

A man and a woman are standing in a shallow river, smiling at the camera. The woman, on the left, is wearing a red long-sleeved shirt and dark blue jeans. The man, on the right, is wearing a light green long-sleeved shirt, dark blue jeans, and a white cowboy hat. They are both holding hands, and water is splashing between them. The background shows a rocky riverbank with some dry grass and a hillside in the distance.

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Celebrating the local food culture, season by season

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Local Water • Spring Cocktails • Home Composting

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chef's table



River Walk Splash

Campo — helmed by local food loyalist Mark Estee — is a welcome addition to Reno's dining scene.

WRITTEN BY SANDRA MACIAS
PHOTOS BY SHEA EVANS

Have a morning cappuccino at a sunny window table overlooking the Truckee River. Or bite into a Neapolitan pizza for lunch, its thin crust smoky and crispy. Or kick off dinner by sharing a savory salami board adorned with house-cured meats. Day or night, Campo — which opened in mid-November 2011 in the bottom of the Palladio condominiums on the River Walk downtown — is the hot urban spot to meet friends around a conversational table loaded with uncommonly good food.

Mornings, Campo wakes up leisurely with cappuccinos and light breakfast fare before quickening the pace for the 60-minute lunch crowd. Evenings, Campo cuts loose.

Energy-charged servers swirl through a maze of high-top tables, banquettes, foursome tables, and booths. Meanwhile, a hostess, trying to appear unruffled, juggles reservations and walk-in traffic. Brisk activity continues in the open kitchen at the back of the house while a snazzy wood-fired pizza oven — straight from Naples, Italy — burns hot up front. Amidst all this, the bar keeps life social. As if Campo needs any help with that.

Eclectic décor adds to the fun: rustic, reclaimed-wood tables; cement floors; an open ceiling exposing a jumble of vents, pipes, and fans; and collected, recycled pieces stuck away in corners. The favorite: the bar's fire-engine red, retrofitted icebox that Chef/Owner Mark Estee found on eBay.

RUSTIC CUISINE

Campo offers rustic cuisine with “an Italian sensibility,” in Estee's words. And the one-page menu, printed daily to allow for seasonal changes or what's available, is inventive and full of surprises.

There's Bismarck pizza: an over-easy egg rests smack in its middle. With a bit of piecrust, you break the yolk, which coats the deliciously simple pie of tomato, house-made mozzarella, and speck (smoked prosciutto) for an added lick of amazing flavor.

Another surprise: kale salad. Kale?!!!!? Yes, green as the tropics and supremely fresh, it's tossed with a lemon-garlic dressing complementing the leaves' rich bite magnificently. A poached egg and crispy grana padano finishes the salad. Totally terrific.

