



RESTYLING A CLASSIC: Owners Mark A. Zimmerman, left, and his brother, Dan Zimmerman, have revamped Cinq restaurant at La Colombe d'Or.

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Zimmerman 2.0

A new day for La Colombe d'Or

By Greg Morago | HOUSTON CHRONICLE



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SEAFOOD TWIST: Spanish octopus with avocado aioli and a chorizo celery heart salad.

Yes, you can do home again. And you can do it with style, innovation and no small measure of chutzpah — as Dan and Mark Zimmerman are displaying. Returning to Houston after college, the sons of La Colombe d'Or

owners Steve and Becky Zimmerman threw themselves into the business they grew up with — in a major way.

They've restored their family's beloved small luxury hotel. A stone's throw away from that property and their mother's Zimm's Martini & Wine Bar, they've also opened a "fancy icehouse" called Zimm's Little Deck.

Some would call it crazy to attempt nearly simultaneous projects. The Zimmerman brothers call it inevitable.

"It's in our blood," Dan Zimmerman said.

They're also taking risks. This

month, as La Colombe d'Or marks its 30th anniversary, they're rebranding the hotel's restaurant as Cinq.

Gone are the tuxedoed waiters bearing leather-bound menus of serious, Old World French cuisine. Now servers with fuchsia-biased shirts and Zegna ties present a menu of modern European fare.

The Zimmermans made their boldest move in hiring chef Jeramie Robison, a Ruston, La., native who's worked at the Mansion on Turtle Creek in Dallas and David Burke's Fish Tail in New York, to oversee both Cinq and Zimm's Little Deck. The Zimmerman brothers and Robison, all in their 20s, clicked from the beginning.

Tesars, where Robison was co-executive chef, shuttered last May, and he was about to move to Austin when the Zimmermans snagged him for an interview. "I had the U-Haul packed. If they had called an hour later, ..." Robison said in a honeyed drawl.

The Zimmermans were so impressed they didn't even taste his food. But they gave Robison a fine line to walk: they wanted to keep their loyal clientele happy and drive new guests to experience the grande dame mansion's beautiful, art-filled dining rooms.

Cinq's menu embraces some of La Colombe d'Or's classics while showcasing Robison's accomplished dishes — including thoughtful presentations of braised Spanish octopus with chorizo and celery salad; cast iron-seared sea scallops with celery root puree; chile-rubbed pork tenderloin with roasted corn relish; and roasted saddle of rabbit with rabbit confit leg with pear and grain mustard.

The young turks are bringing the hotel and its restaurant into a new era.

"That was the idea — to start with a new generation and build a young team," Mark Zimmerman said. "Hopefully, we'll be around."

With the talent and energy invested in Cinq, not to worry.



ROBISON

La Colombe d'Or gets a new look

Looking to rest in one of the world's smallest luxury hotels?

It's time to rediscover the charms of La Colombe d'Or. After an extensive renovation supervised by Dallas-based Vision Design (which has also put its Midas touch on the Mansion on Turtle Creek in their hometown and the 21 Club in New York), the rooms and apartment suites have new furniture, repolstered classic pieces, new color schemes and lighting designs. Luxury linens and amenities are in every room, along with an impressive art collection.



JULIE SOEGER

LINEN CHANGE: The Renoir Suite, one of the rooms at La Colombe d'Or Hotel in Houston that was recently renovated and restored by the Dallas-based Vision Design.

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