



[editorial]



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ESQUIRE'S

BEST

NEW RESTAURANTS

2010

FEATURING

THE RESTAURANT *of the YEAR*

2010'S BEST NEW CHEF *(and four others to watch)*

A HOSTESS WE LOVE

PLUS: A BRIEF HISTORY OF RISOTTO



HOW TO DRINK
WHISKEY *with FOOD*

WHAT WE CAN LEARN
FROM VEGANS

A NEW WAY *to COOK EGGS*

WOLFGANG PUCK

...AND PLENTY *of GUANCIALE*

BY JOHN MARIANI

PULL HERE
TO OPEN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY KEN KOCHEY

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OR NEARLY THREE DECADES, THIS LIST HAS REFLECTED THE BEST OF American dining. The criteria haven't changed—the food and the singularity of the chef's vision, of course, are paramount, but also the attentiveness of the servers, the beauty of the surroundings, the shininess of the forks, the warmth of the hostess, the generosity of the cocktails. This year, however, the first thing we looked at was the people in the seats. In 2010, the most important person in any restaurant at any given moment was not the chef—celebrity or not—but the customer. In every city, we were reminded that while the quality of the stemware and the richness of the bordelaise are important, restaurants are still, first and foremost, places where humans gather and talk and laugh. People ate out again—and they weren't jonesing to spend money on caviar. They were looking for fun. Communal tables ruled. Formal tablecloths continued their disappearance. Chefs created homey day-of-the-week dinners, replicating supper at Grandma's. And the good restaurants, in turn, filled up. Here we pick twenty that are, for our money right now, the best.

RESTAURANT

OF THE YEAR

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ABC KITCHEN

NEW YORK

Jean-Georges Vongerichten first showed up on this list in 1985 as the twenty-eight-year-old chef at the formal nouvelle cuisine restaurant Le Marquis de Lafayette in Boston. Since then he has built an empire. He may have overexpanded and taken a few missteps, but with ABC Kitchen, the [continued on page 78]

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**BEST NEW
RESTAURANTS
2010**

**COOK &
BROWN**
PROVIDENCE



When a recession collides with one of the easiest businesses to bankrupt even in good times, the demise of the mom-and-pop restaurant is one of the sorrier effects. So you've got to applaud the sheer effort of chef Nemo Bolin and his wife, Jenny, in opening a modest place without the slightest pretense that they want to do anything more than cook wonderful, personalized food. Let's let them tell it in their words:

"The roots of both joy and agony come from the same place. The complete emotional, financial, and physical dedication to our business is the reason we are able to relish when a guest raves or when we read a positive review. We can say proudly that we deserve it because we work our asses off, and we live to hear that unmistakable sigh when someone takes the first bite of their meal and just melts into their chair. It is an immeasurable asset to have the strength that comes from a true partnership. Our son will grow up knowing where his food comes from, how it got to his plate, a greater appreciation for the intense labor involved in local farming, and, of course, the importance of obtaining meat from people who raise and slaughter animals humanely. We don't just care that our food tastes good; we care about the people, the animals, and the plants that made it possible."

Very sweet. Now, to actually taste what they're talking about, order a side of peas with Nemo's roasted bone marrow with pickled shallots and country bread. You'll never taste better.

• 959 Hope Street; 401-273-7275; cookandbrown.com



FARM EGG BAKED

IN CELERY CREAM

MILLER UNION ATLANTA

Sometimes one dish sums up the essence of a chef, an idea so well conceived and so beautifully realized that you know he is particularly proud to serve it. For Steven Satterfield, that dish is a simple farm egg baked in celery cream. It might sound as if it belongs at a ladies' luncheon, but it has such a purity of intent—which is to bowl you over with its richness and its sensual textures—that you want to savor it at this charming southern restaurant named for the long-gone stockyards in this part of Atlanta. The country decor, communal table, and straightforward menu coalesce the way biscuit ingredients meld into something wholesome and happy-making. Satterfield treats his ingredients with respect in dishes like beer-braised pork shoulder with a sweet-potato jacket and carrot-and-parsnip soup. One bite of any of these simple but painstaking dishes will tell you all you need to know about the man and his food.

• 999 Brady Avenue; 678-733-8550; millerunion.com

1/3 cup fresh cream
2 stalks celery, including leaves, roughly chopped
1 shallot, sliced, including skin
1/2 small onion, sliced, including skin
1 tsp kosher salt
3 peppercorns
1 small bay leaf
1 sprig fresh thyme
butter for greasing
2 farm fresh eggs
Preheat oven to 330 degrees. In a small saucepan, gently heat cream, celery, shallot, onion, salt, peppercorns, and herbs until very hot. Remove from heat and let steep for 15 minutes. Meanwhile, lightly butter two small oven-proof ramekins and

crack an egg into each, being careful not to break the yolk. Strain the cream into a small bowl, gently pressing on the solids. Discard solids. Spoon cream over each egg just until covered. (It's okay if the egg yolk is protruding slightly across the top.)

Bake dishes in preheated oven for 5 to 6 minutes. Check closely to make sure the whites are setting but the yolk is still soft. Then turn the oven to broil and, with the door propped open, heat until tops begin to brown. Remove immediately and let rest a minute before serving. Serve with warm crusty bread brushed with olive oil. Serves two.

KALU ASIAN KITCHEN
CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA

chef and manager at one of the most exciting Asian restaurants in America. Located across from the Time Warner Cable Arena, the stunning Kalu—that's the restaurant in real life—is cavernous, with more than three hundred seats and a long, polished sushi bar. Emperor works every station and still finds time to check every table. He explains, he recommends, he educates his guests about his sublime sashimi, the Korean spicy wings, the Wagyu steak skewers with garlic chips, and, above all, the *kamameshi* iron rice pots (he's one of few to use them in America), which cook rice and other ingredients to a savoriness and texture that will make you believe you never really tasted Asian rice before.

• 505 East Sixth Street; 704-910-4877; kalunc.com

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