

DINING REVIEW
REYNOLDSTOWN'S
GOLDEN EAGLE GETS
RETRO RIGHT

ALL NEW
50 BEST
RESTAURANTS

Atlanta

HOT NEIGHBORHOODS

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DINING GUIDE

Where
to eat right
now

FRESH ON THE SCENE

ROSE + RYE

➔ Rose + Rye's backstory makes you want to like it. First, the staff is overwhelmingly female, and our city's restaurants could use more women in charge. Executive chef Lindsay Owens and sous chef Anu Adebara make up the back of the house, and general manager Jessica Schilling runs the front. Second, Rose + Rye brings Midtown's quirky "Castle," a 1900s mansion that sat mostly empty for years, back to life. But just before he opened Rose + Rye in October, Thaddeus Keefe, who also owns IKept in Buckhead, said, "We're crafting elements taken from concepts from Los Angeles to New York to Bangkok in terms of lighting, standards of service, flow of service, and culinary trends." Why can't Atlanta's new restaurants look inward more? Rose + Rye misses an opportunity to run with the deep history of its architecture and instead seems to suffer from an identity crisis. There's a skull stuck in one alcove upstairs, a theme that doesn't quite carry over to the dining room's slick white leather banquettes. A confused menu offers a seemingly undressed beet salad (a salt cure alone doesn't provide enough flavor), burrata with modernist pesto "foam" that's really more of a mousse, honey chicken mole with wilted kale, and a \$30 seared tuna dish that belongs at a spa. Desserts do a bit better: Olive oil cake looks worthy of a birthday party, but brushed with pickled plum juice and iced with whipped mascarpone, its sweetness is elegantly restrained. ■ 87 15th Street, 404-500-5980

BAR AMERICANO

➔ Ten Apart, the group behind the Mercury, the Pine-wood, and Proof Cocktail Syrups, opened Bar Americano in Buckhead's Andrews Square in November. (It houses a second concept called Bar Crème, where beverage director John Fogleman, formerly of Octane, offers espresso drinks and pastries starting at 7 a.m. [8 a.m. on weekends] and cocktails and small plates into the night.) Chef Adam Waller, who has worked at Bocado and Sotto Sotto, serves well-executed Italian-American classics like baked cannelloni, eggplant Parmesan, and flounder piccata (in caper and white wine sauce). The menu isn't trying to knock your

socks off with innovation; it's trying to comfort you, and it does. The *cacio e pepe's* bucatini pasta is al dente and littered with fresh-cracked black peppercorns and grated pecorino romano; the 12-inch pizza pies are crispy on the edges; and, unlike most red-sauce joints' subpar chopped salads, Bar Americano's version deftly combines fine strips of salami with shaved radishes, carrots, and other seasonal vegetables, all lightly dressed in red wine vinaigrette. ■ 56 East Andrews Drive, 678-515-0697

DEEP END

➔ Perhaps the Ten Apart team opened one too many new concepts last fall. Just a few weeks before Bar Americano, Deep End opened across from Ponce City Market in the former 4th & Swift restaurant space. While general manager Brent Hesse claimed it wouldn't be "your typical hipster establishment," it appears to be just that: not a customer over 30 and many wearing brimmed hats and heavy eyeliner; a Tex-Mex menu that trendily includes breakfast items for dinner (Deep End opens at 5 p.m. on weekdays, 12 p.m. on weekends); and a stage that suggests it's really more of a music venue than a restaurant. Service comes with a side of we're-too-busy attitude. Here's hoping Deep End tightens things up because it's got some serious patio real estate (dog-friendly, too) and, except for Sundays, is open until 2 a.m. ■ 621 North Avenue, 470-823-3102

50 BEST RESTAURANTS

1 / STAPLEHOUSE

➔ Two years after we gave it four out of four stars, Staplehouse is still on top. Ryan Smith's menu has evolved with time, dropping its prix fixe in favor of an à la carte format, but his food is just as inventive as it was when it first dazzled us. Recent highlights include an elegant mingling of turnips, rutabaga, nori, and burnt garlic and a chicken liver mousse tart topped with sliced radishes. On Sundays, Smith works beyond the confines of weekend brunch fare, opting instead for, say, snapper served with bitter greens and fermented crab broth. A bonus: After-tax profits go to the Giving Kitchen, which provides grants to restaurant workers facing unanticipated hardships. In November, the Staplehouse team turned its upstairs private dining room into a cocktail bar called Paper Crane

