

EAT

Au revoir, Rover's

MADISON VALLEY | After 25 years, Rover's, the French-inspired tour de force considered by some critics to be the best fine dining in town, will close its doors at the end of April. Dapper owner Thierry Rautureau, known as "The Chef in the Hat" for his trademark fedora and tableside banter with guests, is moving on to other projects, though Luc, his French bistro nearby, will remain open. Make reservations ASAP for a last chance at signature dishes like caviar-topped scrambled eggs served in an elegant eggshell cup, or the fabulously indulgent eight-course grand degustation. \$\$\$\$; 2808 E. Madison St.; thechefinthehat.com

don't miss!

From Sicily to table

FREMONT | *Iron Chef* winner Maria Hines has added another organic restaurant, **Agrodolce**, to her mini empire (joining Tilth and the Golden Beetle), this time mixing her love of Northwest ingredients with the flavors of Southern Italy. Inside the small trattoria, it's DIY meets Sicilian grandma: Hines mills her own flour for pastas like thick cavatelli, served with a duck and wild mushroom marsala sauce, and makes sunshine yellow limoncello—also used in a lemony sorbetto—in-house. \$\$; 709 N. 35th St.; agrodolcerestaurant.com

B.C.'s finest export

SOUTH LAKE UNION | Dinner at Vij's, the Vancouver, B.C., restaurant famous for its contemporary Indian fare, no longer requires a passport. Vikram Vij's wife, Meeru Dhalwala, opened a long-awaited sister restaurant, **Shanik**, in Seattle last winter, transplanting hallmarks like first-come, first-served tables and complimentary, wait-easing cups of chai to Lake Union's south shore. Vegetarians and meat lovers alike can eat well from the menu, which ranges from brussels sprouts with cashews and paneer to short ribs in coriander and cardamom curry. \$\$\$; 500 Terry Ave. N.; shanikrestaurant.com >40F

40D Sunset April 2013



MEET

Your new flavor source

Justin Marx has built a hub for the city's savvy, food-obsessed masses.

WHAT DO YOU GET when a continent-hopping, tech-loving food geek opens a grocery? **Marx Foods**, Justin Marx's new specialty-foods shop in lower Queen Anne.

After 16 years of sourcing rare ingredients for chefs of top restaurants, Marx is bringing his adventurous palate and taste for trends to Seattle's home cooks. Inside the small store, exotic ingredients like hibiscus vinegar, dill pollen, and maple cream sit neatly on cherry shelves, across from a glass case filled with larded Mangalitsa bacon and other boutique meats. Not sure what to do with that kangaroo steak? QR codes throughout the store connect shoppers to Marx's vast online resources, including video introductions to unusual ingredients like geoduck clams and *fregola sarda* (an Italian cousin), and recipes for how to use them at home. 144 Western Ave.; marxfoods.com

What are the hot food trends reflected on your shelves right now?

Fermented foods are getting lots of attention. The sauerkraut from Midori Farms in Port Townsend is impeccable; Marko Colby and Hanako Myers grow the cabbage and make the kraut right on their farm. Edible flowers are big too. Borage blossoms, elderflowers, pansies—they're often used

as a garnish, but are breaking out of that pigeonhole. You can make fantastic sorbets and simple syrups with them. Also, kangaroo meat from Australia is pretty popular. It's like beef, but smokier.

What's the oddest item you stock?

Sichuan buttons, those herbal little flowers that feel like electricity in your mouth (it's a tingling sensation, like bubbles from soda).

How does something score a spot on your shelves?

It must be delicious, of course. But it must also be new to us and then pass muster—I have a tasting panel that includes chefs, sommeliers, and dedicated home cooks. I bother to bring back 5 percent of the products that I find, and the tasting panel approves only 20 percent of those.

So the tasting panel votes on every one?

Everything but Rachel's Ginger Beer, made here in Seattle. I literally stock it for me—I drink a bottle a day.

You carry 24 types of whole dried chiles—what's an easy way to cook with them?

I use them as everyday seasoning. I just rip a little piece of chile—like the mild, fruity *aji panca*—and drop it into whatever I'm cooking, like stock or a stir-fry. —REBEKAH DENN