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EDITION

OCTOBER 2000 • \$3.50

Gourmet

THE MAGAZINE OF GOOD LIVING



DETROIT most impressive
TRIBUTE
31425 West 12 Mile Road
Farmington Hills
(248) 848-9393

With its theatrical good looks, menu filled with esoteric ingredients, and wine list rich in rare bottles, Tribute seems like a small corner of Manhattan in the Midwest. But no New York restaurant has service this sweet, and few have food this good. Takashi Yagihashi uses boutique beef, day-boat fish, and local produce to create his fusion food; the results are spectacular.

best city dining
THE RATTLESNAKE CLUB
300 River Place
(313) 567-4400

Big, open, and cool, with modern paintings on the wall and sweeping views of the river, Rattlesnake is Detroit's big-city dining experience. At lunchtime, local power brokers hunker down over Jimmy Schmidt's down-to-earth American food, eating perch with watercress sauce and Caesar salad as they watch the water. Don't miss the white chocolate ravioli.

best chain restaurant
LA SHISH
22039 Michigan Avenue, Dearborn
(313) 565-5500

This may be Motor City, but it's also home to the largest Arab-American population in the country. Walk down Warren and Michigan avenues, and you'll pass 86 Arab businesses and restaurants. And La Shish—with its incredible breads straight from the oven, its array of hummus and *ghallaba*, and its fresh lime juice and generous portions—is the hands-down favorite.

HONOLULU best regional cooking
ALAN WONG'S RESTAURANT
1857 South King Street
(808) 949-2526

The Tennyson of teriyaki, the Proust of *poi*, the Lorca of *lomi lomi*, Alan Wong knits regional Hawaiian flavors into his cooking with the virtuosity of a poet weaving classical allusions into a sonnet. This isn't to say that Wong takes himself too seriously—he has chosen to reinterpret a Hawaiian grease bomb called *loco moco* (rice, hamburger, eggs, and brown gravy)—but in his hands even the lowly *huli huli* chicken, most often seen at fundraisers in Honolulu parking lots, has the lyric power of truffled *poulet de Bresse*.

best french
PADOVANI'S BISTRO & WINE BAR
1956 Ala Moana Boulevard
(808) 946-3456

Some might think that being the best French chef in Hawaii is an achievement comparable to being the best surfer in Belgium or the finest basketball player in Guam. But in Philippe Padovani's hands, with excellent local produce, there is this: For the duration of a meal, Honolulu seems like just another town in Provence.

LAS VEGAS

TOP 5

1. NAPA
Rio All-Suite Casino Resort
3700 West Flamingo Road
(702) 247-7923

Napa, we will concede, is not for everyone. The dining room is country-club sedate, the wine list weighted more toward cultish Alsatian rarities than toward crowd-pleasing California Chardonnays. The ideas of Jean-Louis Palladin are offered in uncompromising form; he seems to use the essences of citrus, black truffles, and cured pork as if they were salt and pepper. Still, we insist: If you come to Napa with an open mind and an open pocketbook, there may be no better restaurant between the coasts.

2. LE CIRQUE
Bellagio Hotel
3600 Las Vegas Blvd. South
(702) 693-8100

We have no idea why this perfect country-French restaurant belongs in a Las Vegas casino instead of in a cottage somewhere on the Loire. That in no way, however, compromises our admiration either for Marc Poidevin's modern riffs on the classics—rabbit stew, *coq au vin*—or for the elegantly silk-tented dining room in which his food is served.

3. PICASSO
Bellagio Hotel
3600 Las Vegas Blvd. South
(702) 693-7223

What kind of restaurant would you build if you had all the money in the world? Would you gild it with original works by Picasso, windows overlooking dancing fountains, and soaring cove ceilings? Would you lure Julian Serrano from the fanciest restaurant in San Francisco and indulge his brand of streamlined pan-Mediterranean luxury cuisine? Would you encourage the kind of formal service so solicitous it practically squeaks? Former owner Steve Wynn's dream of a perfect restaurant may not be your own, but it works.

4. LOTUS OF SIAM
953 East Sahara Avenue
(702) 735-3033

Improbably, the best Thai restaurant in the United States is in a faded mini-mall a mile off the Strip, and most of its customers are there for the \$5.99 buffet. But if you order from the separate northern menu (insist on it), you will find that Saipin Chutima crafts some of the most compelling northern and northeastern Thai dishes on the planet—roasted-green-chile dip with fresh Thai herbs, Burmese-style pork, a delicious jackfruit *larb*, grilled giant prawns with tamarind sauce, mango with sticky rice—and any reservations you may have about the lack of elegance will vanish with the first bite.

5. RENOIR
Mirage Hotel
3400 Las Vegas Blvd. South
(888) 777-7552

Alessandro Stratta, a certified protégé of Alain Ducasse, serves exquisitely crafted constructions of foie gras and balsamic vinegar, truffled scallops and celery root, and sea bass and cranberry beans in a softly lit salon decorated with original Renoir oils. The south of France as imagined by a voluptuary of unlimited means.

SPECIALTIES

best steak house
DELMONICO STEAKHOUSE
The Venetian, 3355 Las Vegas Blvd. South
(702) 414-3737

Las Vegas is to steaks what Paris is to baguettes. But Delmonico, Emeril Lagasse's restaurant, serves not just epochal gumbo and truffled potato chips but huge, dead-rare, dry-aged, bone-in New York strips dripping with butter and herbs that—need we say it—kick the entire concept of a steak house up a notch.

most romantic
DRAI'S
3595 Las Vegas Blvd. South
(702) 737-0555

If your idea of romance involves smoked mirrors, leopard-print banquettes, foie gras, flowing bottles of Champagne, and a private, subterranean hideaway—and why shouldn't it sometimes?—then Drai's might be the place to play out your wildest Ann-Margret fantasies.