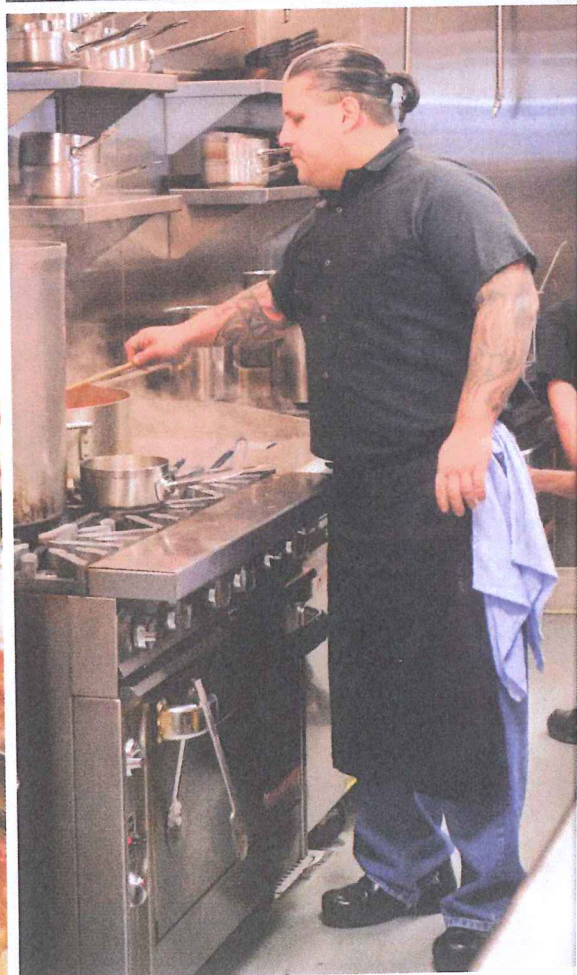
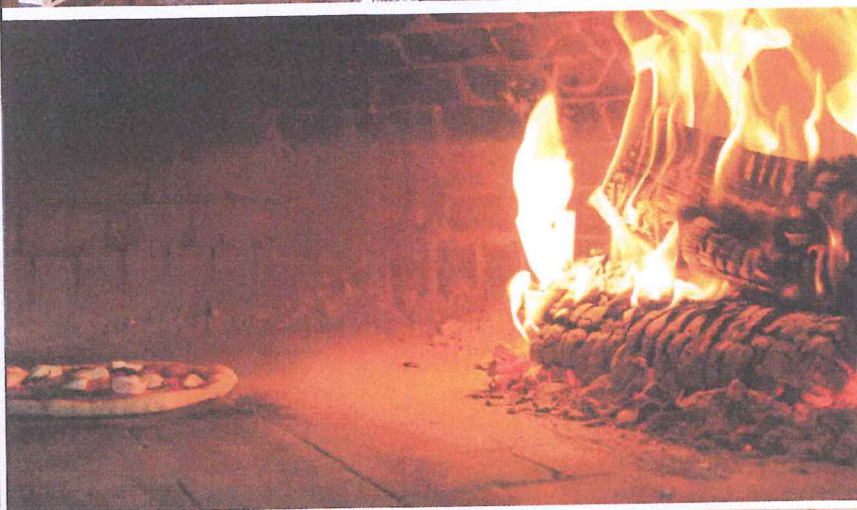
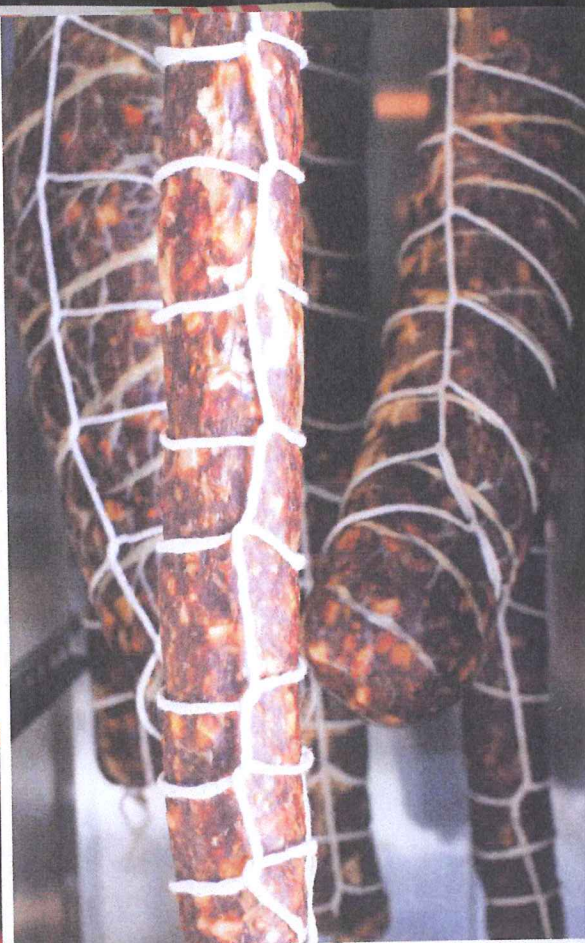
FARM TO FORK

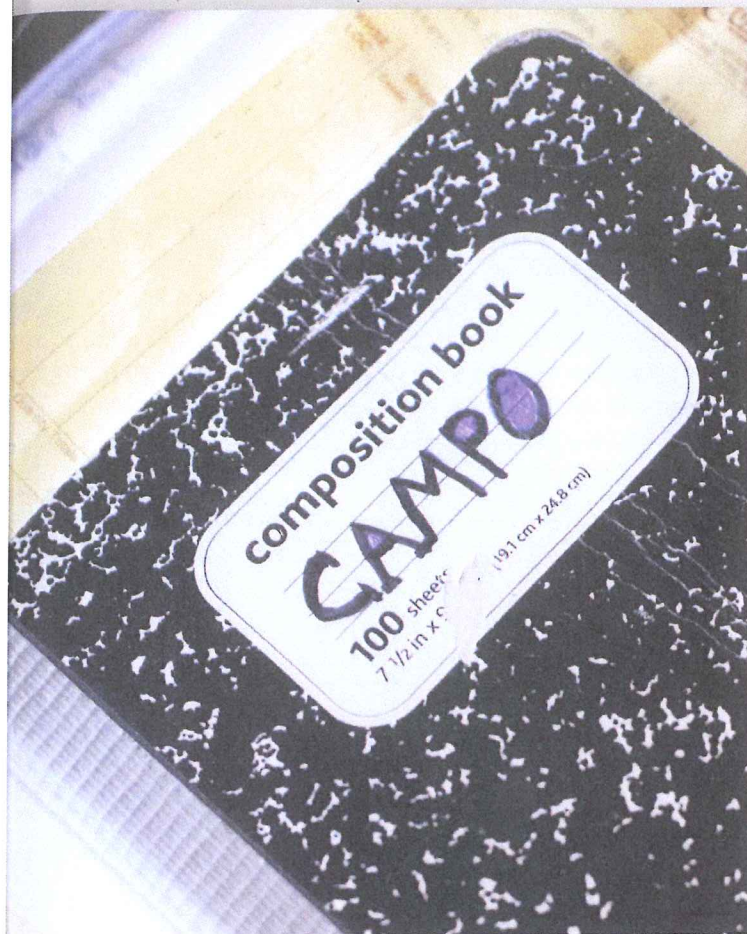
At Campo, fresh ingredients make the difference. Its hallmark: a commitment to the farm-to-fork philosophy, one Estee has embraced since opening Moody's in Truckee almost 10 years ago. Estee, a regional celebrity chef who also owns Burger Me eateries in Truckee and Reno, is a stickler for fresh, seasonal, organic ingredients that are locally grown. His main food source is the Great Basin Community Food Co-op in Reno.

