



Getting fed up

Millennials spur movement for natural ingredients, clean labels on products [PG 2](#)

Raise a glass

U.S. isn't downing its share of wine [PG 3](#)



Butchery demonstrations reveal the craft, uncommon parts to diners



KENNETH K. LAM/BALTIMORE SUN PHOTOS

Angel Pineda, a butcher at Parts & Labor, demonstrates use of a saw on the rib cage of a hog during a class. Most of the butchering, however, is done with sharp knives and leverage.



Meredith Carter of Phoenix, Baltimore County, tastes a piece of cooked pork loin cap at the Parts & Labor class.



Different cuts of meat are for sale at Parts & Labor after being butchered on site.

Cutting classes

BY SARAH MEEHAN
The Baltimore Sun

As 20 guests file into the kitchen at Parts & Labor on a wintry Sunday evening, Collin Morstein, the butcher shop's retail manager, explains what they will observe. George Marsh, the shop's head butcher, will bring out half a hog and break it down from nose to tail.

Yes, he tells one attendee, that includes the head.

"It won't wink at you," he says.

Moments later, Marsh gets to work on a 135-pound side of pork. He starts with the pig's midsection, removing lard before

cutting out the tenderloin. As his two assistants break down the head, Marsh carves around the back leg, slicing through the flesh before turning the leg perpendicular to the rest of the body to break it away from the belly.

The demonstration, a monthly session held at the Remington butcher shop and restaurant, is booked beyond capacity. The class sells out every time, usually capping at 15 students. It's a testament to customers' curiosity about where their food comes from, an increasing demand that's being met by a growing faction of Baltimore-area butchers working to connect consumers

See **BUTCHERY**, page 6

BALTIMORE DINER

Beard Foundation honors area restaurant

Cindy Wolf and Charleston make list of semifinalists

BY SARAH MEEHAN
The Baltimore Sun

As an Annapolis gastropub prepares to dish out its comfort food at the James Beard House, a Baltimore chef and her signature restaurant have been named among the semifinalists for the 2016 James Beard Awards.

Chef Cindy Wolf and her Harbor East restaurant, **Charleston** were the only Maryland chef and restaurant to make the list of James Beard Award semifinalists this year. Wolf, of the Foreman Wolf Restaurant Group, was named a semifinalist in the Best

Chef Mid-Atlantic category. It's not her first nomination; she's been named a semifinalist in the category several times in the last decade and made it to the round of finalists in 2006, 2008, 2014 and 2015.

Spike Gjerde took home Baltimore's first James Beard Award last year for Best Chef Mid-Atlantic, one of 10 regional categories.

Charleston, Wolf's Harbor East restaurant, was also named among the 2016 semifinalists in the Outstanding Wine Program category. That category includes restaurants in operation for at least five years that set standards "for excellence in

See **DINER**, page 6



KIM HAIRSTON/BALTIMORE SUN 2014

Chef Cindy Wolf's Harbor East restaurant Charleston was also named among the semifinalists in the Outstanding Wine Program category.

GET READY, 'CAUSE HERE WE COME.

MOTOWN THE MUSICAL

MARCH 8-13 • HIPPODROME THEATRE • BaltimoreHippodrome.com • 800.982.ARTS

CareFirst HIPPODROME BROADWAY SERIES

Deconstructing a pig

At the conclusion of George Marsh's hog butchery demonstration, he reassembled the pig to remind students where each cut came from. Here's a look at the end result, and the corresponding cuts of meat.

1. Head
2. Snout
3. Shoulder blade roast
4. Pork loin
5. Belly
6. Sirloin butt
7. Ham
8. Skirt
9. Hocks
10. Trotters
11. Kidney
12. Flank
13. Oyster
14. Tail

KENNETH K. LAM/BALTIMORE SUN PHOTOS



Instructions on how to make the cut

BUTCHERY, *From page 1* with their meat.

The hog Marsh is butchering hails from Rettland Farm in Gettysburg, Pa. He cuts just behind its ankle and snaps the leg over the side of his table, separating the foot, or trotter, from the ham hock.

Setting the leg aside, he then counts the bones down the pig's back and slices between the fourth and fifth ribs to take off the front haunch, with the leg attached.

Whole-animal butchery, practiced at Parts & Labor and other local shops, including John Brown General and Butchery in Cockeysville and the Pigheaded Butcher in Timonium, means no part of the animal goes to waste. The ears and tail can be deep-fried; the bones are used for broth; even the kidney is used in scrapple.

Using an entire animal also means introducing customers to cuts of meat not available in supermarkets.

