

THE

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# ATLANTAN



## THE FEAST ISSUE

MUST-TRY EATERIES  
FROM NEW YORK  
TO HAWAII

TOP NEW RESTAURANTS  
AND THE HOT CULINARY  
SCENE IN ATLANTA

MEET A 7-YEAR-OLD  
SOCIAL MEDIA  
SUPERSTAR

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MELISSA LIBBY & ASSOCIATES

# A MATTER OF TASTE



The finest things happening in  
Atlanta's food scene right now

*By Lauren Finney and Jessica Cherner*

Risotto, such as this seafood variation, is a speciality at the newly opened outpost of Taverna at The Shops Buckhead Atlanta.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TAVERNA







Clockwise from left: The Federal's steak frites with sunflower sprout salad; small bites at The Tavern at Atlas are perfect for sharing; South City Kitchen Buckhead's elevated patio takes advantage of prime real estate; Spring's interiors are simple, letting the innovative food shine.



## 10 MOST EXCITING OPENINGS



### 1. THE FEDERAL

When Shaun Doty and Lance Gummere opened **The Federal** at the end of last year in their former Crescent Avenue Bantam + Biddy space, they brought a simple elegance and—seriously good—(mostly) French fare to Midtown. Head straight for the steak frites for a power lunch, or go full speed at dinner with the Kansas City strip. For pescatarians, there's the whole loup de mer, served with the ubertrendy *farinata* (chickpea pancake) and a saffron yogurt. Definitely save room for the sticky toffee pudding, made to be shared at a romantic table by the windows, the best spot for people-watching over candlelight. 1050 Crescent Ave., 404.343.3857, [thefederalatl.com](http://thefederalatl.com)

### 2. SPRING

When word got out that a young chef was doing incredible things with food right off the railroad tracks in downtown Marietta, we were intrigued. But when Brian So was nominated for a James Beard Award in the rising star category, we worried we wouldn't be able to get a table. Part of **Spring's** charm is that it flies so under the radar, despite turning out beautifully restrained food. Case in point: white asparagus soup with blue crab and trout roe; chicken liver pate on toast with blueberry jam; and a roasted rack of lamb with fava beans and glazed carrots. It's a little tricky to find off the main square in Marietta—follow the train tracks around to the backside of the strip of buildings to the semihidden parking lot down an alley—but you'll soon forget the hassle. 83 Church St., Marietta, 678.540.2777, [springmarietta.com](http://springmarietta.com)

### 3. THE TAVERN AT ATLAS

While it was sad to see the lively and packed front library room go at The St., Regis Atlanta staple, it's been replaced with **The Tavern at Atlas**: a casual yet sophisticated option for lunch or a spontaneous dinner. The same richness of the main dining room is there with velvet seats and walnut tables; but small plates now include more barlike options, such as sliders, Parmesan thyme fries with a black truffle hollandaise and roasted oysters on the half-shell. The full wine list from the main dining room is available if you ask for it—consider a bottle of Faustino I, Gran Reserva Rioja, 1970 if you're out celebrating the close of a big deal. 88 W. Paces Ferry Road NW, 404.600.6471, [atlasrestaurant.com](http://atlasrestaurant.com)

### 4. SOUTH CITY KITCHEN BUCKHEAD

You now don't have to drive to Midtown to get indulgent favorites like fried chicken or shrimp and Geechie Boy grits. The expansive **South City Kitchen Buckhead** location of this Atlanta classic is now serving all your favorites on a beautiful patio overlooking Peachtree Street, where you can sip a dram of Parker's Heritage bourbon while you watch the traffic pile up. Sign up for the event listings—word has it that its Whiskey and Vine program will be back in early fall. The program brings together some of the best vintners and distillers, such as Hartford Family Winery (Sonoma, Calif) and Breckenridge Distillery (Breckenridge, Colo.) in a unique barrel partnership that becomes ours for the tasting. 3350 Peachtree Road NE, Ste. 175, 404.815.6677, [southcitykitchen.com](http://southcitykitchen.com)



Clockwise from top left: MF Bar is bringing top-notch sushi to Alpharetta; 8ARM's light and bright dining room is the perfect place for a midday pause; Taverna is dishing up classic Italian eats like *paglia e fieno* at The Shops Buckhead Atlanta.



