

NORTH METRO / BOULDER COUNTY DIVERSIONS

**UNSOLVED
MYSTERIES**

Lessons from the Large
Hadron Collider

**TASTY
TRAVELS**

Culinary
experiences
that are worth
the drive

ALL HEART

Zolo Grill does
not choke on
the choke
challenge



A BRAVE NEW BEER

Cask-conditioned ales
are firkin awesome

**VACATION
RHAPSODY**

A new spin on classic
vacation destinations

GODFATHER OF GEARS

One local man and his
historic collection of cycles



[SPORTS MEDICINE ISSUE]

THE PROFESSIONALS

WHY THIS WOMAN CAN KICK YOUR HINEY

cuisine

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT FOOD UP NORTH

Challenging Elements

Secret Ingredient:

Artichoke

Zolo Grill

By Lacy Boggs

Photo by Ed Corcoran

Chef Brett Smith was pretty confident about taking on our challenge. His wife asked him if he was nervous, and he told her he thought he had just about any ingredient covered, unless we gave him something that had to be in a dessert. Then we called and gave him artichokes.

cont. pg. 81 >

MENU: Ras Kassa's.77 } Nibbles.78 } Foodie.80

Challenging Elements

ONE INGREDIENT; 24 HOURS

It's been a while," he laughed. "I had to call my sous chef and talk through how I was going to prepare them."

Smith can be forgiven for needing a bit of a refresher on artichokes, because they don't often make an appearance in the modern Southwestern cuisine he brings to the table at Zolo Grill in Boulder. Chokes might be a challenge, but he certainly has the culinary chops to tackle them, as evidenced by the smoked chorizo, bacon, pickles, pickled chiles, desserts, sauces and salsas that he makes in house. And if this dish is any indication, he can definitely add artichokes to his list of conquests.

Smith started by marinating and then braising the fresh artichokes in New Mexican guajillo chile and manteca (aka: tasty, tasty lard). He then gave them a quick kiss of a hot grill before finishing them in the oven. The results were fork-tender, slightly crispy, salty and spicy chokes. The layered flavors might have been enough for a simple appetizer, but Smith took the dish to the next level; he added a fresh arugula salad and topped it all with crispy pork

belly, house-pickled chiles and onions and a very light guajillo vinaigrette. On the side, in pride of place in its own tiny cast-iron pan, was a perfect fried local egg.

"I was going with the school of 'everything's better with pork fat,'" Smith confided, and we couldn't agree more.

The flavors of the earthy artichokes and spicy arugula benefited from the salty smoothness of the pork, with the heat of the chile just poking through. The pickles' tart vinegar was a bright burst amidst the other flavors and a perfect way to cut the richness of the pork belly.

Smith says that building a menu around local produce has been his No. 1 goal since taking over at Zolo a year and a half ago, so it was no surprise that both the arugula and the egg were from a local favorite of his, Isabelle Farm in Lafayette. They also source local fish, lamb and beef, and he intends to bring in more and more that's seasonal, organic and locally grown.

For more information about Zolo Grill and to make a reservation, visit zologrill.com or call 303.449.0444. 