

When Houstonians want a break from the hustle and bustle of the big city, they step through the doors of La Colombe d'Or. The Montrose Boulevard mansion belonged to the Fondren family, founders of Humble Oil. There's something wonderfully classic about the historic home, sitting there patiently, like a grand lady waiting for a gentleman to fill in her dance card, an echo of an era gone by.

But looks can be deceiving, and the interior facelift that just took place at La Colombe d'Or is proof positive that this grand Southern lady still has her timeless beauty and a little snap in her yet. For nearly 30 years, La Colombe d'Or has been one of Houston's most romantic spots, the setting for countless proposals and weddings. Now, proprietor Steve Zimmerman is gently handing over the reins of this intimate restaurant and inn to his sons Dan and Mark, who've infused the place with a twenty-first century twist.

Begin with the re-branded restaurant, CINQ at La Colombe d'Or, featuring old-school classics from the original menu, interspersed with new ideas and more bites to share.

"We dine out with friends," says Dan of his generation. "We'll all meet up at a place and share a few dishes. We wanted the new menu to reflect that."

The menu is now divided into two sections, "La Colombe d'Or Classics" and "New Ideas," showcasing the best of both worlds. The new Tomato Mozzarella Caprese is a colorful, tasty platter of red and yellow tomatoes and chewy mozzarella drizzled with vinaigrette, large enough to feed two or three people.

Ditto on the Duck Tasting. The house-cured duck prosciutto is a real treat, while the confit thigh is done with a perfect crispness. You'd be missing out if you overlooked either the lobster bisque or the escargots from the classic side.

For dinner, the House Made Three Chili Rubbed Pork Tenderloin (that comes with a sassy Granny Smith applesauce) is a flavorful invention from chef Jeramie Robinson that dazzles. Also consider the veal chop, served with a beautiful but simple Tuscan herbed olive oil and roasted potatoes. The Pan Seared Chilean Sea Bass, served with jasmine

rice and roasted peanuts, is to die for—firm, simply prepared, showing off the fish.

The old and the new sit nicely together at La Colombe d'Or. And the Zimmerman father and sons say they've thoroughly enjoyed working together.

"The boys have been just great," says Steve. "They've taken the food in a new direction. But I told them, don't mess with my rack of lamb."

They haven't. ♦

● ● La Colombe d'Or Restaurant CINQ
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www.lacolombedor.com



ABOVE, LEFT: Brothers Dan and Mark Zimmerman have taken over the reins at La Colombe d'Or Restaurant CINQ. Under the direction of Chef Jeramie Robinson, Restaurant CINQ indulges diners with a menu of modern European cuisine infused with Texas Creole accents, in addition to creative reinterpretations of La Colombe d'Or classics.