

## Culinary Artistry at 69.2167° N

*Scallops with gel of seaweed, samphire, hazelnuts & dill.*

*Burned halibut with pickled celery, apple, dill oil, gold cress and angelica aioli.*

*Fried lamb hearts with salsify, temperate egg yolk, sellerie puree  
with flavour of burnt heather.*

*Slightly salted poached back of reindeer with beetroot, Jerusalem artichoke,  
dehydrated mustard & beetroot glaze.*

*Compressed & raw pears with white chocolate & chocolate crumble.*

May we suggest Pascal Bouchard Chablis Grand Cru Blanchot 2006 for the halibut and Château de Beaucastel Châteauneuf-du-Pape Rouge 2007 for the reindeer. And with dessert, we have a beautiful Ramos Pinto 30-year-old tawny.

New York, London, Paris?

Mais non. This is fine dining in the Arctic Circle.

Jeppe Ejvind Nielsen, Head Chef at Hotel Arctic in Ilulissat, was born and trained as a chef in Denmark. He came to Greenland to work for a short time, fell in love with the people and country, and decided to stay. He is friendly and fun, and he does not possess the ego-preciousness many talented chefs are known for.

### **What's For Dinner?**

And unlike most chefs, he simply cannot create a menu then call the butcher, fishmonger, vegetable farmer and artisan cheese maker. Instead, it is reverse creativity. He looks in the refrigerator, freezer, smoke room, cold room, dry room, stock room and wine cellar, and from there he crafts his menu.

What Jeppe and his team are mainly known for though is their use of local Greenlandic products. Berries and herbs are picked from the land. Fresh fish and seafood are sourced from the front-door ocean. And Greenlandic hare, muskox and reindeer, who roam wild and free, are sustainably hunted by the Inuit who have lived off of the land for centuries.

### **Chef de Partie**

Dressed in a chef's coat, apron and hat, I am put to work in the kitchen. Sous Chef Inunnguaq Hegelund who was born in Paamiut, a town in southwestern Greenland, wants me to cut, pull and peel the outer layer of the carrots exposing only the inner sweet core.

I ask Inunnguaq why he is going to only use the carrot's core with his halibut tonight. Why not simply julienne the carrots? "You have to cook with love...show love to the food," he tells me.

I can't help but feel that Inunnguaq and Jeppe's real culinary love is their kindred connection to Greenland's food-from-the-land: fresh, wild and as per Jeppe; "clean".

### **The Tickertape Goes Off**

An order from Restaurant Ulo's dining room is printed. I watch Inunnguaq masterly, artistically and lovingly layer the ingredients for each course. I stand back and watch. I stand back and learn. Then I stand back and eat. Like any good hosts, Jeppe and Inunnguaq ensure that my palate is ravished with divine flavours and my stomach is filled to the brim.

When the kitchen winds down and some of the guests linger over coffee, I tell Jeppe that his food is shockingly good. Not because I would question his ability as a chef. I don't. It is because he is producing shockingly good food way up north in the Arctic Circle.

### **Sweet and Savoury**

I wander outside of the kitchen to watch the sun set. Like a pastry chef's cake layered with goodness, tints of purple, blue, orange and yellow layer the sky casting a breathtaking and mellow spell over the water. Icebergs loom in the distance. I think I now understand why Jeppe calls Ilulissat home.