

Where to Eat *Right Now!*



37

RESTAURANTS WE LOVE

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The **37** Restaurants We Love Right Now

A COMPLETELY BIASED, OF-THE-MOMENT LOOK AT
THE PLACES WHERE WE WANT TO EAT **TONIGHT.**

COMPILED BY CHRIS CHAMBERLAIN, JENNIFER JUSTUS, KRISTIN LUNA, ERIN BYERS MURRAY, JIM MYERS, VIVEK SURTI.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY JUSTIN CHESNEY, EMILY B. HALL, AND RON MANVILLE.

PRODUCED BY SIERRA PILAND.



Each spring, we gather a team of food experts and set out to compile our list of the city's best restaurants—and we also attempt to shake up the format in order to keep things interesting. This year, we were stymied. We've seen dozens of new restaurants hit town, and chefs are kitchen-hopping faster than they can toss a sauté pan. Likewise, we've also watched as a few old favorites shut their doors. It comes down to this: Nashville is in the middle of a culinary free-for-all.

Rather than curate a list of the best restaurants of the year, we decided to focus on the very best of the moment—the places we can't wait to get into tonight, tomorrow, or this weekend. This could all change by next month...or even next week. But right now, this is where we're eating.

The main list comprises our top 23 picks—those that are killing it from the greeting at the host stand all the way to the final bite—in alphabetical order. There also are a handful of others that we think nail one particular thing, like ambiance or upscale Southern cuisine. Finally, we let you weigh in with our annual online readers' poll, in which thousands took part.

So if you're looking for a comprehensive guide to all of the city's dining options, this isn't it (but you can find that on our website!). Instead, consider this our recommendation on where to go right this very minute. >>>

PRICE KEY

\$ - AVERAGE ENTRÉE UNDER \$10

\$\$ - AVERAGE ENTRÉE \$11-\$15

\$\$\$ - AVERAGE ENTRÉE \$16-\$25

\$\$\$\$ - AVERAGE ENTRÉE \$26+

360 Bistro

6000 HWY. 100, 615-353-5604;
360BISTRO.COM

Since 2007, 360 Bistro in Belle Meade has provided food-loving wine drinkers with a place to find an exceptional selection of wine and a menu to match. This winter, owner Nick Jacobson upped the ante by bringing in chef Will Uhlhorn, who previously worked at F. Scott's and Miel, and helped open Table 3. Uhlhorn's repertoire of refined yet comforting European-inspired fare fits right in with the sophisticated space, not to mention Jacobson's 5,000-bottle inventory. Whether he's carefully constructing a spring citrus salad or plating a pillowy light Parisienne gnocchi, Uhlhorn uses a deft hand and just the right balance of acid and seasoning. Plus, 360 is now armed with the talented sommelier Elise Loehr, whom Uhlhorn worked with at F. Scott's and Table 3—meaning a trip to this Belle Meade haven will net you a dream food and beverage team. **AMERICAN/WINE BAR, \$\$\$\$**, BELLE MEADE



EMILY B. HALL



The 404 Kitchen

404 12TH AVE. S., 615-251-1404; THE404NASHVILLE.COM

Within 24 hours of arriving in Nashville five years ago, **chef Matt Bolus** was showing off his considerable culinary skills as a competitor in the Iron Fork contest. Although he didn't win, Nashville was put on notice that a young gun was ready to take over the town. Since then, his cuisine has matured, and his mastery in the kitchen is showcased nightly at The 404 Kitchen in The Gulch. Known for his contemporary take on traditional European cuisine, Bolus emphasizes seasonal local ingredients along with seafood sourced from the Atlantic that plays to his strength as a former fish butcher at Mike Lata's acclaimed FIG restaurant in Charleston. No meal at The 404 is complete without an order of housemade burrata, a fresh cheese made from mozzarella and cream, or a beverage from either the inventive wine list or the cocktail menu, which features an eclectic selection of liquors. With only 56 seats and Bolus at the helm, The 404 is one of the city's top dining destinations. **NEW AMERICAN, \$\$\$\$**, THE GULCH >>>





