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BY JULIA BAINBRIDGE, CHRISTIANE LAUTERBACH,
AND JENNIFER ZYMAN



Bryan Furman of B's
Cracklin' Barbeque
PHOTOGRAPH BY
JOHNNY ACRY



BEST



NEW

Thai Chili Pan Mee
at Food Terminal
PHOTOGRAPH BY
IAIN DAGWELL

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RESTAURANTS



What does “fine dining” mean anymore?

All over the country, you can find ambitious cooks serving masterful meals on plastic trays shoved across food hall countertops, not a tablecloth in sight. What the restaurants on this list have in common aren't starched white linens; it's the pure, unwavering focus on food. There's a barbecue pitmaster raising heritage breed hogs and smoking them whole, the meat so full of flavor it's almost better un-sauced; a Malaysian immigrant laboring over fresh-made rice noodles that are as good as what you'd get in her native country; and an Atlanta restaurant veteran who's back in the kitchen after a four-year hiatus, blending his European bistro-style greatest hits with American steakhouse favorites to create something new along the way. It may not be traditional fine dining, but it's some of the finest dining you can do in the city right now.

— JULIA BAINBRIDGE



PHOTOGRAPH BY IAIN BAGWELL



MELISSA LIBBY & ASSOCIATES



FOOD TERMINAL SIGNALS a new chapter on Buford Highway, which is once again becoming the hub of Atlanta's ethnic food scene after a mid-2000s slump. The restaurant—really more like an upscale food hall—was swarmed as soon as it opened in March, and the crowds haven't waned since. Owners Howie Ewe and Amy Wong, who is also the chef, specialize in Malaysian cuisine, which blends Chinese, Indian, Singaporean, and Thai flavors. It's a mash-up style of cooking that reflects the collage of cultures you'll find in this part of town. The colossal freestanding space also places a greater emphasis on design than its BuHi brethren, with neon lights and citron-painted industrial metal stools. Still, you're here to eat: The magazine-sized menu swings from traditional dishes (ginger-poached Hainanese chicken) to oddball ones (a Hawaiian-Korean-Southwestern mix of tomato-braised rice, cheddar cheese, corn, Spam, red onions, and bell peppers) and back again. Whatever you order, make sure it's something with egg noodles, which are made fresh in-house by a machine of Ewe's own design.

5000 Buford Highway, Chamblee, 678-555-6110

**MUST-ORDER
THAI CHILI
PAN MEE**

Wong tops silky flat noodles with dried silver anchovies, ground pork, shiitake and wood ear mushrooms,

spinach, and a fried egg. When mixed together, it's spicy, funky, and distinctively chewy.



B's Cracklin' Barbeque

BARBECUE IS A REGIONAL GAME. A Carolina pitmaster, for example, would no sooner slather his meat in red sauce than open a vegan restaurant. But Bryan Furman, a former welder, is beholden to no style but his own. "Even if I show you how to do it, you're not going to be able to do it like me," he says, winking. When he opened the original B's in Savannah in October 2014, Furman was one of the first to bring heritage pork to the barbecue world; he currently raises six breeds of pigs, Duroc and Chester White among them, in Statesboro pastures. On the table ("sauce is supposed to be a condiment, not part of the cooking"), Furman offers a red sauce, a North Carolina-style vinegar sauce, and—inspired by South Carolina with a nod to Georgia—a mustard and peach sauce. Sides are no afterthought: Collard greens taste like collard greens, not fat and salt; slow-simmered pork hash is the most comforting of comfort foods, an umami-rich gravy on top of steaming rice; and instead of cornbread, you'll find lacy-edged crackling hoecakes. Furman opened the Atlanta location just one year ago, but its V-ceilinged dining room, fragrant with smoke, already feels like an heirloom. Georgia doesn't need its own famous style of barbecue; we've got Bryan Furman.

2061 Main Street, 470-765-6966



**MUST-ORDER
RIBS**

Furman cooks the pork over hickory and cherry coals. What ends up at your table is a meat that pulls cleanly off the bone, and every bite of it—every morsel, even—has been suffused with smoke.



