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~ A BONUS SECTION FOR OUR MID-ATLANTIC READERS ~

Mid-Atlantic Living People & Places®

You Can Go Home Again

Two friends return
to open Bistro 1888
in Virginia.

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Coming Home to South Boston

The return of two natives brings a great restaurant and a new day for their Virginia hometown. By **Gary D. Ford**

People say to us, "It's so much fun to drive downtown now," comments Barbara Cage. She sits with business partner and executive chef Margaret Moorefield over morning coffee in their South Boston, Virginia, restaurant, BISTRO 1888. In a rare quiet moment at this busy restaurant, the two seem slightly amazed at how their fresh fish, fine wines, and other food and drink have brought so many to their hometown on a hill.

A Dining Destination More than locals drop in for dinner. Patrons, including chefs from Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill, North Carolina, drive up to this small town that tobacco built long ago. They love the grilled salmon, the seared rare yellowfin tuna, and other fresh fish brought within a day from the sea to Southside Virginia. They come for the crab bisque with wild mushrooms and leeks, for chicken-and-wild mushroom angel hair pasta, for grilled rack of New Zealand lamb, and for bourbon-molasses porterhouse pork chops.

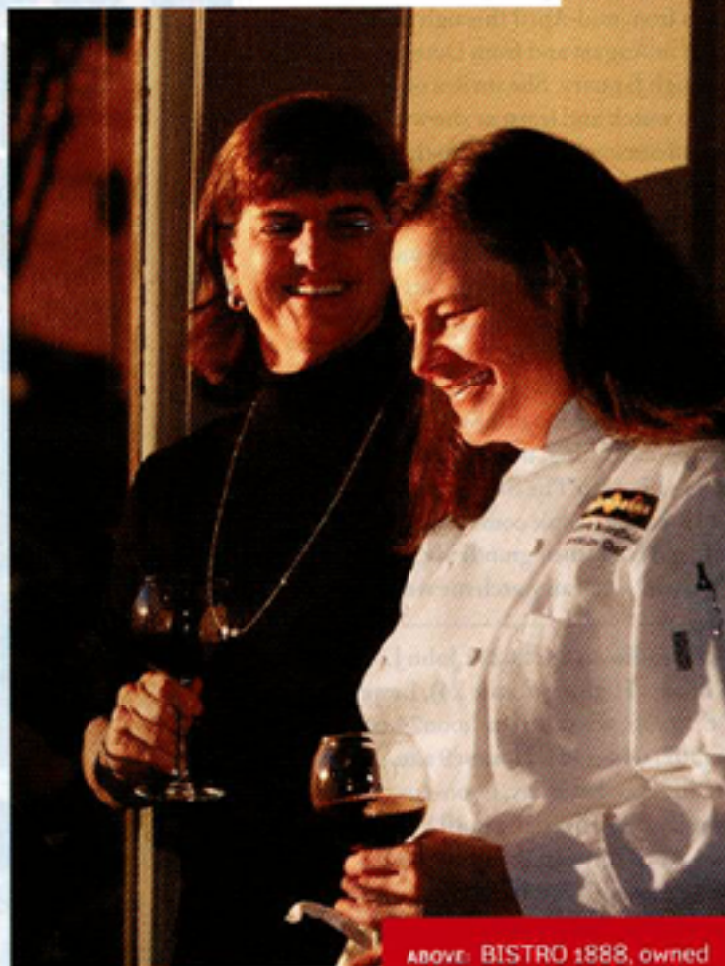
Some say they must have the grilled Angus rib-eye, a cut many restaurants have dropped from menus. "If you don't have a rib-eye here, some people will walk out," Margaret says pragmatically.

Margaret and Barbara work hard to find the best fresh local ingredients such as tomatoes. None better grow elsewhere, Margaret says, than in Virginia. Perhaps the memories of fresh tomatoes, as well as of family, murmured "home" to Barbara and Margaret. Both say they rarely thought of returning from far-flung places until they reached the pinnacles of their professions (marketing for Barbara and cooking for Margaret). From that height they saw how much they had left behind. "We got into our forties. Family became very important to us," Barbara explains.

Both had planned to continue their careers in nearby cities. When this building became available, however, it seemed perfect for a restaurant. Barbara's deft marketing began attracting sophisticated palates from near and far to Margaret's gourmet experience.

Standard of Excellence Both women set a high work ethic for their young employees, who notice how Margaret and Barbara never accept second best. In the kitchen, they see Margaret striving long hours for excellence. Dishes go on the menu only after a taste-testing panel—which consists of the cooks, Margaret's sister, and Barbara's mom and sister—approves. All the food and beverages here taste of far places, of fresh ingredients, and of home. ●

BISTRO 1888: 221 Main Street, South Boston, VA 24592; (434) 572-1888 or www.bistro1888.com. **Hours:** 5-10 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday.



Above: BISTRO 1888, owned by Barbara Cage and Margaret Moorefield (right), adds one more scent of success to the renovation of South Boston, a Virginia Main Street Community. **Left:** "We hand-cut our steaks and trim a lot of excess fat," says Margaret. **Below:** Diners sample superb wines, single-malt Scotches, and Guinness on tap in the comfortable bar.