"It opens up your whole spectrum of proteins," said Robert Voss, who opened John Brown General and Butchery in December.

Creating that exposure — and communicating that the number of popular cuts are limited on each animal — was part of Voss' goal when he opened his shop. The Monkton native spent about five years in New York as a chef before returning home. He had plans to move back to the Baltimore area and open a restaurant, but he decided to take the butcher shop route instead.

"I realized that we needed to adjust the food culture a little bit," Voss said. "If you want to really affect food culture, you have to change the way people eat in their own homes."

Before his shop opened, Voss had the same concern as other whole-animal butcher shops: He worried customers wouldn't be open to trying more uncommon cuts and wouldn't understand that there are only so many popular cuts, like rib-eye and chops, per animal. But he said he's been pleased by the response from customers who have sought more adventurous meats — shanks, short ribs and head cheese.

"It was a great relief, not necessarily at a business-model level, but just how people were cooking around here," Voss said.

In addition to butchery demonstrations and hands-on classes, his shop plans to host cooking classes to demonstrate how to cook the meats it sells.

Much of the education Voss and his staff provide is less formal. His shop and others staff educated employees who can help customers choose cuts of meat and explain best practices for cooking each.

The Pigheaded Butcher, a new shop in Timonium, is also working to educate customers on unfamiliar cuts of meat.

Bacon is still a best-seller, general manager Brian Smith said. But he and owner Charlie Weyand have been surprised by the reception of customers who are open try trying lesser-known cuts like flank steaks,



Marsh takes apart a hog during a monthly class held at Parts & Labor in Remington. "The real work is in the processing, figuring out what to do with everything," he says.

teres major or skirt steak.

"People know what a rib-eye or they know what a strip tastes like — people love filet mignon — but we wanted to introduce those people to those other cuts for that exact reason," said Smith. "You could go to a supermarket 100 times, and they're more than likely never going to be there."

After dispensing with the front haunch of the pig, Marsh moves back to the mid-section, removing the skirt steaks that run lengthwise down the belly.

Only once in Marsh's demonstration did he break out a bow saw to separate the belly from the loin — the rest of the pig was separated using sharp knives and leverage.

"I like to use the table and different parts of my body to keep from dulling my knife or wearing out my body," Marsh says.

Seam butchery — Marsh's style and the type of butchery practiced by other area butchers — involves using knives to cut along seams in the meat to separate different muscle groups.

It's a slower way to process a hog or steer than hacking it into pieces with a band saw, as many large-scale butchery operations do, but it pays off.

Parts & Labor sees an 87 percent to 89 percent salable yield from its pigs. The shop pays \$3.15 per pound for a whole pig, compared to less than \$1 per pound for big-industry pork.

"The real work is in the processing, figuring out what to do with everything," Marsh said.

He shows students how to remove one of his favorite cuts, the oyster steak, near the pig's hip.

Marsh makes breaking down a pig look easy, and he said the team of three butchers at Parts & Labor can process four or five pigs in less than two hours if they're

working quickly. It takes closer to three hours if they're going slowly.

Couples Meredith and Whit MacCuaig and Karina and Joe Rector, who all turned out for Marsh's Jan. 31 class, said they were considering purchasing a whole pig from a friend's farm to share and butchering it themselves.

After watching Marsh's demonstration, they said they were rethinking the do-it-yourself approach because they realized it was harder than it looked.

"It was almost like yoga-esque, some of his moves," Joe Rector said.

Local meat can be more expensive than factory-farmed animals.

At John Brown General and Butchery, New York strip steak goes for \$31.99 per pound; dry-aged bone-in rib-eye is \$28.99 per pound; ground beef runs \$8.99 per pound; sirloin is \$12.99 per pound; and pork sausage costs \$11.99.

Still, Voss says he tries to keep prices reasonable.

"This isn't something that [just] any one group of people should have access to," he said.

Some of the prices are at or below grocery store prices, and the newer shops are beginning to develop a loyal customer base, owners say.

The Pigheaded Butcher opened just before the holidays, and many of the customers who placed special orders during the holidays keep coming back, according to Smith.

"We're seeing those people come back, maybe not for the same things [they bought] during the holiday months, but they are coming back for their proteins once or twice a week," Smith said.

His shop has also seen high demand for butchery demonstrations — one hog butch-

Butchering classes offered locally

■ Parts & Labor will host its next hog butchery demonstration Feb. 28 from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. The class will be held at 2600 N. Howard St. and costs \$65. For reservations, email Collin Morstein at collin@partsandlaborbutchery.com.

