

WHAT'S IN SEASON //

Championing Celeriac

Homely for sure, but this root veggie is an ideal cold-weather alternative to potatoes and other starches.

If there ever were casting for the vegetal version of *Alien vs. Predator*, celeriac would be well equipped to play both roles. With spidery veins coiling a pocked bulb shaded somewhere between wan and death, it's frightful enough to look at, to say nothing of touching, and the last thing you'd want to nestle in a roasting pan among all those pretty sweet potatoes and beets.



But be brave and face your fear: It's going to be worth it. Cut away that warped exterior and behold a moist smoothness, crisp like jicama with the freshness of parsley and the grassiness of celery—though it's unrelated to that common green stalk. No, celeriac is a root all its own, revered in France for *rémoulade*, that Gallic coleslaw redolent with lemon and mustard.

It's revered at Scarsdale's **Savona** (2 Chase Rd 914-798-0550; savonarestaurant.com) too, as a partner for beef and poultry. Chef Eric Goods slices and cooks it in cream, then purées and sets it beside short ribs. Or he'll roast it with turnips, carrots, parsnips, and herbs to accompany baby chicken. "Celeriac's cleansing properties cut the richness of meat, stock, and wine," he says. "I like its creamy texture and sweetness; it has more dimension than a potato." And so he's puréed and stuffed it into ravioli; even taken a tip from the French, shredding it raw into a salad of grilled octopus, red onion, and escarole.

To my mind, there's only one scary thing that remains: being unable to get a reservation.

Escarole Salad with Celeriac, Green Apple, and Walnuts

Courtesy of Eric Goods, Savona
(Serves 6)

- 1 celeriac root (celeriac)
- 1 Granny Smith apple (peeling optional)
- 2 Tbsp walnuts
- 3 heads escarole, washed and chopped into bite-sized pieces
- ¼ cup red wine vinegar
- ¾ cup walnut oil
- salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- pecorino cheese, for shaving

Peel celeriac and slice into matchsticks, or julienne (cut into thin strips) with

a mandoline. Core apple and slice similarly. Toast walnuts by adding to hot sauté pan and tossing until browned and fragrant. In a large serving bowl, combine escarole, celeriac, apple, and toasted walnuts. Whisk vinegar and oil and drizzle onto salad, to taste. Season with salt and pepper. Toss salad and top with shaved pecorino.

// Diane Weintraub Pohl

COFFEE WITH THE CHEF //

Efstratios "Steve" Kontis

Frankie & Johnnie's Steakhouse
77 Purchase St, Rye
(914-925-3900; frankieandjohnnies.com)



Dish I Do the Best...Swordfish picante. Guests love that it's moist and has a bite to it, but also that it's not too spicy.

Favorite Cuisine...Greek. Being from Greece, it is my comfort food.

If Not a Chef, I'd Be a...boxer. It was my first interest when I came to America.

I Never Eat...oysters—the only thing from the sea I won't eat. Not even sure why!

Favorite Place to Dine Out...A good Greek restaurant in Astoria.

I Hate It When a Diner at My Restaurant...requests their steak extra well done and then complains that their meal is taking too long.

Favorite TV Show...*Antiques Roadshow*. I wonder if some of my junk could be worth a fortune.

I Hate It When You're Dining at a Restaurant and...a waiter hovers over the table. It's important to give people privacy and space while still delivering great service.

What Waiters Should Never Do...Let guests over-order. They should advise on the size of sides and entrées.

Favorite Pain Reliever...Vodka.

Culinary School Can't Teach...how to be consistent in your quality and how to stay calm, cool, and collected on a busy night.

Food Trend I Hate the Most...Food trends can be fun but I'm not crazy about small plates. Very little food for the prices.

My Favorite Movie Is...*The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*.

Most Famous People I Ever Cooked For...Joe Torre and the Prince of Morocco.

// John Bruno Turiano

Super Slice Sunday

Super Bowl Sunday is one of the biggest days of the year for pizza delivery (the others are New Year's Day/New Year's Eve, Halloween, and Thanksgiving Eve). Here are some estimates from local pie joints on just how much busier they will likely be for this year's big game.

Pizza Place	Super Bowl Sunday # Pies Delivered	Typical Day # Pies Delivered
Planet Pizza, White Plains	300 to 400	250 (approx.)
Pizza! Pizza!, Mount Vernon	300 (approx.)	50 to 75
Modern Restaurant and Pizzeria, New Rochelle	250 (approx.)	150 (approx.)
Bellizzi Restaurant, Mount Kisco	150 to 200	75 to 100
A No 1 Pizza, New Rochelle	120 to 150	60 to 70
T&J Pizza and Pasta, Port Chester	125 (approx.)	75 (approx.)

// Alexandra Vinci with JBT