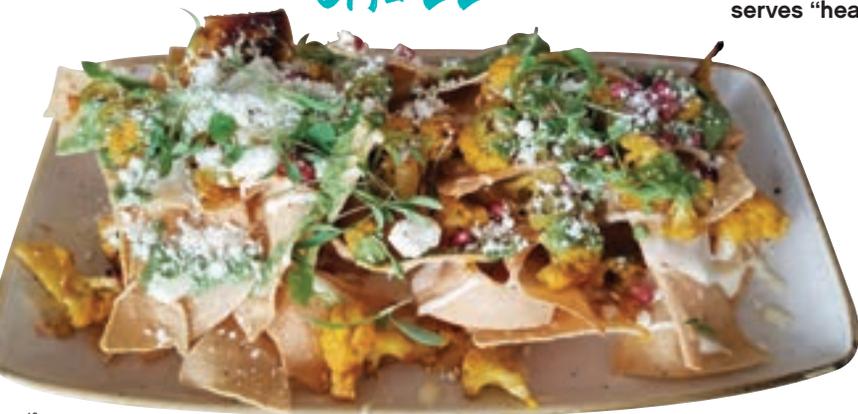


Helmed by *Top Chef* alum Spike Mendelsohn, Vim & Victor serves “healthy-ish” dishes like cauliflower nachos.



A NOVA FAVORITE GETS A SPIFFY NEW LOOK WHILE A CELEB CHEF SERVES “HEALTHY-ISH” FARE AT A MASSIVE FITNESS COMPLEX

New Year, New Flavors

by Kelly Magyarics

When it debuted a decade ago, Trummer’s on Main in the charming town of Clifton was a welcome addition to northern Virginia’s culinary scene. Last year, the restaurant underwent a month-long overhaul that transformed its menu and space from buttoned-up to casual bistrot. Not to say it was ever stuffy—that would have been impossible under the watchful eye of affable husband-and-wife team Stefan and Victoria Trummer. But as I learned during a recent visit, Trummer’s is now decidedly more laid-back and even more welcoming.

The focal point post-renovation is the French rotisserie oven, which chef John Kropf uses daily to spit-roast prime rib and chicken; other main dishes, including Rohan duck and porchetta, get a featured spin in the oven once a week. Stefan nods to his Austrian roots with speck, apples, and manchego cheese; pork schnitzel with browned butter, lingonberry, and lemon; and Sachertorte for dessert. The wine list follows suit with offerings like Grüner Veltliner and Zweigelt made in Kamptal and a Pinot Noir rosé from Burgenland. Sommelier Nicole Bernard, who recently did an extensive wine-tasting tour in Austria, oversees the restaurant’s 4,000-plus-bottle cellar, curating one of the largest collections of Austrian wine on the East Coast.

Stefan also has new cocktails up his sleeve, as he proved when he served us several experiments that will be on the menu soon, including a crème-brûlée riff on a Daiquiri. But longtime

PHOTO: JENNIFER CHASE



At the newly renovated Trummer’s in Clifton, VA, chef John Kropf uses this French rotisserie oven to spit-roast prime rib, chicken, and a rotating series of featured dishes.

Trummer’s fans should be happy to see two beloved libations remain: The Titanic mixes grape vodka with muddled grapes over a Champagne-sorbet iceberg, while the heady Sage tops Plymouth Gin, elderflower liqueur, lime,

and sage with bubbly. Cheers to another decade of some of the DMV’s most impressive dining, 45 minutes outside of the District.

Also in Virginia, Vim & Victor is the dining concept at The St. James, a 450,000-square-foot fitness complex in Springfield. Owner and *Top Chef* alum Spike Mendelsohn cheekily describes it as a “healthy-ish restaurant,” with fresh-pressed juices, bowls, smoothies, and salads joined by low-ABV cocktails. The team recently hosted a media brunch featuring some of Mendelsohn’s greatest hits, so my fellow keto-aspiring friend and I threw our aversion to carbs out the window to try the cauliflower nachos: corn tortillas topped with roasted florets, cheese sauce, radishes, pickled chiles, pomegranate, and a drizzle of crema cilantro. Another favorite—mussels steamed with green curry, coconut milk, lemongrass, and makrut lime—was the most aromatic and flavorful bowl of bivalves

I’ve ever had. Among the drink selections, meanwhile, is a gin, cucumber, and mint libation reminiscent of the infused water sipped by spa patrons. Whatever Mendelsohn means by “healthy-ish,” I’m game. ■■

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