

## The Weekly Dish

By [Tom Sietsema](#)

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### SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY:

Four years ago, chef **Cathal Armstrong** and his wife, **Meshelle**, hatched the ideas for their *Restaurant Eve* over a bottle of wine at the venerable **Majestic Cafe** in Old Town. Understandably, the couple was distressed to hear last month that the sunny American landmark was about to close; one rumor had the cafe reopening as a sports bar.

"We couldn't allow it," Meshelle recalls thinking at the time. The Majestic Cafe "has sentimental meaning to Cathal and I." Faster than you can bake a layer cake -- and with the approval of the restaurant's owners, who include former Virginia governor **Mark Warner** and his wife, **Lisa Collis**-- the Armstrongs came up with a plan to save the place. Cathal would draw up a menu that nodded to tradition (roast chicken, "a great hamburger" and braised short ribs); the couple's business partner, sommelier **Todd Thrasher**, would mix classic cocktails; and Thrasher's wife, **Maria Chicas**, a former manager at **Jaleo** in Crystal City, would come aboard. Meanwhile, **Shannon Overmiller**, who has worked under chef Armstrong for a year at Eve, will execute her boss's recipes, some of which are now being taste-tested during Eve's staff meals.

Although the restaurant's name will be tweaked -- to the **Majestic** (911 King St., Alexandria; 703-837-9117) -- the dessert menu will continue to showcase old-fashioned cakes, and the interior will receive only minor refreshing. The turnaround will be quick. The Majestic's relaunch is expected to fall on one of two dates: the couple's daughter Eve's birthday (March 31) or the third anniversary of Restaurant Eve (April 19).

"Eve's always wanted a big sister," Meshelle jokes.