



The Dish

MARK SULLIVAN
 CHEF, SPRUCE

NAJIB JOE HAKIM

Food style:
 Contemporary
 American.

Address: 3640
 Sacramento St., San
 Francisco.

Phone: (415) 931-5100.

Hours: Lunch, Mon.-Fri.,
 11:30 to 2:30 p.m.; din-
 ner daily, 5 to 10 p.m.

Average check cost:
 \$50 per person.

Web site: sprucesf.com

Background: I started cooking because I love to eat. Amaryll Schwertner (now of Boulette's Larder) took me on as a young apprentice cook at Sol y Luna after I graduated from college. She said she thought I had potential. She believed in me. I then had the opportunity to cook in France and Spain. I worked at Slow Club and 42 Degrees and then was hired as chef de cuisine at Plump Jack in Squaw Valley, where I met Tom, my partner. We opened the Village Pub in Woodside and it was incredibly successful and then opened Spruce.

Food Philosophy: I constantly struggle not to

add, but to take away. I find that as chefs we try to be creative and make food you would not make at home. My food is simple, but not simplistic, not fussy or overly manicured.

Most popular dish: One of my passions is charcuterie and my desire to craft beautiful stuff that you don't see much of in the States. We've committed resources to properly fabricate charcuterie and hired someone who just does charcuterie and cheese.

One thing you'll never see on the menu:
 Inedible garnish.

Most surprising ingredient: Turmeric. I use it

with the salt cod chowder with dates marinated in tumeric. It's an interesting preparation that goes back to my travels in Morocco.

To wow a client or companion: Start with the preserved foie gras (with duck gelee and stone fruit) and then have the buttered Maine lobster and potato gnocchi.

Dessert recommendation: The large, warm palmiers. They are simple and perfectly prepared (cookies) and great with our coffees.

Wine list: About 1,000 bottles with 100 selections of Rieslings. I don't know if any other restaurant in the country has that selection of Rieslings.

Chef(s) inspired by: Amaryll Schwertner of Boulette's Larder and Jim Moffat of 42 Degrees. I worked with him for seven years. He took me under his wing and helped me grow as a chef. He taught me the art of simplicity — how something as simple as dressing lettuce is vital.

Advice for home cooks: Organize. Do things the day before. 99 percent of running a kitchen is organization and preparedness.

Favorite culinary gadget: A Deba fish knife that pushes through fish bones.

Funniest moment: I was lighting the fire of a wood-burning oven at one of my jobs and I threw a match in and a flame came out and burned off my eyebrows, my bangs and my facial hair. But no skin was burned. Someone had put lighter fluid in there.

Favorite ingredient or dish: The (charred Berkshire) pork tenderloin (with crispy pancetta and shelling beans). We're making our own pancetta and slow roasting the pork until it's absolutely tender. Berkshire is a Japanese breed that we brine in maple syrup and aromatics and rub with zatar, a north African spice.

Favorite cookbook: Harold McGree's "On Food and Cooking: The Science and Lore of the Kitchen."

— Emily Fancher ■