When it opened in 2011, The Catbird Seat was a game changer. Suddenly, Nashville had a national spotlight, and from there, the floodgates opened. Founding chefs Josh Habiger and Erik Anderson impressed diners with their carefully constructed, multicourse feasts, all whipped up within a tiny kitchen surrounded by bar seats. And then, in 2014, the restaurant rewrote its own rules. Habiger and Anderson had moved on to new projects, opening the door to chef Trevor Moran, who, after a lengthy wait for an international visa, arrived via Noma in Copenhagen. Almost immediately, Moran's Ireland-by-way-of-Denmark cuisine had the food elite buzzing. Here he was, putting out dishes that incorporated Southern ingredients, recalled his Irish heritage, and looked like Noma masterpieces—all to harmonious effect: Think potato-broth tea infused with herbs; **beef tartare served with hibiscus leaves, snail eggs**—and no utensils (it works, we swear); and poached oysters with buckwheat hollandaise foam. There's talk that Moran's ever-changing menu might soon blow past the typical 11 or more courses, which would certainly raise eyebrows once again. For now, we say get yourself a seat—reservations still fill up fast, but if you're flexible and check back often, cancellations can quickly work in your favor. **ECLECTIC, \$\$\$\$**, MIDTOWN



The Catbird Seat

1711 DIVISION ST.,
615-248-8458;
THECATBIRDSEAT
RESTAURANT.COM

Arnold's Country Kitchen

605 8TH AVE S., 615-256-4455; FACEBOOK.COM/ARNOLDSMEATAND3

When Kahlil Arnold took over the reins of Arnold's Country Kitchen from his father, Jack, he moved slowly. It's a venerable meat-and-three steam table, for crying out loud, and with customers who return every week for that one thing, you don't mess with it. The thing is Kahlil does mess with it, but in a nuanced way that coaxes the food into the 21st century without leaving the past behind. From hot sauce in his catfish brine to his play on tomatoes and grits, he makes simple Sunday table food an exaltation of Southern art. And with the current expansion, we may finally see three things we all pine for: breakfast, dinner, and hooch. **MEAT 'N THREE, \$, MELROSE**



Biscuit Love Brunch

316 11TH AVE. S., 615-490-9584; BISCUITLOVEBRUNCH.COM

They paid their dues serving biscuit sandwiches from a borrowed food truck. Then they renovated an Airstream to do the same. And now they have a bright, airy space with no wheels attached. You can't help but root for Karl and Sarah Worley of Biscuit Love Brunch for their hard work and creative interpretations of our regional fare—from mod bonuts (yes, biscuit doughnuts) to the all-but-forgotten beaten biscuit offered as homage to beloved writer John Egerton through the restaurant's "John's Ham Bar." The line—out the door on weekends, so it's best to visit weekday mornings. The early bird gets the biscuit, after all. **AMERICAN, \$\$, THE GULCH**

Caffe Nonna

4427 MURPHY RD., 615-463-0133; CAFFENONNA.COM

For more than 15 years, chef Dan Maggipinto has been serving traditional Italian dishes inspired by his grandmother, Nonna. While some would call the closely stacked tables a little cramped, fans consider the ambiance to be cozy and romantic. Couples can enjoy quiet conversation accompanied by a tight and affordable wine list plus choose-your-own-pasta dishes that include a variety of sauces. We can't resist the capellini with spicy arrabbiata sauce, which turns up the heat. For one of the city's more authentic Italian experiences, Nonna never disappoints. **ITALIAN, \$\$\$, SYLVAN PARK >>>**



ANNUAL ONLINE READERS' POLL

You voted, we listened. Here are the results of your favorite places in town.

