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More than one way to eat a pig

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Serving up locally grown and raised foods at restaurants is a growing trend in Acadiana, and Jolie's Louisiana Bistro is leading the way and taking the concept to a new level with its Pig's Head 5 Ways Dinner.

The dinner, which is a completely different experience every time, as Head Chef Manny Augello says he usually doesn't prepare the menu until he gets the pig head provided by Eunice Superette and Slaughterhouse, is divided into five courses with five different parts of the pig's head. Diners will get to try courses prepared with the cheek, tongue, ear, the head, which is usually a hog's head cheese, and a wild card category-anything goes.

The concept of the Pig's Head 5 Ways Dinner is largely the result of Augello's constant experimentation and desire to try new things.

"There's a lot of different components of the head that we don't use," he says, adding that they got to thinking about how they could use these components in a 5-course meal.

Dinners may include salads such as the one crafted for the pig's ear category, made with local sprouts, micro collard greens, and preserved persimmon tossed with a charred onion vinaigrette and fried pig's ear, which has a similar flavor to cracklins.

Another example is grits topped with hog's head cheese and a poached egg. General Manager Chelsie Lovell pairs all meals with a specifically chosen beer, cocktail or glass of wine.

Although these two are definite options, you never know what you might get on your menu for the evening. Augello says they're constantly experimenting and trying new ideas, including

brain ravioli, which is still in the works.



A fried pig's ear salad with a charred onion vinaigrette and micro collard greens made by Chef Manny Augello is a possible dish served during Augello's Pig's Head Dinner at Jolie's Louisiana Bistro in Lafayette. Leslie Westbrook/lwestbrook@theadvertiser.com



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"We do brain children and concepts that we throw around late at night," he says. "There's a lot of trial and error. Some things may work, some may not."

The concept might make a pickier diner squeamish, which Manny's wife Abi acknowledges, joking that in a lot of cases, one guest usually drags in the other. However, she says, they always find that they love pig's head, just like any other dish they might try for the first time.

In addition to the opportunity to try something new and as locally grown as you can get, the Pig's Head 5 Ways Dinner can also be a learning opportunity-whether you're chatting about how a meal is prepared, or discussing cocktails at the bar.

"It's kind of got a cool, nerdy thing about it. We're all nerds," Abi says. "It's a great way to be involved and passionate with your food."

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