Lounge, so early arrivals can sip on sparkling Negronis while waiting for walk-in seats. Want reservations? Go to staplehouse.com at noon on the second Friday of every month to make reservations for the following month. ■ 541 Edgewood Avenue, 404-524-5005

2 / MILLER UNION

➔ After five consecutive nominations, Steven Satterfield finally won a James Beard Award for Best Chef: Southeast last year. It's deserved: Few chefs celebrate the region like he does. Satterfield loves Georgia and accepts—with glee—what its soil gives him, which is perhaps clearest in his seasonal vegetable plate. In the summer, it might be loaded with crunchy stalks of fried okra, peas, and corn scented with tarragon; in the fall, roasted Brussels sprouts, wheat berries mixed with kale and turnips, and butternut squash topped with a savory granola. Year-round, the requisite starters are the now-iconic farm egg baked in celery cream and served with thick grilled bread. And if creamed rice with English peas, asparagus, and country ham is on the menu, order it, and ask co-owner Neal McCarthy for a pairing suggestion. Miller Union is as much a stop for oenophiles as it is for Southern food lovers. ■ 999 Brady Avenue, 678-733-8550

3 / MASTERPIECE

➔ It didn't take long for Masterpiece to outgrow its eight tables. Rave reviews of chef Rui Liu's full-throttle Sichuan cooking meant that, roughly a year after its opening, Masterpiece took over the storefront next door, doubling in size to accommodate the crowds. As long as his fermented long beans and cabbage with "streaky pork," fried eggplant dusted with chili powder, and fish braised in chili oil are on the menu, those crowds won't wane. Liu, a certified master chef from the northeastern tip of China, authored three cookbooks before arriving in America on an O-1 visa given only to "individuals with extraordinary achievement." Now, he runs one of the best restaurants in the South. ■ 3940 Buford Highway, Duluth, 770-622-1191

4 / SPRING

➔ In May 2016, Brian So and Kerry Han opened Spring on the edge of Marietta Square inside a 100-year-old freight depot. The dining room is intimate—just 14 tables—and So's cooking is technical, restrained, even reverent. (It got Spring named one of *Bon Appétit's* best new restaurants last year.) Meaty, pan-seared flounder bounces back with brio when prodded with a fork; its bed of English peas, radishes, and baby leeks screams spring (So's favorite season to cook—thus the name of the restaurant); and the daffodil-colored sauce is both tart and creamy, rich but not fatty. It's textbook *beurre blanc*. ■ 83 Church Street, Marietta, 678-540-2777

5 / CAKES & ALE

➔ Billy Allin may have been raised in South Carolina, but his culinary enthusiasm knows no borders. Sure, he and his executive chef Brian Hendrickson make room for North Carolina trout with bacon mayonnaise on their menu at Cakes & Ale, but Allin also possesses a rebel curiosity for global flavors, using a dash of saffron to heighten shrimp or intensifying a plate of cucumbers and avocado with chermoula, an herby sauce from North Africa. Melting pillows of gnocchi tossed in a hearty lamb and pork ragu evoke Italy, while a mushroom tart with *creme fraiche* calls France to mind—and it all works. Sommelier Jordan Smelt has a particular love affair with bubbles and natural wines. ■ 155 Sycamore Street, Decatur, 404-377-7994

Fresh on the Scene reviews are written by our dining editors. Fifty Best Restaurants were ranked this month.

