

A Buckingham chef creates a dinner inspired by the bounty of local farms.

BY BETTY CICHY

THE INTELLIGENCER

Marc BrownGold was gaga over the Walla Walla.

"I think it's the most beautiful onion I've ever seen," the chef exclaimed, holding in his outstretched palm a bulb that, shorn of its papery skin, glistened pure white in the sunlight pouring through the kitchen door.

The onion and several others just as fetching had arrived at the restaurant two days earlier from Blooming Glen Farm, an organic farm in Hilltown. The delivery also included bunches of fragrant basil and Chioggia beets, an Italian

heirloom variety that, when cut in half, shows alternating pink and white rings, like a homegrown bull's-eye.

BrownGold had big plans for the just-picked vegetables and herbs. They would go into his chilled Chioggia beet soup, the first course in a special dinner celebrating food from local farms.

Tom Murtha and Tricia Borneman, the farmers who grew the beets and onions, were among the more than two dozen diners who gathered for the meal earlier this month at JustEat by BrownGold, the intimate Buckingham bistro owned by BrownGold and his wife, Theresa. The dinner was sponsored by the New Hope branch of Slow Food, an

international organization that works to preserve local food traditions, in part by linking consumers with farmers and other food producers in their area.

"We're people who love food and know that it's different when it's fresh and it's local," said Kimberly Kaufmann, leader of Slow Food's New Hope chapter, or convivium.

Kaufmann organized the dinner as a way to introduce the friends and members of Slow Food to a subject close to her heart — a new farmers market that's expected to open next spring on the Middletown Grange fairgrounds in Wrightstown. The market is a project of

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the Bucks County Foodshed Alliance, a recently formed group that hopes to connect small farmers with people — consumers, chefs, foodservice directors and others — who appreciate fresh, natural, seasonal food.

“What we’re trying to do is put this market into place and have more options in choosing local, sustainable foods,” Kaufmann told the diners as they settled into their seats.

She’d recruited BrownGold to create a meal that showcased local food, and he’d come up with a four-course menu, each course featuring food from a different farm.

The salad greens were from Buckingham’s Blue Moon Acres, which grows trendy, tiny microgreens in greenhouses and has recently branched out to field-grown lettuces. The beef brisket was from Tussock Sedge Farm in Blooming Glen, where owner Henry Rosenberger raises grass-fed Red Angus cattle. And the ice cream got its delicate floral flavor from Peace Valley Lavender Farm in New Britain Township,

which sent over its homemade lavender-infused honey, as well as dried lavender flowers.

“It was very, very easy to keep the menu simple and delicious because of what I got to work with this afternoon,” BrownGold said as servers set bowls of chilled beet soup in front of the diners. “My philosophy is always to get great ingredients and step back and let them speak for themselves.”