

GOOD FOOD

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Rouge Tomate's healthy dining charter is now being served nationwide



An SPE dish at Rouge Tomate: Ricotta gnudi with asparagus, black truffles, and morels

No butter. No salt. Rouge Tomate's SPE philosophy (that stands for Sanitas Per Escam—and more practically Sourcing, Preparation, and Enhancing) is about marrying nutrition and cuisine. So far, it's been a specific approach tied to the Michelin-starred Upper East Side restaurant.

Now, it's spreading to other like-minded restaurants—and it has the attention of big-name New York chef-owners, like Bill Telepan, John Fraser, Wolfgang Ban, and more, on whose menus you may soon spy SPE Certified dishes.

All this time, Rouge Tomate has been an incubator for the SPE concept, says Nil Sonmez, COO for SPE development, a “real-life laboratory” with the goal of expanding to other restaurants nationwide. Now that's happening with the launch of SPE Certified, which is both a culinary consultancy and certification board.

Natalia Hancock, RD, SPE Certified's senior culinary nutritionist, sees this as the next big thing—and a big step—in healthy dining.

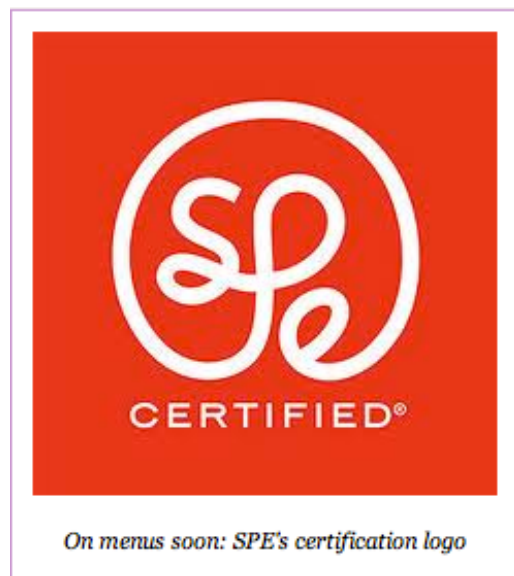
“A lot of great restaurants are doing the farm-to-table thing, which for most people means they think they're eating healthier,” explains Hancock. “But well-sourced ingredients can still be prepared with a lot of butter and salt. So we take it one or two steps further.”



Chef Anthony Moraes and Natalia Hancock in the kitchen

What will that look like in the kitchen? An SPE culinary nutritionist, like Hancock, often along with SPE's executive chef Anthony Moraes, will work with chefs to evaluate what's on a restaurant's current menu and help adapt dishes to SPE guidelines or create SPE-worthy ones, in whatever cuisine.

“They will balance the portion of the ingredients on the plate and will use SPE's proprietary analysis model to suggest additions or substitutions to the chef in an effort to maximize the nutritional quality of the dish,” explains Sonmez.



Another requirement of the charter? The dishes will absolutely have to taste great, says Hancock. That shouldn't be a problem. At Rouge Tomate, we've savored the likes of chilled English pea soup with lavender yogurt and ricotta gnudi with asparagus, black truffles, and morels. ([Click here](#) to see the SPE-style nutritional breakdown of the dish.)

So why should chefs around the country want the SPE logo next to dishes on their menu?

For one, the ease of transparency regarding healthy ingredients, portion, and flavor profile.

But more broadly, SPE could be a balanced and successful approach to healthy dining.

“The latest numbers are staggering: in 2030, forty two percent of the population will be obese. And it is getting worse every year,” Sonmez notes. “[Emmanuel Verstraeten](#) created SPE with a real desire to affect positive change, to help people. It will take time, but the end goal is to reach as many as possible.”

And that will start with New York chefs, who will undoubtedly play a role in spreading the SPE concept, says Hancock, “since everyone looks to what they’re doing.” —*Melisse Gelula and Alia Akkam*

***For more information, and for SPE certified dishes, visit
www.specertified.com***