BEST OF THE BEST, FINE DINING

Etch
Kayne Prime
Lockeland Table

BEST OF THE BEST, MODERATE

Rolf and Daughters
M Restaurant & Bar
Nama Sushi Bar

BEST OF THE BEST, CHEAP EATS

Mas Tacos Por Favor
Hattie B's
Calypso Café

BEST NEW RESTAURANT

Adele's
Nama Sushi Bar
Flip Burger



City House

1222 4TH AVE. S., 615-736-5838; CITYHOUSE NASHVILLE.COM

Among the new restaurants and “It” city-ness in Nashville, this place feels like a warm quilt we can count on. It’s still a great space for getting dressed up and celebrating over family-style bowls of cornbread gnocchi and sopping up egg with slices of wood-fired pies. And it offers a bevy of clever surprises at Sunday Supper, like pork snacks, wings, and lamb chops under Sunday gravy. But it’s also a safe spot to grab a seat at the bar for some of the best cocktails in town. Do dessert first with pastry chef Rebekah Turshen’s modern takes on classic cakes or cookie plates, or split a simple off-menu kitchen pizza pie (just tomato sauce, garlic, oregano, grana padano, and chili oil used to test the heat of the oven). With chef Tandy Wilson melding his travels, Southern studies, and Nashville roots, it’s way more real than any newfangled showplace, but you still can’t spell “It city” without it. **ITALIAN, \$\$\$, GERMANTOWN**



Etch

303 DEMONBREUN ST., 615-522-0685; ETCHRESTAURANT.COM

The e’s no stopping Deb Paquette. The chef-owner of Etch continues to rack up accolades, like being named top restaurant in Nashville last year by Zagat. And with an inventive roster of dishes such as a cornmeal-fried catfish with walnut red bell pepper, and pomegranate sauce, fie y plum preserve, lime crema, pickled onion, pumpkin seeds, and greens, it’s easy to see why. Desserts, like a vanilla bean baked meringue, are the icing on the cake and weekday happy hour (from 4 to 6:30 p.m.) finds discounted d inks and small bites. **NEW AMERICAN, \$\$\$\$, DOWNTOWN**

Epice

2902 12TH AVE. S., 615-720-6765; EPICENASHVILLE.COM

Maher Fawaz’s Lebanese bistro, situated on 12th Avenue South, is still a hidden gem in Nashville’s restaurant scene. Fawaz, who also owns the popular fast casual joint Kalamata’s, named his more upscale endeavor after the French word for spice. On the menu? A journey of exotic Mediterranean flavors. Start with the maktouds (pickled eggplant with walnuts and olive oil) and work your way through the kabobs (especially samak, the spiced fish) before ordering the fassoulya (lamb shank with white beans). Finish off with a glass of hot tea—then sit back and savor one of the city’s coolest dining rooms. **LEBANESE, \$\$\$, 12 SOUTH**



ANNUAL ONLINE READERS’ POLL
You voted, we listened. Here are the results of your favorite places in town.

BEST BUSINESS LUNCH

The Palm
The Southern
Steak & Oyster
Prime 108

BEST BURGER

The Pharmacy Burger
Parlor & Beer Garden
Flip Burger
Burger Republic

BEST PIZZA

Five Points Pizza
Desano Pizza
312 Pizza Company

BEST AMERICAN

Husk
Lockeland Table
The Southern
Steak & Oyster

Ones to Watch

It's been a big year for Nashville. Since we last produced our Best Restaurants Issue, we've been flooded with restaurants helmed by industry celebrities, we've watched local guys get their due, and we've seen a fair share of eateries fade as the spotlight on this city brightens. For a panel of food experts, there's been plenty to celebrate—and almost as much to complain about, from poor service to nonsensical menus. The good news is there are also a handful of places that are just on the verge of being great. Maybe it's a new restaurant that hasn't worked out all the kinks yet. Or perhaps there's a solid concept but the food doesn't quite match.

In the case of **Moto** (1120 McGavock St., 615-319-4301; mstreetnashville.com), all the pieces are in place—but the opening chef recently left. Part of the M Street empire, Moto debuted last year with chef Andy Hayes, who grew up in Nashville, worked at the Hermitage Hotel, and then left town to build up his résumé working at notable spots like Gramercy Tavern in New York. He returned to open Moto to high praise—and the dishes impressed us: fresh Sunburst trout crudo, perfectly tender octopus, housemade pastas, and his own creation, blueberry lasagna. But then earlier this year, he announced that he was moving to another new concept, the forthcoming 5th & Taylor in Germantown. Moto is now in the hands of his two sous chefs, and a recent visit revealed



Chef Maneet Chauhan

that Hayes's menu remains intact. The dishes are still engaging and service is spot-on—only time will tell where the chefs will take it next. We're looking forward to finding out.

