

Some restaurants skirting California's foie gras ban

By Norimitsu Onishi, New York Times

SACRAMENTO – Seemingly an afterthought, the last appetizer listed on the menu at Restaurant Thir13en is a brioche that, at \$21, may sound overpriced even if it is “house made” and comes with strawberry rhubarb purée and a bacon chip. Accompanying it, though, are “complimentary seared foie gras and foie panna cotta.”

This restaurant, not far from the State Capitol here, is one of the few in California still offering foie gras since a ban on its sale went into effect on July 1. Though some restaurants are finding clever ways to serve the fattened duck or goose liver – the law bans sales, but says nothing about giving it away – most of the 340 to 400 establishments that served it before the ban have taken it off their menus, according to restaurant owners, industry experts and animal rights supporters.

Suppliers of foie gras to California, the biggest market for the product in the United States, have halted shipments to the state. So staunch defenders of foie gras like Adam Pechal, Thir13en's owner and chef, are considering new ways to replenish their supplies.

“I'm still working off my treasury,” Mr. Pechal said, explaining that he and other restaurateurs in Sacramento “stocked up big time” before the ban. “Foie freezes fantastically. That's the beauty of it. The foie gras liver, it's a beautiful product. Worst-case scenario for me, I'll just go to Tahoe and spend the week and find somebody in Nevada. It's as simple as that. I can drive an hour and a half and buy it in another state.”

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