fits you." Things will never be the same. But we'll carry on in your name. Rest in peace.

Oh My Darling Clementine!

It's ba-ck. One of my all time fave restaurants, Clementine on Harford Road in the Hamilton neighborhood, closed a year ago, so owners Winston Blick and his wife Cristin Dadant could focus on their catering business and spend more time with their young son. But — there was a huge void-not only for them but the community and regular customers. So they decided to re-open — YES! Clementine focuses on honest, fresh food with an ever-changing menu, using local products whenever possible. Right now, they're open Wednesday through Saturday for dinner (the bar is open til midnight) and brunch is coming soon. One especially cool



thing is that they serve both large and small portions of the menu items so you can do your own thing or share a bunch of plates. They're well known for their house-made charcuterie, great desserts, regional cuisine and fan favorites like pot pie and meatloaf. Gotta say-they have THE best roast chicken I've ever had. Except for Mom Roms. *ClementineBaltimore.com*

Congrats

The award-winning Iron Bridge Wine Company in Columbia. Full Service Restaurant Magazine named award-winning Iron Bridge Wine Company's Bar Manager Stephen Wecker as one of the "40 Under 40 Rising Stars in the Hospitality Industry". Wecker took over the bar program and added craft beers and innovative cocktails to a bar program that relied almost exclusively on wine sales. They were also listed as one of the "Ten places to go in America for Amazing Food and Drinks" by USA TODAY and Wine Enthusiast named them "One of the Best New Restaurants in The United States" in their first year of operation. Executive Chef, Tyler Skinner has elevated the dining experience by introducing Asian influences to their newly launched winter menu. *IronBridgeWines.com*.

This one's gonna be great! Tom Looney, Annmarie Langton and Ed Scherer-the people that brought you the Gypsy Queen Food Truck and owners of the wildly popular but now defunct-Helen's Garden (closed in 2010 after 15 years in O'Donnell Square in Canton) are opening a brick and mortar at 3515 Clipper Mill Road in a formerly working garage. Construction is moving slowly until they get their liquor license. The 1800 square foot



Stephen Wecker, bar manager, Iron Bridge Wine Company

spot will be a meeting of the minds-offering fave dishes from Helen's as well as Gypsy Queen. They're looking to hire 10 employees who will be trained to work both the food trucks and the restaurant. And they'll have a third truck permanently parked outside for guests seated on the outdoor patio, which will seat 85. More to come...

Cool New Promo

Da Mimmo in Little Italy is offering a unique and exclusive dining experience for two. You and your guests will be escorted to a table adorned with a dozen long stem red roses and petals where your server will open a bottles of champagne

and wine for you and ask you only one question for the entire evening: Do you wish to eat from the land or from the sea? What follows is a seven-course, fine Italian meal designed by their Executive Chef, which concludes with their signature homemade limoncello and you can take the roses home. The cost is just \$250 including tax and tip. And, they only take one reservation an evening! *DaMimmo.com*.

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