

# The Washington Post

## On the Menu

**TOM SIETSEMA**

*First Bite*

### *Exploring the West End's New World*

**S**can the menu of the newly opened Hudson Restaurant & Lounge (2030 M St. NW; 202-872-8700) and it's impossible not to feel embraced. Think of a craving or food fashion, and the kitchen appears to stock it. From matzoh ball soup to brick-oven pizza, from deviled eggs to whole grilled fish, executive chef Kyle Schroeder lets diners have it in the West End space formerly occupied by David Gregory.

"Something for everyone" and every budget, says Schroeder's boss, Alan

Popovsky, who recently sold the 12-year-old Felix in Adams Morgan to devote all of his energy to a fresh dining room in a hot neighborhood. (Hudson's competition includes the Westend Bistro by Eric Ripert, the acclaimed French chef from New York's Le Bernardin.) Named after Henry, the 17th-century explorer, Hudson marks a change of heart for Popovsky, who says he feels "liberated" now that he has left the "fights and crime" of his old stamping ground.

Located on a prime street corner, the

window-wrapped restaurant looks like the kind of place where a person could linger over lunch, dinner or brunch. (It serves all three.) The multicolored David Gregory interior has been replaced with a more monochromatic palette, and Siberia seems not to exist here; even tables way in the back have the bonus of a kitchen view and walls decorated with beautiful photographs of cherry blossoms.

I'd be willing to trade some of that smart design for a bit more pleasure on the plate. In an opening-week dinner, steamed mussels in a tame Thai-style curry and over-fried chicken with wimpy collard greens did not offer compelling reasons to return. On the other hand, the Parker House rolls distinguish the bread service, and Hudson's hamburger manages to be dense, juicy and nicely seasoned.

Schroeder, 33, is no stranger to the city, having served as chef de cuisine under Timothy Dean at Dean's eponymous restaurants in the former St. Regis Hotel downtown and in Baltimore. Most recently, Schroeder was executive chef for British Airways at Dulles International Airport, where he whipped up meals for business- and first-class passengers. The biggest difference between grounded and airborne diners? Customers eating in the clouds "are not as vocal" as those sitting at a table, the chef reports.

*Lunch entrees, \$11-\$28; dinner entrees, \$14-\$35.*

