

TELLURIDE DAILY PLANET

January 9, 2012 / Telluride Daily Planet **New restaurant opens in Dahl Haus on Oak Street** by Katie Klingsporn

When Eric Eckert was in the process of opening a restaurant in the Dahl Haus, a historic building in downtown Telluride, he didn't want to pigeonhole his establishment into a specific discipline of cooking.

Instead, he focused on fresh and seasonally inspired ingredients, a sophisticated approach to classic dishes and an emphasis on care and craftsmanship in the kitchen. The result is Flavor Telluride, an eclectic new dining establishment that offers classic breakfast dishes, salads and sandwiches and gourmet interpretations of comfort foods.

The restaurant held its soft opening on New Year's Eve. It's now open seven days a week and is serving breakfast, lunch, an après-ski menu and dinner.

The restaurant, which has been completely renovated since it housed Fat Alley, sits somewhere between casual and upscale. It offers sit-down service at tables with folded cloth napkins, but diners can grab a cheeseburger and fries for \$9. Its menu includes foodie-friendly ingredients such as organic loch duart salmon, lardons and crispy pancetta, but it also features laymen's favorites like French fries covered in cheese; eggs, potatoes and toast; and grilled cheese sandwiches.

"I've been kind of calling it casual upscale," he said.

Though Eckert didn't want to back himself into a specific genre of food, there is a distinct New Orleans-inspired thread running through the menu — and an epicurean slant to classic comfort food dishes.

The shrimp and grits, for example, comes with manchego cheese, gulf shrimp and house-made tasso lardons. The cochon de lait sandwich is prepared with Snake River Farms kurobuta pork that is smoked in house, braised in root beer and served with apple slaw on a Cindybread bun. There is a seared polenta cake topped with ratatouille, and the fried chicken plate comes with two pieces of buttermilk fried chicken with rosemary infused maple syrup and fries. For those looking for something lighter, the house salad is prepared with artisanal mixed greens, watercress, chevre, toasted hazelnuts and sherry-agave vinaigrette. Or there is a smoked salmon, pancetta, lettuce and fried green tomato sandwich on multi-grain bread.

"We're very unpretentious here," Eckert said. "We're just about taking good quality ingredients and making good quality products."