

# Guide

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## Dining review

# A gem from the Westside brings the farm to the table

Restaurant pros show a knowledge of where food comes from.

**Miller Union**, 999 Brady Ave., Atlanta ★★★★★

By **Meridith Ford Goldman**  
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Back in October, I crafted a list of six of what I consider the best restaurants in Atlanta. I chose them because they exemplify a wholesome, sensible approach to restaurant dining, providing foods grown locally whenever pos-

sible, with a focus on sustainability and regional Southern flair.

There's no need to think of "farm-to-table" as a trend in Atlanta anymore; our best restaurants provide this as status quo. And it's time to add one more restaurant to the list: Miller Union.

Other than Abattoir and Bistro Niko, I can think of no other opening I looked more forward to in 2009. A partnership between restaurant veterans Steven Satterfield and Neal McCarthy, Miller Union stands poised to be one of the city's finest dining

destinations, and yet another gem to open on the Westside.

For starters, Satterfield polished his chops (pork and otherwise) as executive sous chef at Watershed for nine years, so he comes to the kitchen with a deep knowledge of Southern cooking and a true appreciation for where food comes from. He's also got skills galore. Second, McCarthy, whose charm permeates the dining room, spent 10 years as Riccardo Ullio's general manager and sommelier at Sotto Sotto.

"I'm really enjoying exploring the world beyond Italian



Miller Union stylishly offers what's considered "farm-to-table" fare now standard in Atlanta's prime restaurants: slow braised pork shoulder and sautéed greens. *Becky Stein/Special*

wines," he told me in his dapper English accent one evening after selecting a glass of sparkling rosé for me as an aperitif.

As for Satterfield, he had me at mustard greens soup.

Imagine velvety smooth texture, the deep, earthy flavor of greens highlighted by garlic, butter and onions and just enough heat to warm your

Miller Union continued on D4

[editorial]



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# Homey praise for cuisine

## Miller Union

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hands as you touch the bowl. I wanted to crawl inside it and stay.

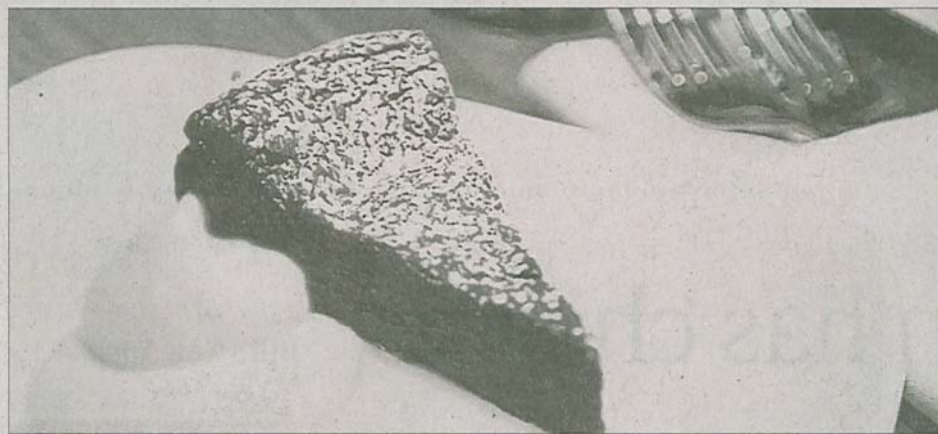
That is, until I smeared the creamy yolk of a fresh egg baked in celery cream, hot from the broiler, over a thick piece of toast made from the rustic bread at H&F Bakery. Chicken liver mousse (which seems to show up on menus everywhere these days) is a smooth smattering of gamey, smooth paté served with Satterfield's own tiny pickled radishes.

Named after the Miller Union Stockyards that once occupied the space that follows Marietta Street past the White Provision complex, one thing about Miller Union that doesn't fall in line with current trend is its design.

Design firm Ai3 (which, like chicken liver mousse, is just so fly) has carved a space that goes against the current grain of austere warehouse chic, opting for cutting from the large space a clever farmhouse look that combines a library room with floor-to-ceiling steel frame windows in the restaurant's bar.

It all seems cozy and comfortable, rather than cool and aloof; a perfect backdrop for Satterfield's rustic approach in the kitchen.

Vegetables, from roast-



The flourless chocolate cake with soft whipped cream is dense goodness, if lacking gooey-ness. **Becky Stein/Special**

ed Brussels sprouts to sweet potatoes served simply in the jacket with a bit of butter, are reason enough to praise this chef's homey style, but let him get his hands around beer-braised pork shoulder with some sautéed greens and there's real reason to celebrate. Sapelo Island clams in buttery broth, plus braised rabbit over grits

with mushrooms are umami-laden, pop-in-your-mouth flavorful.

If there's an area where Satterfield falters, it's his last course.

Desserts don't live up to the grandeur (yes, we can call sweet potatoes grand) of the rest of the menu, though it's been a long time since I admitted to enjoying a flourless chocolate cake as

much as I did the one on this menu. It lacked the gratuitous gooey-ness that usually accompanies this ubiquitous creation and was simply a nicely baked, very dense slice of chocolate cake with whipped cream. Rum raisin pudding and apple tart are unimpressive.

But next time I'm in the mood for a sweet potato fix, I know where to go.

### Miller Union

**Overall rating:** ★★★★★

**Food:** Contemporary American with Southern flair

**Service:** Competent and knowing

**Price range:** \$\$

**Credit cards:** Visa, Mastercard, American Express

**Hours of operation:** Open for dinner Monday through Thursday from 5-10 p.m.; Friday and Saturday from 5-11 p.m.

**Best dishes:** Daily soups, farm egg baked in celery cream, chicken liver mousse, beer-braised pork shoulder, braised rabbit

**Vegetarian selections:** So many, so little time: Brussels sprouts, sweet potatoes, sautéed greens, root vegetable gratin, plus very fresh winter salads

**Children:** Yes

**Parking:** Complimentary valet

**Reservations:** Yes

**Wheelchair access:** Yes

**Smoking:** Heated patio only

**Noise level:** Low to medium

**Takeout:** Yes

### Address, telephone:

999 Brady Ave., Atlanta, 678-733-8550

**Web site:** [www.millerunion.com](http://www.millerunion.com)

**Pricing code:** \$\$\$\$ means more than \$75; \$\$\$\$ means \$75 and less; \$\$\$ means \$50 and less; \$\$ means \$25 and less; \$ means \$15 and less.

### Key to ajc ratings

★★★★★ **Outstanding**

Sets the standard for fine dining in the region.

★★★★ **Excellent**

One of the best in the Atlanta area.

★★★ **Very good**

Merits a drive if you're looking for this kind of dining.

★★ **Good**

A worthy addition to its neighborhood, but food may be hit and miss.

★ **Fair**

Food is more miss than hit.

Restaurants that do not meet these criteria may be rated Poor.

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