

TASTING TABLE

Thu. 22 Oct '09

People | SAN FRANCISCO

Dessert 2.0

The talent behind Absinthe's smart sweets

Many visit Absinthe for its benchmark cocktails and to see *Top Chef* alum, Jamie Lauren, but there's a sweeter reason to go: the inimitable desserts of wunderkind pastry chef Luis Villavelazquez.

Much has been made of Villavelazquez' weekly bakery stand--which debuted today at the [Ferry Building](#)--where he's serving easygoing treats like maple-bacon *bombolini* and lime-coconut cupcakes.

No doubt the venture will be a raucous success. But our money--and mouths--will always be on his wildly delicious composed plates.

Two of his finest creations are currently on Absinthe's menu. For the first, Villavelazquez expels walnut batter from a siphon, then microwaves it; the result is a dead ringer for chiffon cake. Rough sheets of it are strewn over cocoa-Nocino candy, brown-butter-ice cream and spiced, sugar-poached cubes of Okinawan blue potatoes. Think fall flavors in overdrive.

The second dessert was almost washed away with last week's rains. Before the deluge, Villavelazquez hoarded cases of Black Mission figs for a dish he brought with him from [Orson](#). Cooked in San Francisco's favorite digestif, Fernet-Branca, the fruit is surrounded by pine-nut-ice cream and a trail of black-pepper granola. It's like having breakfast, dessert, and a nightcap at the same time.

398 Hayes St. (at Octavia St.); 415-551-1590 or absinthe.com



Photo: Ana Homonnay