6 / TOMO

➤ The best way to see Osaka-born chef Tomohiro Naito work his magic is to make reservations for his omakase, or tasting menu, at this restaurant in Buckhead's Ritz-Carlton Residences. Access is granted to just five diners a night, and it comes with a \$100 price tag (\$150 if you want caviar, toro, and Kobe beef), but have you ever eaten fluke, swimming just hours earlier, with ponzu gelée? What about a lamb chop dusted in citrus, almost minty sansho powder? It's a 10-course display of precision as well as Naito's creative melange of Japanese, French, and Italian cuisines. To wit: The chef may not be as dogmatic as Tokyo's famous Jiro Ono, but he will turn you away if he feels your cologne might overwhelm the dining experience. ■ 3630 Peachtree Road, 404-835-2708

7 / ATLAS

➤ In barely three years, Atlas has catapulted itself to the top of our fine dining pyramid. Original works by Picasso and Matisse line the lacquered walls, fitting partners to chef Christopher Grossman's luxe menu. May he never take his humbly titled "Fettuccine Alfredo" off the starters list; at a cool \$26, the flat pasta tossed in creme fraiche and topped with sturgeon caviar is the most decadent way to kick off dinner. After that, order pan-roasted duck with persimmon and pickled butternut squash, or the Maine lobster en croute with both bearnaise sauce and a lobster sabayon. Even the burger here is made with Wagyu beef. Should you want to wear jeans but still enjoy Grossman's cooking, the adjoining Tavern at Atlas offers small plates such as Yukon Gold potato gnocchi with rabbit sausage and flat iron steak over Caesar salad. ■ 88 West Paces Ferry Road, 404-600-6471

8 / BACCHANALIA

➤ Chef and restaurateur Anne Quatrano boldly moved her crown jewel to a relatively unknown industrial area on the Westside in 1999. Last May, she did it again, designing a stand-alone building to house her flagship just one mile away in another offbeat location. The new Bacchanalia feels a little more relaxed, but the menu still offers those signature crab fritters with citrus and avocado as well as her impeccably sourced cheese course. Everything executive chef Jonathan Kallini and pastry chef Carla Tomasko plate, from scallops with paddlefish caviar to canelés with coffee semifreddo, feels like a little gift. ■ 1198 Howell Mill Road, 404-365-0410

9 / RESTAURANT EUGENE

➤ Linton and Gina Hopkins, the husband-and-wife team whose H&F brand continues to pop up across the city, give Southern food the white tablecloth treatment at their flagship restaurant. A shellfish pan roast with caramelized cauliflower and sorghum-lacquered quail with chestnut flour gnocchi are powerful, rich examples of food short on neither style nor substance. Those eschewing meat (or even carnivores) should swing for the signature "Southern Vegetables," which celebrates the season's best in a handled copper bowl. ■ 1460 Ellsworth Industrial Boulevard, 404-355-0321

10 / ARIA

➤ The beauty of Gerry Klaskala's food is that it's fit for fine dining, but it's not fussy. A meal at Aria feels like a special occasion, but there's restraint in Klaskala's approach. He cooks without pomp or pretension, letting technique and ingredients shine. The chef flawlessly braises short ribs; crisps duck confit and serves it with cannellini beans and leeks; and then pivots easily to seafood, pairing scallops with sunchoke and

romanesco or hamachi with grapefruit, oranges, radishes, and avocados dressed in ponzu. Kathryn King's desserts—her unrivaled warm cheesecake, a toasted lemon pound cake with an inexplicably creamy center—are spectacles of their own. ■ 490 East Paces Ferry Road, 404-233-7673

11 / GUNSHOW

➤ Built upon the singular promise of eating well and without pretension, Kevin Gillespie's Gunshow, which opened in 2013, is still our city's gutsiest restaurant. Although the dining room is short on luxury—stark fluorescent spotlights, metal tables, loud rock music—the format is game-changing, revolving around the weekly whims of seven to eight chefs who cook and then deliver their plates directly to diners. Expect bold and playful food, riffs on beef tartare and Chinese dumplings, and even throwbacks like a show-stopping beef Wellington. ■ 924 Garrett Street, 404-380-1886

12 / SUSHI HOUSE HAYAKAWA

➤ Atsushi "Art" Hayakawa is not out to dazzle you with decor. This restaurant is a temple to fish, and the chef is nothing if not a purist. He serves lavishly thick slices of tuna, salmon, mackerel, and red snapper over rice with a dot of wasabi and nothing more. If Hayakawa offers you the chance to compare the flavor of uni (sea urchin) from northern and eastern Hokkaido, say yes. ■ 5979 Buford Highway, 770-986-0010

13 / KIMBALL HOUSE

➤ In four years, Kimball House has become a staging ground for a new kind of Southern cool. The hype started with Miles Macquarrie's bar program. It's hard to find better cocktails in Atlanta than his easygoing Afternoon Delight (cava tinged with absinthe) or the edgy New Tokyo (Scotch with pine and pear brandy).

