

## G R E A T C H E F S O F B O S T O N

# Bin 26 Enoteca's Mozzarella and Crispy Speck

**by Clint Hamblin**

Brother and sister restaurateurs Babak Bina and Azita Bina-Seibel have opened Bin 26 Enoteca, an outstanding restaurant and wine bar located at 26 Charles Street on Beacon Hill. With 60 by-the-glass selections and more than 200 wines available, it was not a surprise to hear that this distinctive 70-seat establishment has been included in the Best New Wine Lists '07 by *Food & Wine* magazine.

The wine-inspired decor features cork coat pegs, pictures of wine-making equipment, stacks of wine bottles including empty suspended upside-down bottles hanging from the ceilings in the bathrooms. A fascinating and colorful decoupage of wine labels covers the entire back wall of the restaurant and definitely deserves a closer look.

The Italian inspired food may take second place to this shrine of wine but Chef Bina-Seibel's exceptional epicurean specialties are worthy of your attention. Grilled Mediterranean Sardines with Rucola, Tri-color Peppers and Saffron gets you off to a great start, and it was nearly impossi-

ble to stop eating the Fussili with Herbed Rabbit, Fava Beans and 05' Vermentino, Moris. Not a noodle was left on the plate.

Never has a fish been treated with more respect than the magnificently prepared Whole Fresh Mediterranean Sea Bass, Grilled with Lemon Thyme and Asparagus. The waiter pulled the moist and tender flesh from the fish and placed each fillet on our plate. This sea bass was so light and exceptional, we could have easily had another.

If you're in doubt as to what grape goes with your dinner choice, pick the wine first and then ask wine director Andy Cartin to help you choose the appropriate food pairing. Wine is the star at Bin 26 Enoteca, and Cartin's passionate and vast knowledge of the grape will guide you through making exciting and memorable choices.

For dessert, you can't go wrong choosing the Strawberry Millefeuille, almond flavored cookies layered with mascarpone, strawberries and paired with a sparkling Castello del poggio "Dolce" Brachetto Piemonte, IT, NV. This is a perfect finale to your Bin 26 Enoteca fine wine

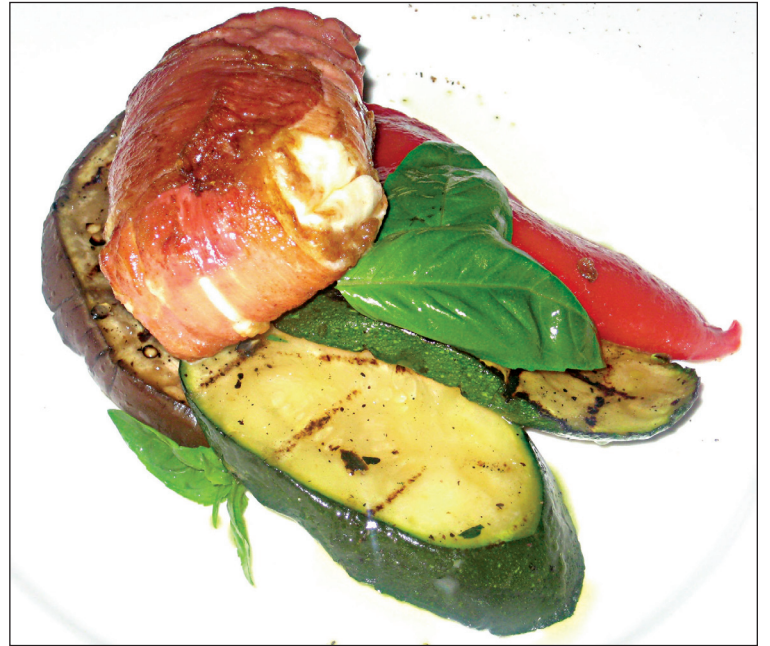
and dining experience.

The Mozzarella Wrapped and Roasted in Crispy Speck Served with Grilled Marinated Vegetables dish is fairly simple to make, beautiful to look at and positively delicious to eat. The Italian Speck looks like prosciutto and tastes like bacon. It was no surprise when Chef de Cuisine Andrew Sloan said, "It's one of our most popular appetizers." Coupled with a fine wine, you'll wonder, "Am I on Beacon Hill, or is this Rome?" *Salute.*

### *Mozzarella Wrapped in Crispy Speck Served with Grilled Marinated Vegetables (Serves 1)*

#### Ingredients

2 slices zucchini  
1 slice eggplant  
1 red bell pepper, roasted and skinned  
4 ounces fresh mozzarella cheese  
1 ounce thinly sliced speck  
Fresh basil leaves  
Olive or canola oil  
Basil oil



*Mozzarella Wrapped in Crispy Speck*

#### Preparation

Slice vegetables into rounds or diagonal pieces about 1/4 to 1/3-inch thick. Lightly coat zucchini and eggplant in olive or canola oil. Season with salt and pepper.

Arrange the sliced speck on a flat surface in the shape of a cross. Place the mozzarella ball in the center and wrap the cheese with the speck so that the cheese doesn't show.

Heat grill and sauté pan, adding some olive or canola oil to pan. Grill zucchini and eggplant until cooked and then remove and set aside. Sear mozzarella and speck on all sides till brown and

crispy.

Place all vegetables on a hot plate. Set mozzarella and speck on vegetables, and garnish with basil leaves and basil oil.

#### Wine Pairing

Bonarda/Barbera Vercesi del Castellazzo, "Pezzalunga," Oltsepo Pavese, Lombardy, IT 2005

#### Signature Wine

The cocktail-free Bin 26 Enoteca offers its own wine label imported from a vineyard in Umbria, Italy where friends of the Seibel family produce wine specifically for the restaurant.

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