

Aqua chef to take love of seafood to Saratoga

It's official. Peter Armellino, chef de cuisine at Aqua (252 California St.), is leaving the critically acclaimed San Francisco restaurant and partnering with the new owners of the **Plumed Horse** (14555 Big Basin Way), a Saratoga institution since 1952. The 38-year-old says he starts as executive chef at his new restaurant in mid-May. Armellino was part of the team that won the seafood restaurant two stars from France's Michelin Guide this year. But he says after 3½ years at Aqua, he's ready for a change.

"I'm looking forward to being in a sleepy town," he says. "Maybe I can wake it up a bit."

He and his new partners — **Josh Weeks**, **Aki Fujimura** and **Gary Price** — are already tossing around ideas for the Plumed Horse's new menu.

"It's going to be California cuisine based in classic French technique with an emphasis on seasonality," Armellino says. The menu will be half seafood.

Plumed Horse will close Feb. 17 for 90 days for a complete overhaul. They're planning live seafood tanks in the kitchen for sea urchins and spotted prawns.

As for Aqua replacing Armellino, stay tuned. Executive Chef **Laurent Manrique** says he's interviewing several people and should have a decision in the next couple of weeks.