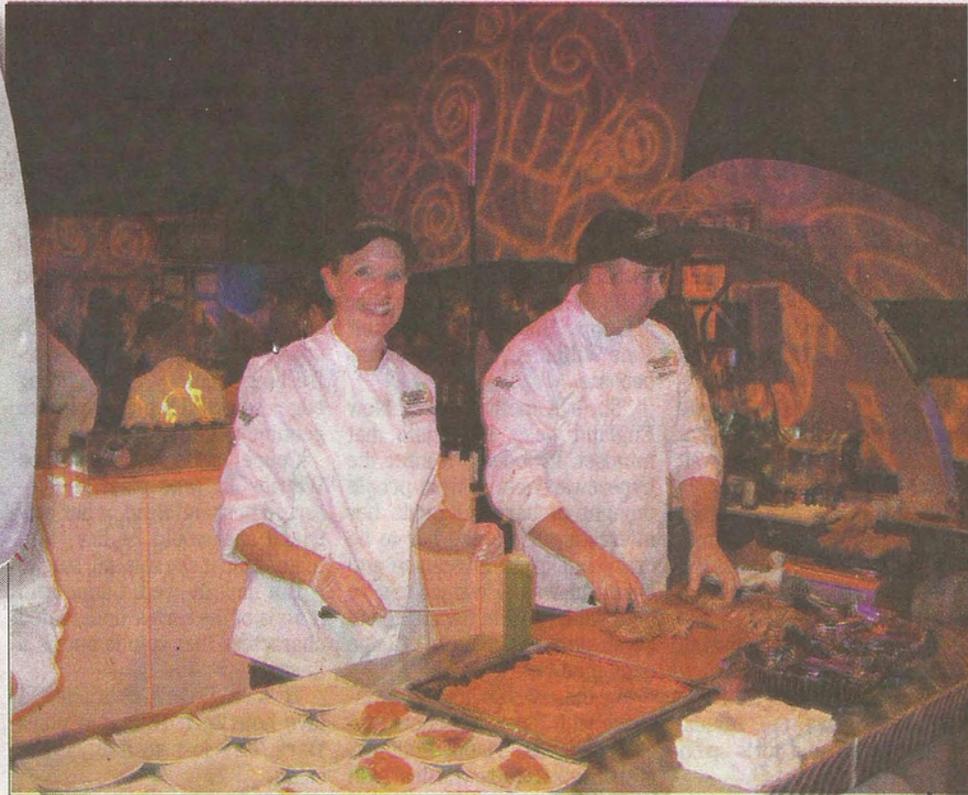
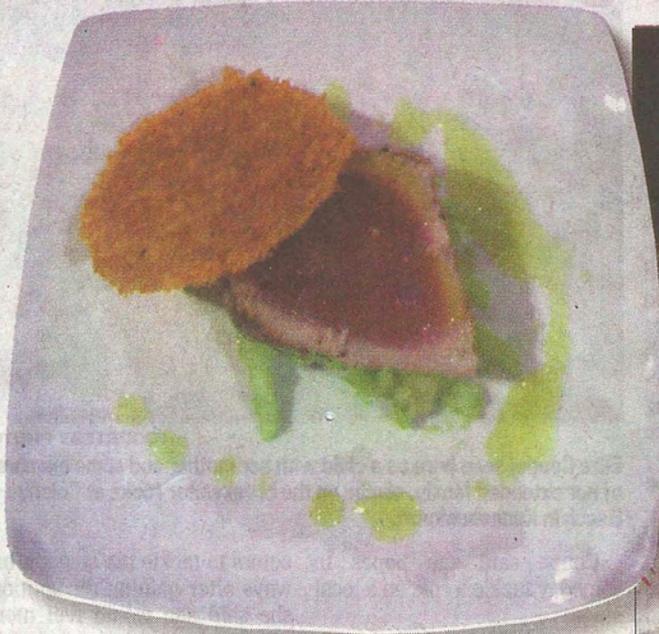


LIVING

AMBASSADOR CHEFS RETURN WITH INSPIRATION



M&B MORGAN PHOTO

Shanna and Brian O'Hea, chef owners at the Kennebunk Inn, Academe Brasserie, were part of the chef team for Party for the Senses at Walt Disney World's Epcot Center in Florida last week. Left, the tuna melt is created from fresh seared tuna loin served atop avocado and apple slaw, crowned by a parmesan crisp.

I am thankful for new manifestations of comfort food. I love trying a new way to drink a root beer float, or a personal-sized meatloaf with a sauce made from truffles and ginger. Take me to new places

This is the second year that the O'Heas have been asked to showcase their food at Disney World's Epcot Food and Wine Festival. The festival runs for six weeks and brings in worldwide talent. Brian was an extern at Disney World before he attended the Culinary Institute of America.

"I saw what an amazing operation they had, working in the back and front of the house. We have had a great relationship with them ever since."

The O'Heas were asked to attend in 2010 on a moment's notice. They said they were wowed by the focus on detail and the support they received from the Disney staff.

"We knew we wanted to be asked back," said Shanna.

And they were. This year, they were asked to teach at the Party for the Senses. True to their comfort-turned-up food style, the couple showcased their version of a tuna melt: fresh seared tuna loin served

atop avocado and apple slaw, crowned by a parmesan crisp.

"We had tried the recipe out at the inn, and it was a winner," said Shanna.

They were well received by the party's crowd of 1,000, and the day after at the open marketplace.

"We had a lot of support from shopping and staff, to our on-stage demo where a great MC kept things flowing. We had a sell-out crowd," said Brian.

Food festivals have become a part of the regular cooking season for the O'Heas.

"We like to go and promote

the Kennebunks. We see attendees year after year, and the more they are familiar with us, the more they consider coming to spend time in Southern Maine," said Shanna.

The O'Heas have also travelled to a Houston spring food festival for several years running, as well as their yearly turn at Maine Restaurant Week and the Kennebunkport Festival.

This year, they have been asked by Holland America Cruise lines to showcase their talents on a 14-day Caribbean tour.

"We like to be inspired.

too, when we attend different festivals. We run into chefs we know and see the new and exciting things other cooks are doing," said Brian. "It gives us inspiration to bring back home."

I am thankful for their energy, their enthusiasm and ambassadorship and what it means to our towns. Happy Thanksgiving!

Kristin Fuhrmann Simmons is a food lover and the owner and baker at kristin f. simmons custom cakes. She may be reached at kafcooks@gmail.com.



COOKING WITH KAF
KRISTIN FUHRMANN-SIMMONS

where food combines a sense of tradition with fresh and exciting viewpoints and I will be eternally grateful.

That's how it is eating the food created by Brian and Shanna O'Hea of Academe at the Kennebunk Inn.

The O'Heas are a cornerstone in the lauded food scene of southern Maine. Their comfort food with a twist has continued to attract seacoast diners, as well as guests from away, due in part to their participation in countrywide food events.