

CHEF TALK

Michael Purpura shares some summer recipes at Wagner College Guild tea

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Tea sandwiches, scones and sweets were served as light fare for a Wagner College Guild tea celebrated recently on the Grymes Hill campus.

The school's executive chef, Michael V. Purpura, created the menu, a summery selection of eats that drew compliments from guests. And he shared two of those recipes.

Native Staten Islander Purpura has been top toque for the school's dining services for six years. His roots in the industry include service with acclaimed Framboise Catering, Tottenville, known for its attention to detail and unique style.

With those tidbits in mind, Purpura enjoys the Seahawks' traditions like teas and special luncheons, events where his distinct, classical approach to food is on display.

This function this week, a welcome fete for the new administration's "first lady" Jan Martin, harkens back to some of Wagner's history.

And over roasted pepper spread on dark bread with basil cream cheese and assorted scones with strawberry preserves, there was talk of the legacy of the Guild.

This group was formed in 1918 when Wagner College moved from Rochester, with all of its 18 students.

The Guild members worked as an extra set of hands and cheerleaders of school spirit with its charitable work, hence the naming of Guild Hall, a dormitory built in 1951.

Over the years, the Guild ladies hosted elaborate teas following homecoming concerts of the Wagner College Choir, recounted its former Guild president and board member, Ruth W. Schlichtmann in a memoir. She detailed: "Two faithful Guild members Esther Momrow and Erna Schneeberg brought their own silver service, which made these teas very special occasions."

And so was this summer-y spread created for a new chapter in Wagner's history — as Joel Martin began his tenure as the 19th president of the school on July 1.



Michael Purpura, executive chef at Wagner College, works with the Tottenville High School team. *Claire Regan, for the Staten Island Advance*



Purpura and Kim Spiro at Wagner. *Pamela Silvestri, for Staten Island Advance*

ROASTED PEPPER SPREAD

(Makes about 1 pint)

INGREDIENTS

12 ounces cream cheese
(or goat or feta)
2 roasted red peppers
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon red wine vinegar
1 small clove garlic
Salt and pepper, to taste



Pamela Silvestri, for Staten Island Advance

DIRECTIONS

To roast peppers: Toss in olive oil, roast over a flame and when cool enough to handle, peel and seed.

In a food processor add all the ingredients except the cream cheese. When well-processed slowly add the cream cheese (or other cheese) in four increments. Check for seasoning and refrigerate.

We served this on toasted pumpernickel or whole-wheat bread discs and garnished with sliced scallions. It also make a great bagel spread.

SCONES

(Makes about 20)

INGREDIENTS

3 cups all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon cinnamon
½ cup sugar
5 teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
¾ cup softened butter
1 egg
1 cup milk
1 cup raisins



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DIRECTIONS

Mix all the dry ingredients in a mixing bowl. In a separate bowl whisk the egg with the milk and butter.

Add the wet mixture to the dry ingredients and mix until a sticky dough forms. Add the raisins and mix a little bit more. Refrigerate for about 30 minutes or you can store for a few days in the fridge.

Roll the dough out to about a ½-inch thick and cut into desired shapes or triangle. Bake in pre-heated oven at 350 degrees for 12 to 15 minutes until slightly browned on the edges.

Courtesy of Michael Purpura, executive chef at Wagner College, Grymes Hill