Over time, Kimball House also developed into one of the best oyster bars in the Southeast. (On weekdays from 5 to 7 p.m., select oysters are half off.) The dinner menu, though, should not be overlooked: Standouts include crispy-on-the-outside, molten-on-the-inside pommes macaire and classic Southern Hoppin' John with Sea Island red peas and Carolina Gold rice. ■ 303 East Howard Avenue, Decatur, 404-378-3502

14 / BOCCALUPO

➤ Here's what the ideal neighborhood restaurant looks like: a T-shirt-friendly dress code; impeccable, often surprising food; and bartenders who shake cocktails as well as they recommend wine pairings. You'll find all of that at Bruce Logue's pasta bungalow, where Old World Italian staples get New World makeovers. Think pan-fried wedges of lasagna, thin chicken liver ravioli, and 20-yolk tagliatelle tossed with butter and kimchi. A skewer of grilled octopus and mortadella over Marsala-scented field peas is one of the city's best appetizers. ■ 753 Edgewood Avenue, 404-577-2332

15 / TICONDEROGA CLUB

➤ While this dark little room in the corner of Kroger Street Market is where Greg Best and Paul Calvert—two of the city's most ingenious mixologists—ply their trade, the kitchen pushes out a quality menu. Executive chef David Bies's playful lineup offers vegan fried rice as well as a fried clam roll and grilled Virginia lamb with white bean puree. Sunday brunch is a similarly high-low mix; diners can get a bacon, egg, and cheese on a Kaiser roll as well as a Rap Sheet—a cocktail made with blanco tequila and orange bitters. ■ 99 Kroger Street, 404-458-4534

16 / THE FEDERAL

➤ Much of this stretch of Midtown has become a

bland, corporate landscape, but the Federal is a place to linger. The reason goes beyond its antique mirrors and tufted leather banquettes; chef Shaun Doty, who became superstar chef Gunter Seeger's right hand at the Dining Room in the Ritz-Carlton, Buckhead, is in the kitchen. His now-classic Sardinian flatbread with greens has made its way here from much-missed Shaun's in Inman Park alongside coarse chopped liver bound with mayonnaise and pork schnitzel with a salad of marinated onions, peanuts, and Italian parsley leaves. ■ 1050 Crescent Avenue, 404-343-3857

17 / THE GENERAL MUIR

➤ Remember when you couldn't get good matzo ball soup in this town? What about a Reuben stacked with corned beef and sauerkraut on rye? In its five years, the General Muir has become indispensable for its upscale New York-style Jewish deli-inspired menu. Go here for house-made bagels with lox and a schmear—and return for chopped liver at night. Where else is brunch actually worth the wait? Fluffy omelets, latkes with applesauce and sour cream, and poutine topped with chopped pastrami are the makings of a perfect Sunday morning. ■ 1540 Avenue Place, 678-927-9131

18 / KYMA

➤ The ocean-blue Kyma, which means wave in Greek, is Buckhead Life Restaurant Group's brightest star. Many make a feast out of chef Pano Karatassos's shareable meze plates, in particular grilled octopus, white beans stewed with tomatoes and dill, and pan-fried kasseri cheese. Wash it all down with ouzo, and finish with a honey-laced yogurt showered with candied walnuts. ■ 3085 Piedmont Road, 404-262-0702

19 / BONES

➤ If corporate bigwigs want to blow \$6,000 on wine,

they do it at this landmark wood-paneled steakhouse. The 28-ounce porterhouse is as well-aged as the servers, 15 of whom have been on staff for at least a decade. Even lunch at the bar is a treat, a prime perch for sipping a martini, chowing down on one of the city's best burgers, and finishing with a towering mile-high ice cream pie. ■ 3130 Piedmont Road, 404-237-2663