“It is great because it is the hub for local farmers,” Estee says. “Going through the co-op makes it easier for farmers to drop off their products in one location as opposed to spending time delivering to each of my restaurants.”

Chef/Owner Mark Estee with Chef Arturo D. Moscoso

Story continues on page 58





CAMPO SPINACH SALAD

(courtesy of Campo, 6 to 8 servings)

- 1 pound Bloomsdale spinach (or other local sturdy type)
- 3 shallots, julienned
- 4 ounces pancetta
- 8 ounces goat cheese
- 4 tablespoons toasted pine nuts
- 4 ounces grape-seed oil
- 2 ounces extra virgin olive oil
- 4 ounces red wine vinegar
- Kosher salt
- Fresh pepper

In a saucepan on medium heat add the pancetta and shallots. Sweat for 2 minutes. Add 2 tablespoons water. Cook for 1 minute. Add the 2 ounces oils and vinegar, reduce heat to low, add $\frac{1}{2}$ of the spinach, and mix into hot dressing. Place the remaining spinach into a large mixing bowl and season with salt and pepper. When spinach starts to cook, remove from the heat and pour the hot mixture in a large bowl that contains the rest of the spinach. Use your hands and toss warm spinach and cold spinach together. Add goat cheese and pine nuts. Continue to toss. Serve in bowls.

Estee also buys eggs directly from Hadji Paul's Chicken & Feed and produce from Avansino Farm and River School Farm, all Reno sources.

HOUSE MADE

Campo's kitchen keeps it fresh with house-made mustard, cheeses, and sausage, house-cured salami, and handcrafted pizza and pasta. Whole hogs also are broken down in the kitchen, assuring fresh meat cuts. One of Campo's signature dishes is pork prepared three ways (braised, roasted, and formed into sausage). With spring menu changes, a whole lamb will be broken down and prepared the same ways as above.

Ever since Campo's opening night, pappardelle with wild boar Bolognese was an instant hit. It remains on the spring menu along with lighter pasta fare such as cavatelli (short, ripple-edged shell pasta) tossed with rabbit and fresh greens. Other spring additions: fresh, local duck eggs, instead of a chicken egg, on the Bismarck pizza and an aromatic white pizza of morels and robiola, sprinkled with fresh thyme and orange zest.

Add an Italian or California wine from a carefully selected list, and you can't go wrong — unless you skip dessert and the addictive budino (Italian for pudding), served in a Mason jar.

Campo's food is deliciously fresh and wildly fun. With Campo's riverside patio opening as soon as the weather cooperates, what more could you want?

"The sky's the limit!" says an enthusiastic, grinning Estee, arms widespread. 🐔

Longtime Reno-based Food Writer Sandra Macias welcomes Campo, loving its digs that are unlike any other in town. She already has a list of dishes to try on her next visit — but only after that memorable kale salad.

RESOURCES

Campo

50 N. Sierra St., No. 104, Reno, 775-737-9555

(Entrance: southwest corner of the Palladio condominiums)

Open daily

Coffee bar 8 – 11 a.m. Mon. – Fri.

Lunch 11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. Mon. – Sat.

Tweener Menu 2:30 – 5 p.m.

Sunday Brunch 11 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Happy Hour 3:30 – 5:30 p.m.

Dinner 5 – 9 p.m. Mon. – Thurs., 5 – 10 p.m. Fri. – Sat., and 5 – 8 p.m. Sun. Dinner recommendations highly recommended

For weekly specials and other news, visit Camporeno.com or the restaurant's Facebook page.



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CAMPO BUCATINI

(courtesy of Campo, 4 servings)

- 1 pound cooked bucatini
- 4 ounces diced pancetta
- 1 tablespoon garlic
- 4 tablespoons white wine
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 4 local eggs
- 1 cup grated Grana Padano
- Kosher salt
- Black pepper

Heat saucepan to medium heat. Add pancetta and garlic, sweat for 7 to 8 minutes. Add wine and reduce. Add $\frac{3}{4}$ of cream and bring to a simmer. Whisk eggs with remaining cream. Add pasta and toss. Add egg and cream and toss until sauce starts to thicken. Season with salt and pepper. Toss in grated cheese and serve.

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