



Blackened shrimp atop fried green tomatoes with mique chou and remoulade.



Joel Miller picks fresh tomatoes from his garden behind Ravine.

## **RAVINE, OXFORD** Homegrown goodness in the Oxford hills

Chef Joel Miller didn't grow up in Mississippi and never went to Ole Miss, but at age 33, he's had a heap of Southern regional cooking experience with some of the best in the business. He's cooked for the Brennan family and The Ritz Carlton in New Orleans and in Karen Carrier's Memphis mainstays Automatic Slim's and The Beauty Shop. With a new baby on the way, Joel and his wife, Coni, moved from San Francisco into a log cabin and B&B on the outskirts of Oxford, where they had family nearby, and christened it Ravine. The garden-to-table focus is evident upon entering Ravine, which is surrounded by Joel's impressive vegetable and herb gardens. The menu changes daily, sometimes hourly, depending on what's abundant. Small plates we ordered were the grilled bruschetta with asparagus, goat cheese, red pepper and truffle oil and the mini burgers served with red onion jam and bleu cheese (all the rage since its opening). Soups and salads, or middle plates, feature a soup of the day and, on a July visit, lump crab tossed with strawberries, pecans and greens in a strawberry vinaigrette. Large plates are typically generous portions of rib-sticking beef, pork, quail, duck and lamb dishes. The staff lives by the hanger steak with pommes frites and béarnaise sauce. When in doubt, order the duck breast on wild rice pancakes with sweet and sour cherry sauce—it's not going anywhere unless they want to catch some heat. There's also a handmade "pasta of the moment" that's always interesting. We're putting Ravine's Sunday brunch on our wish list, said to be one of the best in town. 53 County Road, (662) 234-4555.