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## *Nantucket's third annual Hogtoberfest promises to be pig heaven once again.*

**LET'S FACE IT:** Our language has given pork a pretty bad rap. If you eat too much and feel sick, you are “pigging out.” Corrupt politicians are known for their “pork belly” deals. If you live in a messy place, it’s called a “pigsty.” We raise our ire at road hogs and male chauvinist pigs. And then there’s The Bible’s famous “Cast not your pearls before swine.”

The truth is that as the good folks at the National Pork Producers’ Council have taught us, pork can actually be fine “white meat,” a versatile, reasonably priced choice that can be very good for you. The leaner tenderloin and chops cuts are high in protein, low in fat, and full of important B-vitamins. Just try to stay away from too much bacon—unless of course it’s a Hot Chocolate Bacon Brownie, one of the featured menu items at this fall’s Nantucket Hogtoberfest.

Each October for the last two years, pork lovers have traveled to the island for this upscale event dedicated to pure porcine pleasure—and they will do so again this October 15 and 16. Pork aficionado Michael LaScola, chef of the island’s highly regarded American Sea-

sons restaurant, teams up with Chef Matt Jennings of Providence’s The Farmstead (winner of the Northeast Boston Cochon 555 competition, where he was recently crowned “The Prince of Pork”) to bring visitors an entire weekend custom-tailored to turn pork fans into culinary connoisseurs.

The centerpieces of the weekend are two Berkshire-Tamworth pigs raised on Nantucket’s The Far Away Farm. American Seasons, a charming eclectic bistro conveniently located on Centre Street in the heart of Nantucket village, is the stage for two days of events, kicked off with a “This Little Piggy” Carving Demo on Saturday morning. Guests watch a back-of-the-house demo while Michael and Matt butcher an entire pig from tail to snout.

At the 2010 Hogtoberfest, a group of somewhat squeamish guests quickly relaxed listening to Matt and Michael’s chatter during the 10 a.m. demo when low-on-the-pig cuts earned a place on American Seasons’s innovative menu of pork choices. At 2 p.m., in the outdoor dining area of the restaurant still warm and flower-



At the 2010 Nantucket Hogtoberfest, guests enjoyed a full weekend of porcine pleasure at the island's American Seasons restaurant. Chef Michael LaScola (top row, center) will join forces with his wife and American Seasons Sommelier, Orla Murphy LaScola, and Providence's The Farmstead chef, Matt Jennings once again for this fall's October 15 and 16 Hogtoberfest.

scented on an autumn afternoon, guests gathered to sip tasty local beer from island brewmaster Jeff Homer of Cisco Brewers at a Beer Master Class. Different brews, including some particularly good red and deep orange varieties, were perfectly paired with pork delicacies, including several melt-in-your-mouth pates served with artisanal mustards, pickles, fresh ginger, and hand-crafted breads.

Michael LaScola and his wife, American Seasons' sommelier Orla Murphy LaScola, were on hand to answer guests' questions. "We decided to do this event because there are so many interesting things that can be done with pork—it is such a versatile meat," said Michael, sitting in the restaurant's cozy, creatively decorated bar area. "And the Hogtoberfest is a great way to bring people back to the island between the busy summer season and the December holiday stroll weekend."

At that evening's "All Things Pork" dinner, a sell-out crowd of guests gathered in American Seasons' intimate, candle-lit dining rooms, ready to pig out on pork specials, paired with wines from the restaurant's all-

## Hogtoberfest 2011 Menu

### AMERICAN SEASONS

#### SNACKS

Head-on-a-Stick, Smoked Tomato Dressing,  
Dill Pickles  
House-smoked Country Ham & Buttermilk  
Biscuits, Apple Mustard  
Pig Ear Fries, Chili & Lime  
Pork Cracklins & Maple Flavors  
Mixed Charcuterie (Rooter to Tooter)

#### TO SHARE

Half Roasted Pigs Heads with House-made  
Pickles & Baboo's Mustard

#### FIRST

"Chicken Fried" Pig Tails, Buttermilk Potato  
Fondant, Black Pepper Honey & Pickled  
Apple Relish, Pecans

#### SECOND

Ginger Brew-Braised Pork Belly, Boudin  
Noir Gratin, Pig Jus, Fig Vinegar & Quail Egg

#### THIRD

Pork Meat Loaf Sandwich, Cured Foie Gras,  
Smoked Ketchup, Caramelized Onion  
Marmalade

#### FOURTH

Chili & Tobacco-Rubbed Loin of Pork,  
Cheddar Grits, Mustard Greens, Pig Ear  
Bacon, Drunk Plums & Garden Sage

#### FIFTH

Hot Chocolate Bacon Brownie  
Banana Split with Lardo Ice Cream & Salty  
Caramel

### 'Three Little Nantucket Pigs' Bully Boy Cocktail Hour

#### FIRST LITTLE PIGGY

ACK Mojito  
Bully Boy White Rum, Beach Plum Syrup,  
Fresh Lemon Juice, Lemon Wedge, Basil and  
Mint Leaves

#### SECOND LITTLE PIGGY

Cranberry Bog Martini  
Bully Boy Vodka, Nantucket Conservation  
Cranberry Puree, Lemon Juice, Brown Sugar  
Simple Syrup, Splash of Chocolate Liqueur

#### THIRD LITTLE PIGGY

Raised in the Fog  
Bully Boy White Whiskey, Powdered Sugar,  
Egg White, Brown Sugar Simple Syrup,  
Splash of Kübler Absinthe, Splash of Tonic

American wine list, featuring 500-plus vintages chosen by Orla.

The dinner started with a bang when guests were served a small glass of John Jameson's distinctive Whiskey 1780, the precursor to half of a steaming roasted pig's head for each guest, served with tart pickles and nose-tingling Baboo's Mustard.

The pork was cooked to fall-off-the-bone perfection and set the stage for the second of six courses: "Breakfast of Champions," sweet and comforting with maple glazed pork belly, foie gras sausage, oats, and bacon granola, topped with a sunny quail egg. Served with a classic Bloody Mary, the course was a wake-up for the zippy third course of spicy fired pork and ricotta meatballs, piquillo pepper, and chimichurri, washed down with a zesty Porkslap ale.

The wait staff was good at keeping guests happy with attentive service and quick refilling of water glasses, a necessity with six courses. For the fourth course, a whole hog crepinette was served with tomato fondue, creamy chevre and black garlic lentils, and fennel cracklins, the flavor deepened with a fine glass of I'M Cabernet Rose featuring scents of cranberries and apples.

A tasty, sweet and nutty fifth course was a highlight of the evening, with a super-tender roast loin of pork served with an unusual bacon (smoked guanciale)—a tasty choice sweetened with onion marmelade on soft polenta garnished with hazelnuts. Served with a cedar and fruit-scented malbec—La Posta Cocina—this course was followed by a soul-warming dessert: caramelized apple brioche and bacon bread pudding and cider ice cream with caramel and candied bacon.

The high on the hog crowd of happy diners applauded Michael, Orla, Matt, and the American Season's staff vigorously before trailing out into the warm seaside air. If you are a lover of pork, fine wines, great beer—and most of all of top of the heap cuisine in one of the world's loveliest places—reserve your spot soon at this fall's Hogtoberfest trough.

**For information on this fall's Hogtoberfest, call 508-228-7111 for reservations, times and pricing. Space is limited. 🍷**

*Susan Dewey is the Associate Publisher and Editor of Cape Cod Life Publications.*