■ The Pigheaded Butcher will show customers how to break down a lamb March 19 at 11 a.m. The shop is located at 1840 York Road, and the event is free.

■ John Brown General and Butchery held a hog butchery demonstration Feb. 23. Its next class has not been scheduled yet. Call the shop at 410-891-8549 or visit its website, jbgbutchery.com, for more information on future classes.

ery class this month drew nearly 70 people.

The rise of local meat is largely a product of the local food movement that has developed during the last decade.

"People want to know more about their foods," Voss said, "where they're raised and what processes they go through."

That was true for Anne and Geran Kostecki. They came to the Parts & Labor class as an early Valentine's Day outing.

"I was interested in how they had to make decisions when they break down the hog," Anne says at the conclusion of the demonstration.

Marsh explains how some cuts are mutually exclusive. One pig can't provide both pork belly and bacon; they come from the same part of the hog, depending on how you slice it.

It's home cooks like the Kosteckis that local butcher shops are looking to cater to. Voss said another goal when opening the butcher shop was to get people cooking at home again — instead of just watching cooking shows. He wants to make obscure ingredients more widely available to help people get over one of the barriers to home cooking.

"Cooking shouldn't be scary; it should be an intimate experience that people can share," Voss said. "We sort of need to break down the walls that have been formed that are scaring people from doing it."

At the end of the class, Marsh reassembles the pig to remind students where each cut came from.

He wraps up with a cooking demo of his own, showing the class how to prepare one of his favorite fresh pork cuts — the rib cap, hidden between layers of fat. He scores the fatty underside of the meat and renders it in a cast-iron skillet, slicing it thinly for students to sample.

Attendees snack and mingle, asking questions of Marsh as his assistant butchers carry the pig, piece by piece, back into the shop's walk-in refrigerator, fully butchered from nose to tail.

smeehan@baltsun.com
twitter.com/sarahvmeehan

Fox's Den in Annapolis will offer taste of Beard Foundation dishes

DINER, *From page 1*

wine service through a well presented wine list, knowledgeable staff and efforts to educate customers about wine."

There are 20 semifinalists in the Best Chef Mid-Atlantic and Outstanding Wine Program categories. The awards have 21 categories overall. Each category will be narrowed to five final nominees, which will be announced March 15.

The winners will be unveiled May 2.

In the meantime, the Annapolis restaurant **Fox's Den** will allow local diners to sample the dishes it will serve at the James Beard House in New York next month. Executive chef Josh Brown and mixologist Tommy Burns will head to the James Beard Foundation's headquarters on March 22 to showcase gastropub's seasonal comfort food paired with beer and wine.

Chefs are invited to cook at the James

Beard House after being selected by the James Beard Foundation's director of house programming, who receives recommendations from the foundation's chef selection committee.

Ahead of the meal in New York, on March 8 at 6:30 p.m., the Annapolis restaurant at 179B Main St. will serve the same six-course dinner for \$75. The price does not include beverage pairings.

Dishes include cauliflower panna cotta, beef tartare, rye garganelli, smoked French onion-marinated squash and juniper-braised venison, with carrot cake for dessert.

Reservations are required; call the restaurant at 443-808-8991 or book online through OpenTable.

In brief

■ Two neighboring restaurants, **8 Ball**

Meatball and Points South Latin Kitchen, have opened their doors in Fells Point.

8 Ball Meatball, a meatball-centric restaurant, replaced Tapas Adela at 814 S. Broadway, where it serves made-to-order meatball dishes. The eatery offers four varieties of meatballs, five sauces and a number of sides for customers to build their own bowls, subs and sliders.

Points South Latin Kitchen opened at 1640 Thames St., where Anastasia was housed.

The restaurant, owned by Bryson Keens, will serve dishes from Panama, Brazil and other Latin American countries using as many local ingredients as possible.

Both eateries took over spaces formerly occupied by operations in Kali's Restaurant Group.

■ Several bills being considered by the General Assembly would allow restaurants

to store life-saving devices onsite. Senate Bill 898, cross-filed with House Bill 1418, would establish a program for restaurants to store and administer auto-injectable epinephrine, known as EpiPens, onsite in case customers developed life-threatening allergic reactions. The state health department would regulate the program and certify individuals at restaurants who would be charged with administering the epinephrine if medical treatment was not immediately available. Senate Bill 434, cross-filed with House Bill 1194, would require restaurants with seating for more than 50 guests or gross income of at least \$400,000 to have an automated external defibrillator on site. The state's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene would develop regulations and guidelines for the program.

smeehan@baltsun.com