20 / YET TUH

➤ For those of us without Korean grandmothers, Yet Tuh's chefs are the city's closest substitutes. This humble hideaway off Buford Highway offers homestyle Korean food at its best: kimchi, steamed chicken and rice, and bubbling pork soup. Most of the regular clientele is more interested in drinking tea than soju, though there are plenty of premium bottles on offer. ■ 3042 Oakcliff Road, Doraville, 770-454-9292

21 / WATERSHED ON PEACHTREE

➤ Chef Zeb Stevenson's 2015 arrival at this 20-year-old institution signaled a renewed interest in progressive Southern cuisine. Original dishes like fried chicken, mac and cheese, and chocolate cake are still available (and still fantastic), but now what's giving the shrimp and grits that extra oomph? That would be the sauce, flavored with shrimp heads. What's hidden within that vegan-friendly squash soup? Mexican-style candied squash cubes. Stevenson has even perfected chicken and dumplings, made with a golden broth so rich and restorative that it could knock out any head cold. ■ 1820 Peachtree Road, 404-809-3561

22 / O4W PIZZA

➤ New Jersey native Anthony Spina opened his original pizzeria in Irwin Street Market in January 2015. The Old Fourth Ward stall was short-lived (it closed in



June 2016), but the concept was not. A month later, Spina relaunched in Duluth, where a larger space accommodates proper table service and an expanded menu including chicken parm heroes and handmade cavatelli. But what brings us back are the game-changing pizzas: classic round pies, thick-crust Sicilian ones, rectangular Detroit thick-crust with those signature browned-cheese perimeters, and square Grandma pies. Thankfully for ITP-ers, Spina plans to open a new restaurant—pizza included—at Studioplex later this year. ■ 3117 Main Street, Duluth, 678-587-5420

23 / BREAD & BUTTERFLY

➔ Bread & Butterfly doesn't just look like a proper Parisian bistro; it operates like one. Open morning to night, it's where to go for your breakfast coffee or your post-work glass of Sancerre. Last April, owner Billy Allin hired chef Remi Granger, who, after working at Kevin Gillespie's Southern restaurant, Revival, now gets to lean into his French upbringing. Expect the streamlined cafe classics Allin has always offered—leeks vinaigrette, moules frites—as well as Granger's specials: roasted eggplant with creme fraiche and loads of spring herbs, for example, or seared foie gras with pickled apples and pecan chutney. ■ 290 Elizabeth Street, 678-515-4536

24 / B'S CRACKLIN'

➔ When he opened the original B's in Savannah in October 2014, Bryan Furman was one of the first to bring heritage pork to the barbecue world. (He currently raises six breeds of pigs in Statesboro pastures.) And though he opened his Atlanta location just two years ago, its V-ceilinged dining room, fragrant with smoke, already feels like an heirloom. The must-order: pork ribs, which Furman cooks over pecan and cherry coals. But sides are no afterthought.

Collard greens taste like collard greens, not fat and salt; slow-simmered hash and rice is the most comforting of comfort foods; and instead of cornbread, you'll find lacy-edged crackling hoecakes. ■ 2061 Main Street, 678-949-9912

25 / MAMAK

➔ Mamak is an unapologetic reflection of real Malay cooking, which pulls from other South Asian traditions (namely Chinese, Indian, and Singaporean) and blends them with a sure hand. Hainanese chicken over rice, wok-fried flat rice noodles with beef, and curry laksa are perennial favorites. (Closed Thursdays.) ■ 5150 Buford Highway, Doraville, 678-395-3192

26 / TAQUERIA DEL SOL

➔ Eddie Hernandez and Mike Klank opened the first Taqueria del Sol on the Westside in 2000, cranking out crowd-pleasing \$2 tacos. Eighteen years and four additional locations later, customers still line up for Hernandez's Southern-Mexican food: fried chicken tacos with lime-jalapeno mayonnaise, refried bean enchiladas with a side of turnip greens, and shrimp corn chowder. Check for creative weekly specials. ■ Multiple locations, taqueriadelsol.com

