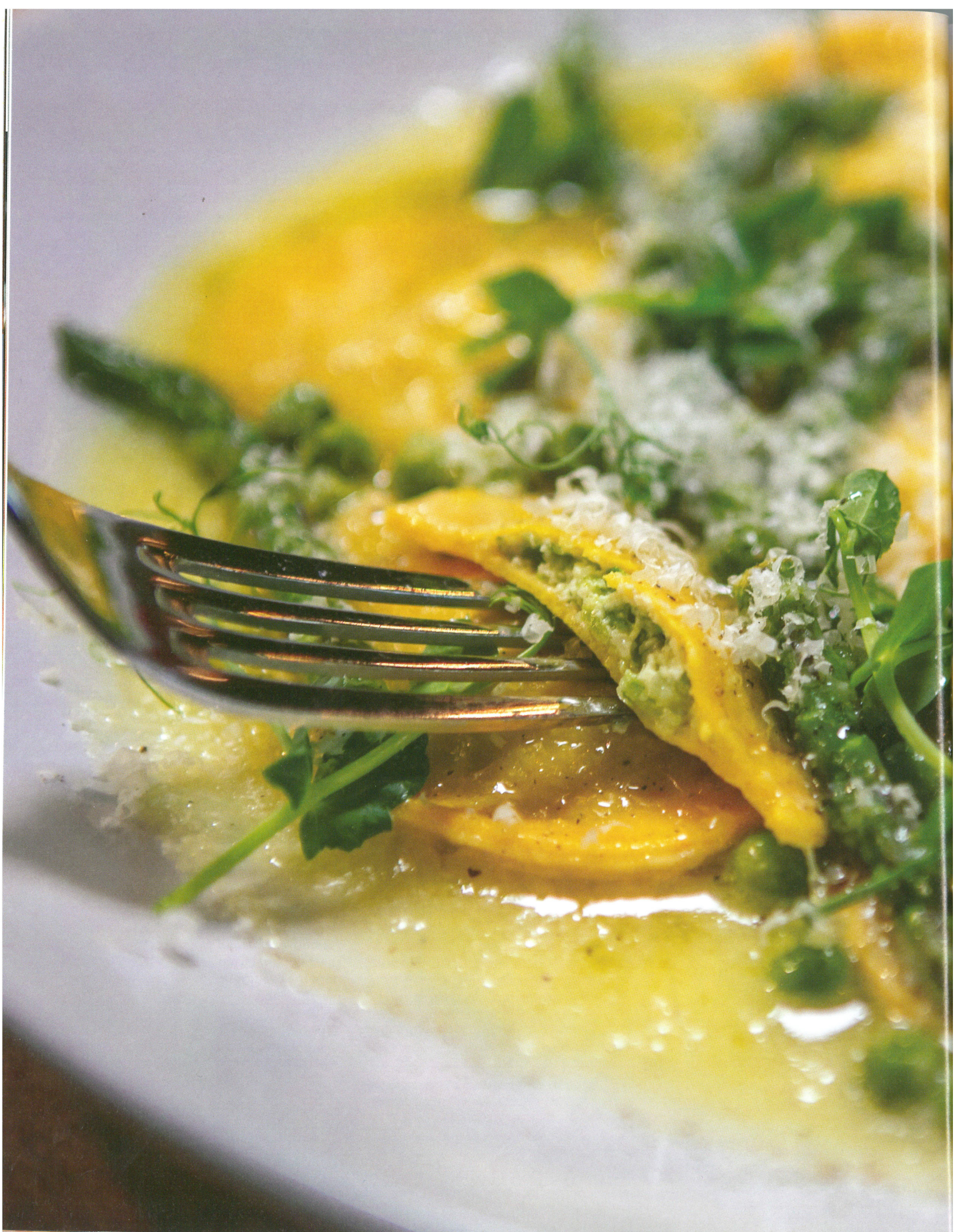
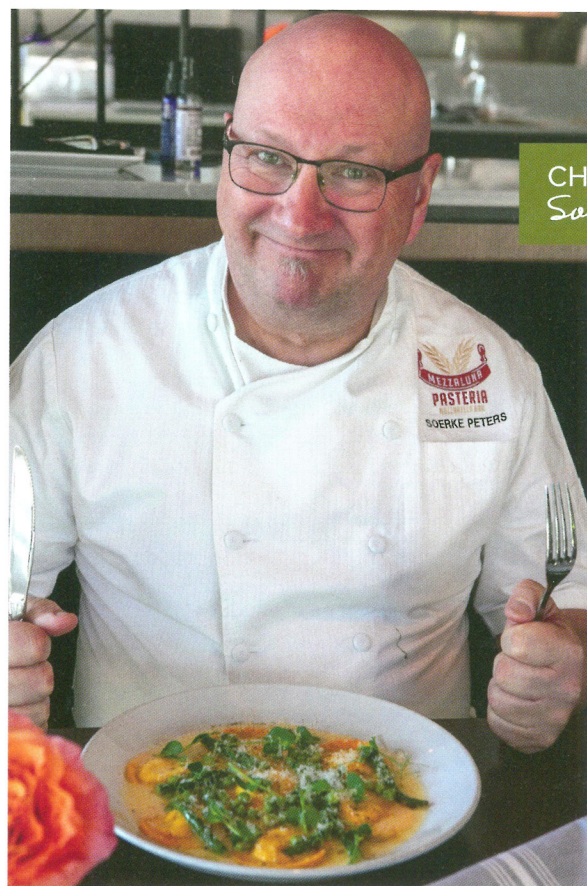


at the table

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CHEF
Soerke Peters

CULINARY CLASS

Spring Pasta-bilities

Learn how to make fresh ravioli at home with a Bentonville chef

BY **TATE JACARUSO**

PHOTOGRAPHY **BONNIE LEONARD**

RECIPE **SOERKE PETERS**

*“You’ve got to start out with the best ingredients available to you.”
—Soerke Peters*

