



# Fresh FOR Spring



Event and Food Stylist Jamie Keating, CEC is well-known in Columbus, Georgia for his exquisite cuisine and amazing events. He is the owner and chef of the premier catering company, Jamie Keating Culinary, Inc. that manages The RiverMill Event Centre.

*Spring is the season for lighter fare, and treats from the garden. It is time to snack on foods straight from the earth, such as radishes and raw peas - where the source of the most nutritional value of an ingredient comes from, prior to storing and washing.*

Spring is the best time to shop at local food stands or farmers markets due to price and fresh produce. You may want to stock up on those ingredients that preserve well. Drying spring herbs and freezing seasonal berries for later use will come in handy!

I've never been a fan of the slogan "Farm to Table". I do believe in resourcing locally harvested ingredients and seeking out the best and most reliable sources.

I "source" as local as possible and we are very fortunate to have two wonderful farms that operate with the same commitment to personal attention/quality/consistency/flavor as EPIC Restaurant.

"Pope's Farms" specializes in the art of tomato production. Beginning this spring, they will expand their offerings to include a variety of onions, herbs, melons, heirloom tomatoes and more. Mr. Neal Pope has implemented the technology and resources for producing the same quality of produce that you would find 500 miles south of Columbus. The benefit of being able to create this "off peak environment" all year long, supplies us with locally grown tomatoes into the month of December!

Lisa Armstrong from Little Bit Farms (Whitesville, Georgia) and I have worked together to devise a master plan over the next three seasons. Little Bit farms supplies year around produce to many local restaurants, as well as to the public during Market Days in Uptown Columbus. We recently asked both farms to review our past purchases from both of my locations in hopes that they will be able to expand and assist us with providing the most nutritional, savory and freshest produce in the area!

## Fresh Produce

What we expect to see from the spring harvest of 2016:

*Herbs:* chives, dill, mint, parsley and cilantro

*Salad Greens:* baby lettuces, spinach, pea tendrils, micro greens and arugula

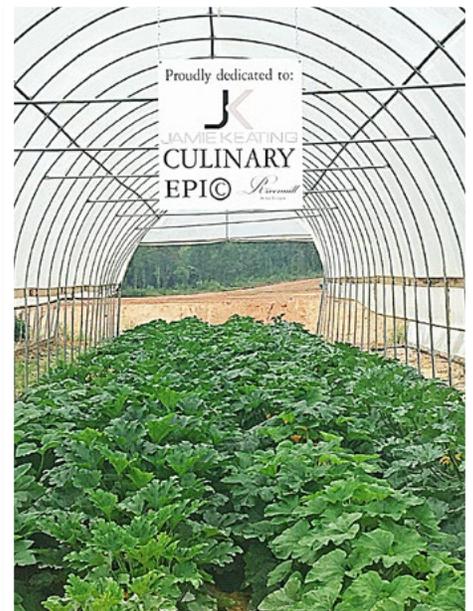
*Cooking Greens:* collards, kale and beets

*Fruits:* peaches, blueberries, raspberries, blackberries, rhubarb, tomatoes, strawberries and melons

*Garden Vegetables:* peas, asparagus, sugar snap peas, potatoes, radishes, fennel and kohlrabi

Arugula is one of my favorite salad greens. I love its fresh, almost peppery flavor in everything from lunch salads to pasta dishes. Rhubarb, a favorite of my wife, isn't technically a fruit, but is the first dessert-worthy ingredient to appear in the spring. It can be prepared so many ways: roasted, stewed, baked, etc.

And let's not forget that a lot of these items can be used in spring cocktails, shrubs, or mojitos. One of our EPIC cocktails, "A Wrinkle in Time", is a wonderful example of how we utilize fresh herbs (Thyme for time).



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## *Tomato Sorbet*

### *Ingredients*

2 tsp. olive oil, 1 ½ each shallots minced, 2 each garlic gloves minced, 1 pinch red pepper flakes, 1 lb. ripe tomatoes cored and diced, 2 each lemons zested and juiced, 2 each oranges zested and juiced, 1 cup sugar, 1 cup orange juice, 1/4 cup pineapple juice, 1 each cinnamon stick, TT salt and pepper, 1 dash Tabasco

### *Method*

1. In a medium saucepan heat oil. Add the shallots, garlic, red pepper and sauté until translucent. Add the remaining ingredients and bring to a simmer over medium heat. 2. Cook until all tomatoes are broken down. Taste and adjust salt and sweetness to desired taste. Remove from heat and let cool. 3. After cooling remove cinnamon stick and blend the contents until smooth. Strain through a fine mess strainer, and reserve. 4. Freeze mixture in an ice cream machine and reserve for service.



## *Tomato Jam*

### *Ingredients*

1 lb. ripe tomatoes (peeled and diced), 1 lb. sugar, 1 each shallot minced, 1 glove garlic minced, 2 tsp. olive oil, 1/8 tsp. red pepper flakes, 2 each lemons, 1 each cinnamon stick, 2 each gloves

### *Method*

1. Bring a pot of water up to a boil. Have an ice bath ready. Remove core from tomatoes and put a small x cut on the top. Blanch the tomatoes for twenty seconds. Remove from boiling water and put into ice bath to chill. Remove peels from tomatoes and dice tomatoes. 2. Zest the lemons with a peeler. Then roll the lemons on a cutting board to help loosen juices. Cut lemon in half and juice. Reserve both for recipe. 3. Take medium saucepot and heat on medium high heat when hot add olive oil. Add shallots, garlic, red pepper flakes. Sweat these items until golden. 4. Add tomatoes, sugar, lemon zest and juice, cinnamon stick, gloves. Bring to a boil on medium high heat. Stirring occasionally cook the mixture down until it is a nappé consistency. 5. Remove from heat and let cool. After cooling refrigerate or use. Remove cinnamon stick and gloves before service.

### *Wine Suggestion*

## *St. Germain Liqueur*

St. Germain is a French liqueur, created in 2007, and launched by Coopers Spirit Co. The company was later sold off to Bacardi Limited in 2013. The French liqueur is made from elderflower, picked from the French Alps. Elderflower is a tiny white, starry flower that blooms in the spring and summer. St. Germain perfectly preserves the freshness from the bloom for its flavor. When you open the bottle, your senses are invited to a fragrant and flavorful scent that brings this liqueur to life. Elderflower is used in many foods and drinks in Europe, but is now gaining popularity here within its liqueur form. The bottles are no exception to the uniqueness, as each one is numbered, in reference to when the flowers were picked for that specific batch. *Special thanks to Brad Bush, Georgia Crown Distributing Co.*