27 / KAISER'S CHOPHOUSE

➔ After more than 30 years in some of Atlanta's finest kitchens, Liechtenstein-born chef Peter Kaiser finally gets to see his name above the door of a restaurant. His steaks are listed in two sections: Uptown Meats, expensive prime cuts such as New York strip and an extraordinarily tender spinalis, also known as ribeye cap; and Downtown Meats, less flashy, leaner cuts, including a set of three four-ounce bone-in baby filets. (The terminology hints at the price differential.) The rest of the menu could

easily pass as Continental with a soupçon of global fusion. Sweet little ice cream bonbons by old-school pastry chef Joannie Trotochaud are the thing to order after a meal. ■ 5975 Roswell Road, Sandy Springs, 404-549-2882

28 / CHAI PANI

➔ Kudos to Meherwan Irani, who sticks to his spicy central and south Indian roots at Chai Pani restaurant in Decatur. Locals crowd the colorful space for street snacks, ranging from okra fries and puffed flour crisps stuffed with potatoes, onions, and cilantro to a humorously named "Sloppy Jal," lamb hash simmered with tomatoes and ginger and served on a bun. Even kale haters will happily eat their greens once Irani gives them the fritter treatment. ■ 406 West Ponce de Leon Avenue, Decatur, 404-378-4030

29 / NAM PHUONG

➔ Both the Chamblee and Norcross locations of Nam Phuong are worthwhile starting points for discovering the joys of Vietnamese cuisine beyond pho and banh mi. Examples: bone-in steamed chicken over a crisp pile of shredded vegetables; egg crepes; and cubes of marinated, flash-seared beef tenderloin. ■ 4051 Buford Highway, 404-633-2400; 5495 Jimmy Carter Boulevard, Norcross, 770-409-8686

30 / HEIRLOOM MARKET BBQ

➔ He was a boy from the hills of Tennessee. She was a pop star in Korea. At Heirloom, Cody Taylor and Jiyeon Lee merge American and Korean barbecue traditions. The smoky pork sandwich topped with kimchi slaw might be the tastiest example of this marriage. Sides like cucumber and radish salad and pickled green tomatoes are a nod to Korean banchan. ■ 2243 Akers Mill Road, 770-612-2502

31 / NOBLE FIN

➔ Its dining room may look nondescript, but Noble Fin is one of our most assured, satisfying seafood restaurants. Inspired by a traditional fish house, it draws on partner Jay Swift's time in Boston and Baltimore. You cannot find better crab cakes in the metro area, but it also serves a more succulent New York strip than most local steakhouses. It's the rare restaurant that delivers more than it promises. ■ 5260 Peachtree Parkway, Peachtree Corners, 770-599-7979

32 / NO. 246

➔ Ford Fry didn't always launch behemoth restaurants with sky-high design budgets. In 2011, he opened this intimate Italian charmer in Decatur that remains his most sincere effort. Drew Belline runs the kitchen, cooking classic Margherita pizzas and handmade pastas. Don't miss the mushroomy chicken Marsala, served with a thick tangle of tagliatelle. ■ 129 East Ponce de Leon Avenue, Decatur, 678-399-8246

33 / COOKS & SOLDIERS

➔ Sibling owners Stephanie and Federico Castellucci spent time researching the Basque cuisine they wanted to feature at Cooks & Soldiers, a Westside follow-up to the Iberian Pig, their perpetually crowded Decatur mainstay. You might not expect to find one of the city's greatest steaks among the traditional Spanish pintxos—garlic-rubbed pan con tomate, a Spanish omelet—but the chuletón, a 2.2-pound bone-in ribeye, is as rich as its \$78 price tag. The menu's other asador plates are equally suave and confident uses of wood and flame. ■ 691 14th Street, 404-996-2623

34 / MADRAS MANTRA

➔ Fifteen years ago, Narendra Patel and his chef, Ram Nanjuda, rose to prominence at Decatur's Ma-

dras Saravana Bhavan, then Atlanta's best Indian vegetarian restaurant. To many fans' surprise (and delight), the duo returned this past year to the same location, where they opened under a new name in a pristine, pastel-colored dining room. The masala dosa with curried potatoes, miniature idlis, and homemade paneer are as good as ever. ■ 2179 Lawrenceville Highway, Decatur, 404-636-4400

