



Questions & Answers

Wylie Dufresne (chef/co-owner) & Dewey Dufresne (father and co-owner) of WD-50

With Myra Fiori, *illy caffè North America, Inc.*

1. American society is a melting pot of different cultures. Does the same go for food in America?

Myra: The American ethnic fabric is in a state of constant change and with it, the food. Numerous global influences continue to push and pull the American table, at home and in the restaurant.

Wylie: In my kitchen we use the melting pot label as an excuse to bring ingredients and techniques from all over the world in to our kitchen.

Dewey: Absolutely. Especially in metropolitan areas where people are influenced by the global influx of immigrants and therefore the cultures they bring with them. American chefs incorporate spices and influences into their cuisine to become a part of their cooking.

2. In recent years there's been a boom in restaurants cooking all types of food, from Mexican to Thai. With this mixture of different traditions and cultures, isn't there a risk that different flavors will start tasting the same?

Myra: Merging, mixing and melting are what continues to shape American cuisine.

Wylie: I don't think so. As long as a chef uses these

flavors and techniques with an understanding then there's no reason that they can't help us to create 'new traditions.'

Dewey: Only if they are improperly used. Over the years this has become incorporated into a new, constantly evolving indigenous cuisine. There are cross cultural techniques and seasonings.

3. Talking of gastronomy, how open are Americans to other cultures and how close do they feel to their own?

Myra: Among food cognoscenti there is an elitist attitude about what defines "cuisine"; to the point that many culinary historians have claimed that America is too young to have its own cuisine. The American table is a reflection of the world's people and their diverse culinary traditions. We are embracing to all aspects of other cultures, including the customs and rituals of food. What Americans have come to call "American cuisine" has always been fusion and has never been easy to define in the way Italian, French or even Japanese cuisines can be.

Wylie: I'd like to think we are open. Our country is based on that idea, and certainly New York City embraces the foods of many nations.

Dewey: This country is so big it becomes more about looking at the regional aspect. Regionally, people are proud of their cuisine, take barbecue as an example; it varies from state to state. But, certainly New York is open to other cultures as it the most culturally diverse city in America. And, as people travel more and more immigrants settle in the country, America opens up more and more.

4. Are there young American chefs trying to bring back old traditional American cooking?

Myra: I don't think Americans are nostalgic about food; rather we are always looking for the next new thing. But there are several American chefs reinventing traditional regional recipes with a more modern interpretation. I've seen a lot of short ribs on many "A" list menus, updated versions of an old classic from most American Moms' kitchens. Apple pie has many new faces on upscale menus too.

Wylie: Not that I know of.

5. What role does fast food have in the American family?

Myra: If "what we eat now" defines our cuisine then fast and junk food is the American family cuisine. Fortunately the recent plethora of news reports on obesity and poor health among Americans and the link to what we eat has forced the big fast food chains to offer a broader range

of healthier options. The easy availability and low cost of fast food has made it a frequent food choice among time squeezed families.

Wylie: Unfortunately, it seems to play a large role in the American family. However, recently it seems that people are reevaluating it because there is an increasing awareness nationwide of how unhealthy it really is.

6. Do you think that espresso coffee, which is one of the symbols of Italian culture around the world, could become part of the tradition of day-to-day life for the majority of Americans?

Myra: For good or bad, Americans have a history of adapting or modifying almost everything we import. Most likely we will not exactly mirror the Italian ritual of coffee consumption in its entirety. Rather, we will embrace some modified version and define our own traditions, however slight those adaptations turn out to be.

Wylie: It already has, it's called Starbucks!





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Words to practice for today:
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左列(漢) song	左列(漢) large
左列(漢) not out	左列(漢) take
左列(漢) to be	左列(漢) only
左列(漢) waterbird	左列(漢) salt lamp

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