The Federal



MUCH OF THIS STRETCH OF Midtown has become a bland, corporate landscape, but the Federal is a place you want to linger. The reason goes beyond its antique mirrors and tufted leather banquettes; it's also the morning-to-night menu that any proper European brasserie should offer. Plus steaks—chef Shaun Doty hails from Oklahoma, after all—hand-cut and cooked in cast iron. Doty became superstar chef Gunter Seeger's right hand in the kitchen of the Dining Room in the Ritz-Carlton, Buckhead, and grew by leaps and bounds after letting loose on his own at the much-missed Shaun's in Inman Park. After four years spent in the fast-casual business, Doty is back in the kitchen at the Federal, which he opened in November 2016 with longtime collaborator Lance Gummere. Doty's now-classic Sardinian flatbread with greens has made its way here from Shaun's, alongside coarse chopped liver bound with mayonnaise. It's an all-around excellent expression of a bistro in a part of town that needs it.

1050 Crescent Avenue,
404-545-5857

MUST-ORDER PORK SCHNITZEL. More tender than any such cut of meat, pounded

thin and fried, has a right to be. Doty's schnitzel comes with marinated onions, peanuts (hat tip, Georgia), and a healthy handful of peppery Italian parsley.



Spring

THERE AREN'T MANY chefs in Atlanta who can cook like Brian So, who has chosen to open his first restaurant not in the city but in Marietta. Spring is located just one block off of the square in an almost-hidden, minimally decorated room inside a 100-year-old freight depot. It's intimate, to say the least—you can hear every move So makes in the kitchen, down to the swipec of his whisk against a stainless steel bowl—but that's a bantam price to pay for access to his technical, restrained, reverent cooking. It's clear that his goal isn't necessarily to innovate; it's to perfect: 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*. You could eat at Spring every night and never find an element that wasn't similarly flawless. So helped tend over 40 garden beds as the chef at the now-closed Korean Southern diner Sobban, and Spring's menu continues to honor the work of Georgia's soil.

GROUPEL
with tomatoes,
spinach, and
beurre blanc



90 Marietta Station Walk,
Marietta,
678-540-2777



MUST-ORDER BREAD AND BUTTER

So does many things right—those crisp-tender vegetables—but his sourdough bread, springy in texture and pleasingly tart, with a dark and toothsome crust, is not to be missed. He even makes his own cultured butter.

THE FEDERAL: GELDHAUSER; SPRING: AUTRY; BARM: KILGORE





Meet the Crew

The people behind Atlanta's best new restaurants hail from all over the country—and the globe

1) SARM

BAKER
Sarah Dodge
HOMETOWN
Atlanta, Georgia

BEVERAGE DIRECTOR
Joshua Fryer
HOMETOWN
Nashville, Tennessee

PARTNER
Nhan Le
HOMETOWN
Hue, Vietnam

CHEF (NOT PICTURED)
Wilson Gourley
HOMETOWN
Washington, D.C.

CHEF (NOT PICTURED)
Keith Remes
HOMETOWN
Covington, Georgia

2) SPRING

CHEF/OWNER
Brian So
HOMETOWN
Kennesaw, Georgia

3) 04W PIZZA

CHEF/OWNER
Anthony Spina
HOMETOWN
Red Bank, New Jersey

4) 9292 KOREAN BBQ

OWNER
Sung Yong Lee
HOMETOWN
Gwang Ju, South Korea

5) B'S CRACKLIN' BARBEQUE

CHEF/OWNER
Bryan Furman
HOMETOWN
Cassatt, South Carolina

6) NOBLE FIN

CHEF/OWNER
Jay Swift
HOMETOWN
Baltimore, Maryland

7) FOOD TERMINAL

CHEF/OWNER
Amy Wong
HOMETOWN
Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia

8) THE FEDERAL

CHEFS/OWNERS
Lance Gummere (left), Shaun Doty
HOMETOWN (BOTH)
Stillwater, Oklahoma



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