Fresh pasta is surprisingly simple to make, calling for eggs, flour, and water—but quality counts. “You’ve got to start out with the best ingredients available to you,” says Soerke Peters, owner and chef at Mezzaluna in Bentonville, Arkansas. “Having 00 flour is very, very important—and good eggs, and that’s all you need.” The restaurant uses 00 flour from Italy, which is a high-quality, finely ground durum wheat flour, and organic eggs from Heritage Farms.

These ingredients shine in Peters’ saffron ravioli, which includes asparagus, peas, and pea tendrils from the local farmers market. “Usually starting in mid-March or the beginning of April, you get fresh green asparagus in season, which is when it tastes the best,” says Peters. “And fresh English peas, one of my favorites as well.” Presentation matters, too. Peters adds saffron to the water when making the pasta dough. “It has a vibrant yellow color and looks beautiful with the green peas. Very mild taste, not overpowering as some may think.” The saffron ravioli is available to Mezzaluna diners in the spring, but here, Peters shares his technique for making fresh pasta at home.



SAFFRON RAVIOLI

SERVES 4 TO 6

For the dough:

- Pinch of saffron
- 4 cups 00 flour, plus more for dusting
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup egg yolks
- 1 whole egg for egg wash

For the filling:

- 1 bunch asparagus, tips and stems separated
- 4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 shallots, finely chopped
- Salt to taste
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon nutmeg
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups fresh ricotta

For the sauce:

- 1 cup (2 sticks) cold butter cut into 1-inch cubes
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dry white wine
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups shelled and blanched English peas
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano and pea tendrils for garnish

Special equipment: Wood cutting board and rolling pin, or Kitchen Aid with a dough hook and roller attachment; ravioli cutter; pastry brush; pastry bag (optional)

STEP 1

KNEAD THE DOUGH

1. In a pot, bring $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water to a low simmer and add a pinch of saffron to it. Turn off heat and let sit for 30 minutes.
2. If kneading by hand, form a mound of flour not more than 5 inches in diameter on a wood cutting board. Make a well in the center. Add egg yolk and saffron water to well, mixing into flour a bit at a time, using a fork in the beginning so your hands don't get too sticky. Once it comes together, keep kneading by folding it over until smooth. If using a Kitchen Aid, mix flour, yolk, and saffron water on the lowest setting for at least 10 minutes.
3. Shape dough into a round loaf, put it in a bowl, and cover with a plate or plastic wrap so it doesn't dry out. Let rest at room temperature for about 30 minutes.

**STEP 2****MAKE THE FILLING**

1. Finely chop asparagus stems. Add oil to a cold sauté pan and heat over medium. Once it comes up to temperature, add shallots and sweat over low heat for 2 to 3 minutes.
2. Add asparagus, salt, pepper, and nutmeg. Cook over low heat until soft. Transfer to a plate and refrigerate until chilled.
3. Add cold vegetables to a food processor and pulse for 5 to 10 seconds until a fine paste forms. Transfer paste to a bowl and stir in ricotta, mixing thoroughly. Taste, add salt as needed, and refrigerate.

**STEP 3****CUT THE RAVIOLI**

1. With a rolling pin or Kitchen Aid roller attachment, roll dough out into a thin sheet. Cut sheet in half. Mix remaining egg with 1 to 2 tablespoons of water. Use a pastry brush to apply egg wash to one sheet of dough.
2. Using your preferred ravioli cutter, gently press on egg-washed sheet so you can see an outline where each raviolo will be, with about ¼ inch between each one.
3. Using a pastry bag or teaspoon, dollop 1 teaspoon of filling in the center of each marked shape. Place the other half of the sheet (make sure it has the same dimensions) over the first half. Gently press the sheets together, pressing out any air bubbles. Cut out the ravioli with the cutter. Place them on a sheet pan, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate until ready for use.

**STEP 4****COOK THE PASTA, MAKE THE SAUCE**

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add salt, then desired amount of ravioli, along with asparagus tips. Cook 3 to 4 minutes, or to your preferred texture.
2. In a large pan over medium heat, add half of the butter, keeping the rest cold. Let it melt and add white wine. Bring to a boil and add peas, salt, and pepper. Add remaining butter and cook, stirring, until it becomes thick. If it separates, add a little pasta water. Add ravioli and asparagus tips to pan and toss gently.
3. Plate pasta and sauce, then garnish with Parmigiano-Reggiano and pea tendrils.