

# FOODIE'S CORNER

by Simonette Berry

Do you nibble on lemon ice or crave death by chocolate? On long days at the office, delectable specters like tiramisu and flourless chocolate cake with raspberry reduction whisper over my shoulder. These devilish desserts make a convincing case for the dark side, where it's rich and sweet and you never dream of counting calories. Yet the breathless heat of a June afternoon often shifts my dessert fantasies to lighter fare, where dripping cones of honeyed gelato beckon from the white clouds of heavenly creameries, adorned with little lemon twist halos. Even if you let the Catholic Guilt Fairy rule your divine indulgences, the good news is that taste is never a sacrifice here in Louisiana.

## divine desserts for saints and sinners



### LATTE E MIELE

Did you know that gelato, arguably the most delectable version of ice cream in the world, is on the lower end of the calorie spectrum? Gelato is denser yet less fattening than traditional ice cream, and its slightly warmer temperature makes it taste like fluffy, silken cream if done right. I've had swoon-worthy authentic gelato in Italy, but stateside, none sent me to the moon until I tasted Latte e Miele gelato in Baton Rouge. Charismatic owner Corrado DiMartino's nephew, Simone Romano, was voted one of the best gelato artisans in Italy by winning the prestigious Gambero Rosso award before he moved to Louisiana. Now, DiMartino and his family make fresh gelato each morning for the lucky residents of Baton Rouge. He uses the freshest local produce and Kleinpeter milk to make a constantly evolving menu of flavors and combinations such as honeysuckle crème, amaretto, tiramisu, and pannacotti (wedding cake). For a special treat, take a friend or two and split the Latte e Miele Sunday, a simple cream gelato topped with seasonal fresh fruit and drizzled with Louisiana Orange Blossom Honey. Get your shiny angel halo at Latte e Miele, the land of milk and honey, where each bite is a little taste of guilt-free heaven (17650 Highland Road; Baton Rouge; 225-751-4555).

### OAK

This upscale wine bar is more of a sinner's joint, a new spot in the middle of the Oak Street action that offers late night tapas, desserts, and inventive cocktails along with a well-rounded wine list. Sin in style with the baked chocolate mousse with strawberries and Chantilly cream; or go for the lighter, equally delicious white wine-poached pears with warm brie, walnuts, and an orange blossom reduction. If your postprandial preferences lean more towards liquid dessert, enjoy a Josephine Baker cocktail, made of banana and chocolate flavored Van Gogh vodka; or a glass of the sparkling Stellina di Notte Prosecco from Veneto, Italy. Take your drinks out onto the front patio, where you can sit under the stars and watch the parade of tourists and local characters (8118 Oak St.; New Orleans; 504-302-1485).



### CAFÉ DOMINIQUE

Have the best of both worlds at Café Dominique, where former aerobics instructor Donna Malbrough presides over the land of health-conscious fine dining. Noticing a lack of healthy dining options in Cajun country, Malbrough decided to create a restaurant modeled around the finest organic ingredients and low fat options. Since the doors opened in 2007, Café Dominique has become a hot spot for foodies and health nuts alike. The gourmet goodies on her dessert menu may not be the most slimming, but they're made with all fresh, organic ingredients that are great for your body in moderation. For a savory, fruity treat, try the organic blueberry bread pudding, topped with vanilla bean ice cream and blueberry compote. For something just as fresh but even more sinful, try the creamy Italian Mascarpone cheesecake made from crème fraîche, drizzled with strawberry puree, and topped with a scoop of fresh Louisiana strawberry sorbet; or the irresistible siren call of the triple chocolate mousse, which combines white, dark, and milk chocolate, raspberries, and raspberry puree (8013 Main St.; Houma; 985-223-7540).