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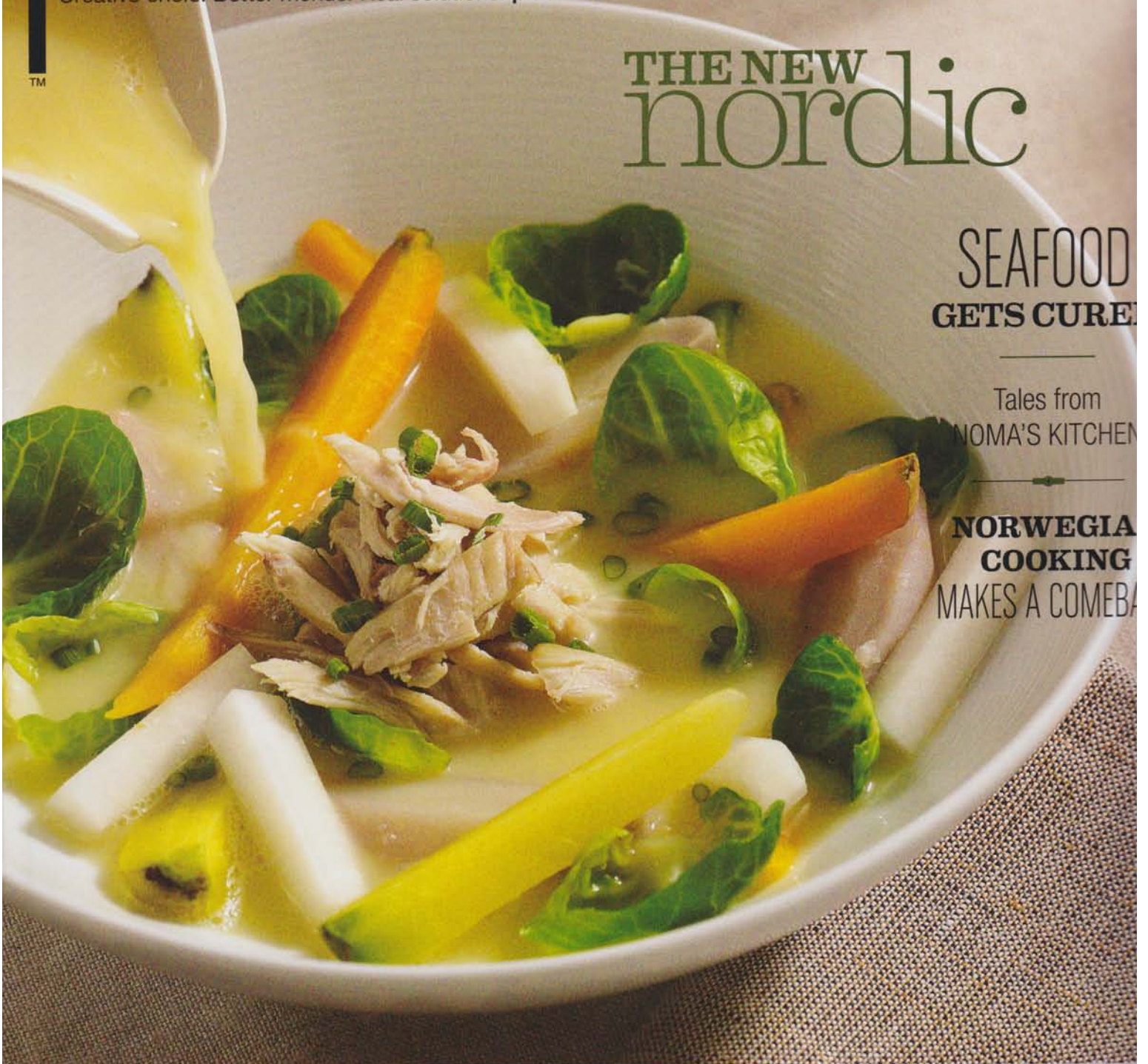
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Out of Austria

SIMPLE FAMILY DESSERTS REIGN AT SAN FRANCISCO'S LEOPOLD'S

by **Katie Robbins**

After 20 years of running restaurants in San Francisco, brothers Albert and Klaus Rainer were inspired to bring the flavors of their Austrian upbringing to the Bay Area dining scene. Named for their grandfather, a wine trader, Leopold's is a classic Austrian *gasthaus*, with *dirndl*-clad servers, beer steins, and *schnitzel*. Klaus Rainer discusses the inspirations behind the sweet side of the menu.

What did you think about when designing the dessert menu?

I am a trained pastry chef. I was

trained in Viennese pastries, *apfelstrudel* or *Linzer torte* and *sachertorte*. Those are basics. People who know a little bit about Austria know those desserts, and then Mozart and Schwarzenegger.

Are these the desserts you'd see in a coffeehouse?

In Austria's coffeehouse culture, you don't take your coffee to go. You run into someone on the street and you go into the next coffee house and you have an *apfelstrudel* or a *Linzer torte*. A little snack with your coffee. There aren't too many Sundays after lunch where you don't

sit down and enjoy a cup of coffee with those traditional desserts.

How traditional is Leopold's?

We try to keep it traditional, and we do make [desserts] in-house. We make it very much the way it should be. I still use recipes from the days when I first learned the trade; basic recipes that haven't changed in hundreds of years. They are simple recipes. Every housewife had the ingredients in their kitchen or in their back yard to create an *apfelstrudel* or *Linzer torte*. Everyone had apples in the back yard. Then you need water, flour, a little bit of salt. You [add] some cinnamon, sugar, raisins, and you roll it up. So it's basically a cheap, good dessert.

How do you serve the *apfelstrudel*?

We serve it with vanilla cream called *schlag*. It's just whipped cream with a tiny little bit of sugar and maybe fresh vanilla. I remember as a kid, just to have fresh whipping cream in the afternoon was a treat. You put a spoonful in your coffee and then you get a little serving next to your *apfelstrudel* or your apple cake.

Are there regional differences in Austrian baking?

The Viennese are really known for their *apfelstrudel*. Basically there's no coffeehouse in Vienna without *apfelstrudel*. And *Linzer torte* is named after the city of Linz. I grew up in Salzburg and trained at a very traditional hotel there. Hotel Sacher, the original place of the *sachertorte*. Every city has something to claim.

What kind of coffee is best with these desserts?

Typically in Vienna they call it a *melange*, which is two shots of espresso with some cream. They always serve it with a glass of water. They say you should drink a glass of water before you drink your coffee and eat your dessert. It's part of the Austrian coffee culture. It's very good for you.