### 5. TAVERNA

In The Shops Buckhead Atlanta, **Taverna** opened without much fanfare this spring, but just because they came in quietly doesn't mean you won't leave talking the place up around town. With locations in California and Texas (and one in trendy Akumal, Mexico), Taverna turns out Italian comfort food dishes like sea bass brodetto and veal Milanese. But the real draw here is the risotto—the house specialty comes prepared with seafood; burrata, cherry tomatoes and prosciutto; with chicken and vegetables; with shrimp and porcini mushrooms; and simply, with Parmesan and black truffle sauce. Spend a day post-shopping-sprees on its porch, which conveniently overlooks Buckhead Avenue for excellent people-watching. 280 Buckhead Ave. NE, Ste. 317, 678.791.1311, [tavernabylombardi.com](http://tavernabylombardi.com)

### 6. MF BAR

Avalon's Phase II saw favorites like Rumi's and Jeni's Splendid Ice Creams head north, but none were as exciting as **MF Bar**, a second outpost of Inman Park's MF Sushi. The group's signature restrained decor is complemented by large windows that give a great view of people-watching, and be sure to look up: Part of the ceiling is covered in a beautiful Japanese cherry blossom print. Don't overlook the robata grill, where freshly cooked salmon, black cod, A5 wagyu and more are a great substitute for nigiri and specialty rolls like toro osaka. Add a little fresh wasabi grated on sharkskin to really bring out the flavor, and if you're feeling adventurous, start with the jellyfish salad. 7135 Avalon Blvd., 404.977.1207 [mfsushiusa.com](http://mfsushiusa.com)

### 7. 8ARM

Atlanta was saddened by the tragic passing of Angus Brown, who, along with partner Nhan Le, had set the city on fire with energetic spots like Octopus Bar and Lusca. Their newest venture, **8ARM**, opened late last summer, before Angus' death in January. An all-star team of chef Keith Remes, pastry chef Sarah Dodge and a slew of Lusca alum are helping keep Brown's memory alive through ever-changing dishes like lamb neck with roasted vegetables and rock crab, avocado and flying dragon fruit. Go for dinner; stay for the cocktails on the rowdy patio. If you see Le, pester him about the forthcoming seafood spot Ama inside neighboring Paris on Ponce. 710 Ponce de Leon Ave., 478.875.5856, [8armatl.com](http://8armatl.com)

8ARM PHOTO BY SETH SMITH OF LADY FLASHBACK; MF BAR PHOTO COURTESY OF MF BAR; TAVERNA PHOTO COURTESY OF TAVERNA





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Clockwise from far left: Enjoy a savory bite of Nine Mile Station's squash galette; the newly rebranded AG is the perfect Downtown spot for its famous Smoky Old-Fashioned; Bacchanalia's new home on Ellsworth Industrial Boulevard retains the same simple elegance as its previous home at Westside Provisions.

NINE MILE STATION: PHOTO BY AMY ENCLAR; AG: PHOTO COURTESY OF AG; BACCHANALIA: PHOTO BY ANDREW THOMAS LEE

## 8. NINE MILE STATION

The hoopla of Skyline Park can be mildly offputting, but bear with it: Behind the slide is the entrance to **Nine Mile Station**, the best rooftop dining in town. This isn't your average picnic-tables and plastic-cups joint, but rather an elegant iteration of a beer hall. But the best part is most definitely outdoors—sweeping Atlanta skyline views are best seen from the comfort of a fire pit, complete with colorful blankets for chillier nights. The bar food is elevated; a squash galette with Gruyere and spinach, and pork belly with poached eggs are two examples. The best part of the entire experience, though, is confirming a reservation at the restaurant, which lets you bypass the monstrously long line downstairs and head directly up to a summertime spectacle. 675 Ponce de Leon Ave. NE, 770.999.1532 [9milestation.com](http://9milestation.com)

## 9. BACCHANALIA

**Bacchanalia** and sister concept Star Provisions Market & Cafe are starting a new chapter in an 8,717-square-foot shared space just a little over a mile from their former home in Westside Provisions District. Designed collaboratively by architecture firm Perkins+Will and chef-owners Anne Quatrano and Clifford Harrison, the new location echoes the feel of the culinary duo's family farm, Summerland, complete with exposed raw materials, natural light aplenty and design elements with a personal touch. The creative and challenging dishes that have made Bacchanalia a staple since 1993 still shine in this new home. 1460 Ellsworth Industrial Blvd., 404.365.0410, [starprovisions.com](http://starprovisions.com)

## 10. AG

You might remember it as downtown's The Ritz-Carlton, Atlanta stalwart Atlanta Grill, but the newly refreshed and rebranded **AG** has had a bit of a makeover. Dishes for all-day dining have been reworked and include offerings like Enchanted Springs trout, a lunchtime-only cavatelli pasta with confit duck legs, and a baked Alaska for two torched tableside. For harried Deloitte execs or anyone else short on time downtown, there's also an express-lunch option that cuts down on time significantly. However, our favorite way to enjoy a meal at AG is at the superintimate hideout table—complete with a curtain for top secret mergers, deals and takeovers. 181 Peachtree St. NE, 404.221.6550, [ritzcarlton.com](http://ritzcarlton.com)