

# Allyn's restaurant changes hands

By Mitchell Trinka  
Staff Reporter

Alicia and Mikael Moller, owners of Charlotte's, always wanted to move to the country and own a restaurant. Seventeen years after starting their New York City catering business by the same name, the Mollers have now found a place in Millbrook, Allyn's restaurant. Charlotte's, once a church, a theatre, and a barn among other uses, was built 225 years ago. Mikael Moller came to the building seeing the rich drapery

and furnishings accompanied by a finished looking dining area. For Moller, this wasn't what rural fine dining should be like, so he started to renovate.

"We've done so much in so little time," said Moller.

Only a month after they moved into the space they have repainted many of the rooms, are using new tablecloths, changed the smooth and shiny bead board to a more rustic stained matte board, and invested in new chandeliers from Arrowsmith Forge. For Moller it has been worth the work.

"It's a whole different room come nighttime," said Moller.

For the owners, the room can be changed from one look in the evening, to an entirely different one during the day. One thing that Moller said has influenced the change is the menu. He heard patrons of Allyn's telling him when he opened, that the menu read like a book, and he could do well by shortening it. Moller agreed, saying you could starve before you finished reading the old menu.

Now Moller, a chef for 35 years, doesn't have a set menu,

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instead he has a menu of the day or week, choosing to change the 8-10 main courses on the menu whenever he feels like it.

When cooking, Moller likes to use 6-8 different vegetables on a plate, as well as employing the use of different game meats, like pheasant, venison, or game hen. For Moller, the use of different meats and vegetables is key to giving patrons a different flavor in every bite they take.

"It should be a culinary adventure while you eat here," said Moller.

His wife and co-owner, Alicia Moller, likes what her husband has done with the menu, saying his menu is sophisticated like a Manhattan restaurant, but by using game and a lot of different vegetables, is rooted in country living.

One dish, escalope of Norwegian salmon in a lime dill beurre blanc, and accompanied by their mushroom artichoke orzo, is a light dish with height and lots of flavor, while they also offer an inch-thick smoked pork chop with dirty mashed potatoes, roasted shallots, and a red onion marmalade. Moller said it is imperative they have such different meals, adding

that they have many different appetites walk through their doors.

For Moller, it is great to see people come in and book 3-4 reservations in the future, adding that she thinks the move has been a positive one for her and her husband.

"I want to be here for a long time," said Moller.

In the end, Mikael Moller said he just wants people to come and try his food, saying that he loves cooking because he gets to make people happy with his culinary creations.

"I'm not trying to just be another steak house," said Moller.

He said more important than anything else, people interested should call and make a reservation. It is more than just making sure you get a seat for Moller, who said if he doesn't know how many people he has to cook for things can get very tense because they only staff the amount of people they think they will need. Moller said it is best that people call a couple of days in advance for seating, especially when they are having their Thanksgiving dinner with all the trimmings.



LIVING A DREAM: Owners of Charlotte's restaurant, Alicia and Mikael Moller, stand in front of one of the restaurant's four fireplaces. (Photo by Mitchell Trinka)

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