35 / OCTOPUS BAR

➔ Fine dining restaurants—serious places where you spend serious money on serious food with a pedigree—ruled Atlanta for a long time. When Nhan Le and the late Angus Brown opened Octopus Bar in 2011, they shook things up, offering small plates rife with primo ingredients like oysters and uni but served in a loud, dark room adjoining Le's Vietnamese restaurant So Ba—and from 10:30 p.m. until 2:30 a.m. every day but Sunday. Seven years later, it's still the coolest restaurant in Atlanta, and chef Duane Kulers is carrying on Brown's love of seafood and his devil-may-care attitude, serving a punk mashup of flatbread with anchovies, smoked bronzino with trout roe and white grapefruit, and family-style daeji bulgogi (spicy Korean pork). ■ 560 Gresham Avenue, 404-627-9911

36 / SEED KITCHEN & BAR

➔ Doug Turbush brings a bright-white New Nordic aesthetic to an East Cobb strip mall, an unexpected location for an idiosyncratic restaurant. The menu is mainly Southern and New American, with some global ingredients. Turbush garnishes butternut squash soup with pepitas, for example, and serves crispy calamari with a yuzu and ginger sauce. The food is hard to categorize but easy to eat. ■ 1311 Johnson Ferry Road, Marietta, 678-214-6888

37 / PORCH LIGHT LATIN KITCHEN

➔ Rathbun Steak's former executive chef Andre Gomez draws on his Puerto Rican heritage at Porch Light, where he serves a beer-can chicken burrito; a torta stuffed with house-smoked bacon, pork collar, and beef short rib; and sofrito mac and cheese with pork rind crumbs. The star order is "can can pork," a massive cut that extends from loin to belly. ■ 300 Village Green Circle, Smyrna, 678-309-9858

38 / VINGENZO'S

➔ Some of the best Neapolitan pies can be found in Woodstock, where chef and owner Michael Bologna cooks them in a wood-fired oven. His comforting spaghetti Bolognese is also pure rustic Italian comfort. Other favorites: an elegant frutti di mare served over linguine or braised pork shank and white beans. ■ 105 East Main Street, Woodstock, 770-924-9133

39 / THE OPTIMIST

➔ What with the mini-golf lawn outside, you don't really need dinner to have a grand time at Ford Fry's seafood sensation. But you'll want to eat. Your ideal meal: the best lobster roll in the city, stuffed almost entirely with claw meat; wood-roasted oysters blanketed with lemon, Parmesan, and breadcrumbs; and, to drink, A Nod and a Wink (gin, sweet vermouth, Hoodoo chicory liqueur, and black pepper). Now that's a good time. ■ 914 Howell Mill Road, 404-477-6260

40 / ONE EARED STAG

➔ Anchored by a long, friendly bar, One Eared Stag is the kind of place nearby residents hit up twice a week. Robert Phalen's menu swings from the quirky (clams in bone broth with gremolata made from turnip greens, pork loin with boiled peanuts) to the familiar (tomato soup, hot chicken on white bread).

When in doubt, order the off-menu "meatstick," a two-patty burger made with beef and ground bacon. ■ 1029 Edgewood Avenue, 404-525-4479

41 / RUMI'S KITCHEN

►► Ali Mesghali's Persian restaurant is staged against a turquoise-tiled open kitchen curving along the back wall. (A second location opened at Avalon last year.) A deep tandoor oven turns out charred beef and lamb kebabs perfumed with saffron. To accompany the protein-heavy main courses: mountains of buttery basmati rice flecked with orange zest and pistachios. ■ 6112 Roswell Road, Sandy Springs, 404-477-2100

42 / TABLE & MAIN

►► Ryan Pernice has invigorated downtown Roswell with two of the busiest restaurants in the area: Table & Main and, across the street, Osteria Mattone. The former is set in a renovated farmhouse and offers simple Southern food with an emphasis on vegetables (blackened cabbage with roasted sunchokes, Brussels sprouts with bacon hollandaise). Don't stick to just the veggies, though: The golden fried chicken is a must. We're watching as Pernice opens a third restaurant, Coalition Food & Beverage, in Alpharetta later this year. ■ 1028 Canton Street, Roswell, 678-869-5178

