

Silicon Valley

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PREMIERE ISSUE!



AGENT OF CHANGE

Tristan Walker Challenges the Startup Status Quo

SPRING FASHION
THE FUTURE OF STYLE ALIGHTS IN SAN JOSE

OFF-DUTY DEVICES
INVENTIONS POISED TO CHANGE THE WAY WE PLAY

MODERN MASTERPIECE
A PENINSULA HOME HARMONIZES WITH NATURE

PLUS AN INSIDER'S GUIDE TO DINING OUT FROM BURLINGAME TO LOS GATOS

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STEAK OUT
From top: The wagyu rib-eye (\$33) at Bird Dog in Palo Alto; chef Robbie Wilson.

CHEF CHAT

A Fresh Perspective

Last fall, chef Robbie Wilson—along with his wife and business partner, Emily—moved from Santa Barbara to the Peninsula to open **Bird Dog** (420 Ramona St., Palo Alto, 650.656.8180, birddogpa.com). Now that they've had some time to settle in, he sat down to talk about their 4-month-old Palo Alto restaurant, which features California cuisine with Japanese notes. —AL

You trained in France and have worked at The French Laundry and Nobu. But where did it all start? In high school—at an old, funky steakhouse where all of the steaks were grilled over mesquite and marinated in teriyaki sauce—as a means to not have to ask my father for cash. Although he was generous in his own special way, he wasn't big on handouts. **Describe your approach to food, please.** We simply cook food that we want to eat. End of story. Furthermore, we love what we do. We keep our egos in check. We try not to take ourselves too seriously. We enjoy ourselves, and we look forward to the task at hand. A fairly simple approach. **How has that translated into the menu at Bird Dog?** In the past, when Emily and I wanted to go out for dinner, the things that we would crave were generally found at different restaurants. At Bird Dog there is a progression of various types of dishes to satisfy these cravings: sashimi options; intensely, fatty, flavored, smaller-portioned proteins; and simple, creative vegetables. Frankly, I just became underwhelmed and indecisive with any commitment to the larger formatted selections on so many menus. **In your first few months, what has been the reaction**



from diners? Better than we could have ever imagined. This community of ours has been acutely supportive, kind, thoughtful and appreciative since Day One. There has not been one service yet where a guest has not come back to the pass and wished us the best. It has been a pep rally of sorts. **Has being in Silicon Valley influenced your cooking?** No question. When you are surrounded daily by an onslaught of logical minds, it forces you to be honest with your cooking. At the same time, one can push the envelope a bit knowing that many of your guests are dialed in to the au courant culinary scene just up the road in San Francisco. **Finally, what's the origin of the name?** Bird Dog, by definition, essentially alludes to: searching out or pursuing a goal with dogged determination. Before Bird Dog opened its doors, or even had a name, I earnestly established some definitive goals for this soon-to-be restaurant, our team and myself. As professionals, I knew that we would continue to generate boundless goals for our craft.