



# THE RED LION INN

Food & Lodging Since c.1773

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## BRIAN J. ALBERG



### **Background**

Brian J. Alberg was appointed Executive Chef at The Red Lion Inn in Stockbridge, Mass., in July 2004 and was promoted to Director of Food & Beverage in April 2006 (while remaining Executive Chef). Under his tenure at The Red Lion, Alberg brought Sommelier Dan Thomas onto the staff, in order to further explore the connections between food and wine for our guests, through the wine dinners that they create together, and for his own culinary development. The Red Lion Inn's wine list has annually won an Award for Excellence from *Wine Spectator* under Brian's tenure. Brian is responsible for four distinct dining areas at The Red Lion Inn (plus room service): the Main Dining Room, Widow Bingham's Tavern, the Courtyard and the Lion's Den pub.

Brian is a native of Copake, NY, in the Berkshire foothills of neighboring Columbia County, where he began his culinary career as an apprentice at the former l'Hostellerie Bressane. After graduating from the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, N.Y., in 1987, he oversaw the kitchens in a number of high-profile Berkshire area restaurants earlier in his career, first as head chef at the Underhill Inn in Hillsdale, NY, and later at the 1780 Egremont Inn in South Egremont and the Old Inn on the Green in New Marlborough. He left the area in 1993 to become Executive Chef at Dudley's Restaurant in Westchester, NY, where he earned a "Very Good" rating from the *New York Times* and made the first of eight appearances at the James Beard House.

### **Innovative Yet Timeless Cuisine**

At The Red Lion Inn, Brian has put his own stamp on the menus, while remaining true to the Inn's focus on contemporary cuisine rooted in the region's heritage. A large percentage of Brian's menu ingredients are sourced from local farms. Menu highlights include: *Braised Lila's Mountain Lamb with Porcini Mushrooms, Kale & Truffled Polenta; Ricotta & Goat Cheese Gnudi with Smoked Tomato Sauce & Crispy Fried Onions Maple Cured Berkshire Pork Loin with Farro, Confit of Beets & Roasted Carrot Puree; Moulard Duck Breast with Creamed Green Bean Gratin, Shallots & Port Glaze; Grilled Black Angus Filet Mignon with White Truffle Potato Cake & Sautéed Organic Spinach; Berkshire Pork Tenderloin with Parsnip Puree, Roasted Carrots & Braised Red Cabbage; Roasted Leek Risotto with Delicata Puree & Toasted Pumpkin Seeds; Roasted Pheasant Breast with Root Vegetable Risotto & Sweet Potato Chips; Paradise Seed Encrusted Moulard Duck Breast with Maple Braised Kale & Crispy Overmeade Farm Potatoes; and Pan Fried Rainbow Trout Fillets with Caramelized Savoy Cabbage & Lemon-Thyme Beurre Blanc* as well as traditional favorite *Roasted Native Turkey with Stuffing and Mashed Potatoes*. While the menu always includes a significant amount of seasonal, locally-sourced ingredients, on Sundays and Mondays (for over five years now) The Red Lion Inn is offering a Sustainable Foods Menu in its Dining Room. This special menu features locally grown and produced ingredients from small farms in the Berkshires and the surrounding region. Sustainable Foods Menu items are available a la carte. A Sustainable Foods breakfast is served daily. Brian believes that supporting area farmers helps to secure a healthy landscape for future generations – and he sustains that belief in both his work and in his life. Alberg raises pigs at Bacon on the Side farm and Bantam chickens at Graceful Acre Farm, supplying the Inn with heritage breed pork and fresh eggs.



Brian offers specials at both lunch and dinner, which allow him to express his creativity even further. His close relationships with farmers and producers inspires him as he explores ways to utilize any special produce they may grow or obtain. In addition to daily specials, he offers wine dinners throughout the year – which are known for being very special, intimate evenings of food, wine and conversation. Selected dinners include a California Dreamin' dinner after an inspiring trip to the west coast; a Burgundy dinner exploring the bounty of this fabled French region; a Winter Doldrums menu featuring 10 microcourses and 20 wines; a Vegetarian Winter Exodus dinner pairing 10 wines with 10 vegetarian courses; a Harvest Dinner highlighting the fall bounty and benefitting Berkshire Grown; and one of his most recent dinners was inspired by a work-in-progress presented at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (the Get-a-Waypoint package at The Red Lion Inn's sister property, The Porches Inn at MASS MoCA).

### *Sustainability & Community Outreach*

Brian has been on the Board of Directors of Berkshire Grown since 2007. Berkshire Grown is an organization that promotes sustainable agriculture and nutritious food. The organization supports local agriculture as a vital part of the Berkshire economy by marketing locally grown products, establishing farm networks, increasing public awareness through education and outreach and encouraging supportive public policies. Berkshire Grown envisions a community where residents buy food from neighboring farms and where healthy, locally grown food is available to everyone. Brian is an active member of its board and tirelessly promotes its mission as a buyer, as a diner and as a part of this community. He participates in several fundraising dinners, promotes Berkshire Grown to audiences outside of the area (such as at the James Beard Foundation) and is a champion for local farmers through the fact that his menus include a huge percentage of local ingredients. When farmers begin planning their growing season, Brian meets with them in the winter to discuss his menu ideas along with their specific interests; this ensures that he will have a fresh supply of produce for his menus and specials while the farmers secure the market for their product – all in all, a rather symbiotic relationship!

For the past four years, Brian has been working with the Railroad Street Youth Project (RSYP) on the Youth Culinary Arts Program (and is now a full-fledged RSYP board member), which gives participants, often at-risk youth, the opportunity to gain valuable job experience working alongside a professional chef—cooking sophisticated food for guests, not just doing dishes. As one of the largest segments of the local Berkshire economy, the hospitality industry provides a typical introduction into the workforce for many local kids, who start out as bussers and dishwashers to the area's restaurants and hotels. Brian works alongside these students throughout the year, on his day off, giving them the opportunity to gain first-hand, professional experience in menu design and food preparation. Several program graduates now work for The Red Lion Inn and other area restaurants professionally and continue to cultivate their skills in the culinary arts.

Brian has been instrumental in galvanizing a Berkshire culinary movement – as a chef supporting local farms, as a grower raising his own heritage breed pigs at his Bacon on the Side Farm, and as a member of Berkshire Grown's Board of Directors. Brian is a member of the James Beard Foundation and is on the board of Berkshire Grown. He volunteers for the Railroad Street Youth Project to provide young people with the opportunity to explore the culinary arts as the lead facilitator for the advanced students. He led motorcycle rides showcasing Berkshire farmlands on his days off to promote sustainable farming (through the inn's **Roaring Ramble** package in prior years). In addition, Brian has been featured in *Gastronomica* and *The Boston Globe* and has appeared on *Good Morning America*, *Chronicle* and WGBY's *On the Menu!* (Springfield, MA) and regularly on Albany's News Channel 13. Brian resides in Kinderhook, NY.