43 / BUSY BEE

►► We'd be a lesser town without this institution, which has been a go-to for the comforts of smothered pork chops, oxtails, and fried chicken since 1947. Six days a week, old-school politicians and R&B artists alike file in for lunch and early dinners (it closes at 7 p.m.). Don't forget sides: collard greens, house corn muffins, and candied yams, all served with a smile. ■ 810 Martin Luther King Drive, 404-525-9212

44 / 9292 KOREAN BARBECUE

►► Good Korean barbecue is the sum of its parts. At 9292, each part is a cut above: a rainbow of daily changing banchan (complimentary side dishes) like pickled radishes and soy-glazed peanuts; prime-tasting brisket, short ribs, and ribeye; charcoal grills; and a clean, modern space. (As for the name: Say "92-92" in Korean and it sounds a lot like the word for "grill.") It's a marvel to watch the servers navigate the labyrinth of semi-private dining cubicles. Need a water refill? More meat? Push the call button and your table number flashes red on a screen near the kitchen. ■ 3360 Satellite Boulevard, Duluth, 470-227-1431

45 / KEVIN RATHBUN STEAK

►► This glossy steakhouse along the BeltLine's East-side trail has long attracted expense-account diners as well as date-night couples, both drawn to Kevin Rathbun's all-American bravado. Where else will you find fat squares of pork belly glazed with Sriracha molasses as an appetizer? Come hungry to tackle the 20-ounce ribeye, not to mention standout sides like creamed spinach and onion rings. ■ 154 Krog Street, 404-524-5600

46 / COMMUNITY Q BBQ

►► Dave Roberts is a veteran pitmaster dedicated to tender pulled pork and smoky St. Louis-style ribs. Set your sights on daily specials like black-eyed peas with bacon, a kitchen-sink salad made with local greens and vegetables, or a three-cheese mac and cheese. ■ 1361 Clairmont Road, Decatur, 404-633-2080

47 / DESTA ETHIOPIAN KITCHEN

►► You'll find Desta's dining room packed with people born in both Atlanta and Ethiopia. They all come for miser, red lentil stew spiced with cayenne pepper;

ayib, homemade cottage cheese; and soft fermented injera bread. ■ 3086 Briarcliff Road, 404-929-0011

48 / EMPIRE STATE SOUTH

►► This rustic Midtown centerpiece still draws enormous energy from its handsome bar, which opens at 7 a.m. with coffee, pastries, and bagels. Throughout the day, enjoy Hugh Acheson's "Farm Egg Fried Rice" with kimchi and sweet potatoes, among other Southern-ish dishes. Visit during cocktail hour for Kellie Thorn's killer drinks. ■ 999 Peachtree Street NE, 404-541-1105

49 / RISING SON

►► When Hudson Rouse, formerly of Home Grown, and his wife, Kathryn Fitzgerald Rouse, opened this earnest meat-and-three for breakfast and lunch almost two years ago, crowds flocked. Hearty fare included fried trout with cheese grits, vegetables Hudson grows himself, and chicken pot pie. Now, the Avondale Estates restaurant also offers dinner and cocktails plus housemade sodas and cold-pressed juices. ■ 124 North Avondale Road, Avondale Estates, 404-600-5297

50 / AREPA MIA

►► Lis Hernandez has been slinging arepas—stuffed cornmeal patties, crunchy from a hot grill—at the Sweet Auburn Curb Market since 2012. Last summer, she moved a second location from Decatur to Avondale Estates, where she has a patio and more parking. New menu items there include two entrees—pabellón (shredded beef with black beans, fried plantains, queso de año, and rice) and asado negro (beef roasted with red wine, served with rice and vegetables)—plus avocado and heart of palm salad dressed with olive oil and sweet corn juice. Atlanta needed a captivating introduction to Venezuelan food, and this is it. ■ 10 North Clarendon Avenue, Avondale Estates, 404-600-3509