

HEADLINER

Tavo Julieta B (right), who has a name at a number of spots, including Loteria and Chateaufort, teamed up with Decrescenzo (left), a native of Montevideo and a fledgling chef who developed his plan while at the University of Pennsylvania. The menu's Mexican approach is richly seasoned with global notions, the result of both partners' travels. You will find Peking duck carnitas, chow fun noodles with corn and shrimp, and lamb chops in a chocolate-habanero sauce. Chorizo shumai and Cuban lasagna with adobo pulled pork and plantains are also available. The dining room is finished in copper, oak and white brick, and the restaurant gets its name, short for Gustavo, from one of Mr. Decrescenzo's grandfathers. (Opens Friday): 615 Hudson Street (West 12th Street), 917-675-6454, tavonyc.com.

2 A GOOD APPETITE

A butterfly leg of lamb takes wing. BY MELISSA CLARK

2 CITY KITCHEN

Mild halibut's wake-up call: five peppers. BY DAVID TANIS



3 A GINGERBREAD HUNT

Polish history, and mystery. BY BARBARA WHITAKER

3 FRONT BURNER

Holiday charcuterie to take home. BY FLORENCE FABRICANT

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Food

The New York Times

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2016



SASHA MASLOV FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

ica. The name is misleading: It's a full-on restaurant, not a coffee shop (though the simple bare wood décor suggests that it is), and it's open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The chef, Titus Wang, who presides over an open kitchen, was previously at Annisa. The menu is American, with Asian touches, featuring dishes like grilled chicken wings, hamachi tartare and borscht, some prepared on a special charcoal grill. (Wednesday): 1065 Avenue of the Americas (40th Street), 212-221-2510, coffeemaniannyc.com.

La Barrita The Argentine-style steak house is the work of Sebastian Cardona, a native of Mar del Plata, a beach town just south of Buenos Aires. His goal is to provide Argentine food that is more authentic than the usual fare found in New York, with tongue vinagrette; empanadas filled with chopped, not ground, beef; rolled and stuffed breast of veal; and grass-fed steaks. The wine list is long on malbec, and the chef, also from Argentina, is Marcello Laz-

zarín; 132 Montague Street (Henry Street), Brooklyn Heights, 718-596-1800.

Lady's A black-and-white décor and leather banquettes provide a striking setting for familiar Italian specialties, highlighting pizza and pastas. (Friday): 572 Fulton Street (Rockwell Place), Fort Greene, Brooklyn, ladysnyc.com.

La Esquina Midtown West Tacos, tortas and quesadillas are featured at this fast-casual uptown outpost of an expanding restaurant group: 200 West 55th Street, 646-707-3950, esquinanyc.com.

Tim Ho Wan This dim sum house — which originated in Hong Kong, has locations in Asia and Australia, and is notable for its low prices and Michelin star — has finally landed in New York. The format (no reservations, dim sum from morning to night) is the same here, except that until Jan. 18, a date determined by the lunar calendar, for good luck, it will close from 3 to 5 p.m. There are two new items for New York: a deep-fried vegetable spring roll, and a dessert of French toast filled with custard.

The chain's most popular choices baked
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LOOKING AHEAD

Charlie Palmer Steak The chef and restaurateur will close his steak house on East 54th Street on Dec. 31. He is moving it to the Archer Hotel, where it will replace David Burke Fabrick and reopen almost immediately on a limited basis while being renovated. The steakhouse will be fully up and running next month: 47 West 38th Street, 212-302-3838, charliepalmer.com.

Minton's and the Cecil Given Minton's more prominent name and history, the jazz club will combine with its sister restaurant, the Cecil, starting Jan. 6. The owners of both — Alexander Smalls and Richard Parsons — decided that it made sense to use the Minton's space on more than just weekends. They will use the Cecil for private events for now. Through Dec. 31, the chef at the Cecil, Joseph Johnson, known as J J, will be in the kitchen there and serve some of the items that will go on the menu at Minton's. Some Cecil favorites, like gumbo, will still be served at Minton's, where Mr. Johnson will remain the chef: Minton's, 206 West 118th Street, mintonsharlem.com, 212-243-2222; the Cecil, 210 West 118th Street, thececilharlem.com, 212-866-1262.

OPENING

Allora Ristorante Red-sauce Italian is served at this restaurant, with some specialties like steak Diane and whole branzino finished tableside. (Wednesday): Bernic Hotel, 145 East 47th Street, 212-754-9800, alloranyc.com.

Coffeemania There is a chain of 27 restaurants by this name in Moscow, and this will be the group's first branch in Amer-

More restaurant news is at nytimes.com/food.