

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2011

Learning About Paw Paws and Rockmill in Cedar Falls



One of the major reasons I decided to go to the Inn at Cedar Falls at this time was because it is paw paw season and this Inn has found many ways to take advantage of this tropical fruit grown in Ohio. (Yes, you read that right: tropical fruit in Ohio.)



I learned a bit about the antioxidant properties of the paw paw from Spa Director Randall Wellman before my massage, but I had yet to taste any. I was excited to learn that my friend Lisa and I would get to taste paw paws as well as cook with them during our time with Chef Anthony Schultz.



Everything we had to eat at the Inn at Cedar Falls was delicious so I felt confident with Chef Schultz, who had previously worked at Eon in the Hamptons, not far from where I had grown up. As much as I love to cook I decided that I would get better notes and pictures as the observer so Lisa got to do the actual preparation.

First, we learned about the paw paw. It really is a tropical fruit, the most northern tropical fruit you will find. It looks a lot like a mango and with similar properties to a papaya or banana. The paw paw does not have a strong flavor so it blends well in many dishes. (Rumor has it that Lewis and Clark lived on paw paws when they traveled through this area.) Lisa learned how to make a crème brûlée with the fruit, which would be served at dinner that night. After the porcelain dishes were prepared and put in the oven, Chef Schultz showed us how to muddle some of the fruit for some delicious cocktails.



The concentration of the evening was not on cocktails, but on beer and we had an expert to see us through it. Matt Barbee had spent time in Beverly Hills, Belgium and just about everywhere in between, before returning to his native Ohio. He's opened up quite an unusual brewery, using the styles of Belgium and Northern France, with production on his family's Ohio farm. It all sounds amazing and I have heard nothing but raves for the beer at this small production organic brewery and it was time for us to check it out.



Rockmill Brewery's products will get your attention immediately as it is served in beautiful bottles that resemble what you would pour wine from more than brew. Matt's love of wine (his grandfather started a winery in Ohio and he worked for awhile as a sommelier) carries this even further as he believes his brews should be savored in wine glasses and paired

properly with food, especially cheese. The bottles are actually done in champagne style and even have corks.



Matt makes only four different beers in all – Saison, Tripel, Dubbel and Witbier. They are all varietals grown in Belgium and he gets nearly all of his grain from the state of Washington. Lisa and Matt tasted through most of them and she was quite impressed. The Tripel is golden in color and strong in taste, though sweeter and fruitier than the average beer. The Saison is a low alcohol ale, but is much more rustic and earthy.



We talked for hours about beer, wine and another great dinner at the [Inn at Cedar Falls](#). We finished appropriately with the best chocolate torte I've ever tasted and, of course, the Paw Paw Crème Brulee, which Chef Schultz fired up for us before he joined us for a night cap.

It was our final meal at the for now (I'm already searching my schedule for another time to return) because we were heading to a very different place

in the morning – Chicago, for the grand opening party of [Michael Jordan's Steak House](#).

Posted by Marcia Frost