At **Chauhan Ale & Masala House** (123 12th Ave. N., 615-779-3770; chauhannashville.com), the pros certainly outweigh the cons. The food, which may or may not meet your personal notion of authenticity depending on how many times you've been to India, hits very high notes with its layering of spice, heat, and seasoning. But the experience can feel disjointed with its club-like vibe, sometimes thumping bass, and projected images floating across the walls. Chef Maneet Chauhan fills a void for good ethnic food in this town—here's hoping the experience and the ambience even out.

In our opinion, there can never be enough great sushi in this town. **Nama Sushi Bar** (2300 Elliston Pl., 615-933-6262; nama-sushibar.com), the newest fish-focused addition, hails from Knoxville and puts out pretty and massive specialty rolls plus other Asian-influenced fare. And while this isn't the place to find a

diligent, highly trained sushi chef slicing slivers right before your eyes, there are plenty of gems on the menu—consider it a fun and colorful meeting spot to share inventive rolls with a group of friends.

Finally, we come to **Adele's** (1210 McGavock St., 615-988-9700; adelesnashville.com). After a splashy entrance and the high expectations put in place thanks to the star power of its owner, New York chef Jonathan Waxman, the experience has faded into something that feels like a shadow of what it was meant to be. There's been tough press as well as rumors of a complete overhaul of the kitchen and front-of-house staff. And yet the interior is still cool and understated; the bar seats staring into the kitchen offer a stellar show; and when done right, the meatballs, crispy trout, and gnocchi have all been standout dishes. The truth? We want this restaurant to succeed and hope that Waxman and his team find their footing—because once it's operating on all cylinders, we're guessing it'll be the kind of place Nashville deserves. —E.B.M. >>>



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Flip Burger

4111 CHARLOTTE AVE., 615-454-2917;
FLIPBURGERBOUTIQUE.COM

In a town that seems to be rapidly filling up with gourmet hamburger emporiums, chef Richard Blais would appear to be very brave, or perhaps foolhardy, to open the fifth location of his Flip Burger chain of restaurants here in Music City. But Blais isn't scared. He calls it a "restaurant that happens to serve burgers," with chefs who "treat a \$6 burger like a \$65 steak." Indeed, those burgers are upscale, like the

Oaxaca, made with Angus beef, avocado, and cilantro-lime aioli; there's also the raw tuna tartare sandwich with Asian pear, pine nuts, and wasabi mayo. But Blais also made sure to include a few local touches at this outpost. A Blue Plate Special not only offers daily variety but keeps the kitchen staff creatively engaged. Then there's his version of Nashville's iconic hot chicken: the Hot Rabbit appetizer. Served with the traditional white bread plus bread and butter pickles, that bunny packs a punch. In addition to a full bar with wine, beer, and cocktails, Flip offers up a selection of decadent milk shakes that show off the former *Top Chef Masters* winner's skill for molecular gastronomy—they use frozen nitrogen to freeze the alcohol without diluting the drink. Add-ins like Krispy Kreme doughnuts, Cap'n Crunch, and even foie gras ensure that you'll be back for more. **AMERICAN, SS, SYLVAN PARK**



Hattie B's

5209 CHARLOTTE AVE., 615-712-7137; 112 19TH AVE. S., 615-678-4794; HATTIEB.COM

What was once a relatively unknown treat outside of the few who ventured to Dickerson Pike, Nashville-style hot chicken is now on menus across the country. And some of that notoriety can be credited to Hattie B's Hot Chicken, which opened in 2012—since then, owners Nick Bishop Sr. and Nick Bishop Jr. and chef John Lasater have been on a roll with the proverbial spice train. At either of their locations, in midtown or on Charlotte Pike, you're just as likely to sit next to a mechanic as you are a celebrity. Hattie's version of the fiery fowl is perfectly cooked, with a flavorful and crunchy crust yielding to tender, juicy meat. With five different heat levels, they cater to every palate, from those who can't handle the heat to the bravest of fire eaters (who will appreciate the hottest, called Shut the Cluck Up). Add in a well-curated selection of craft beers, exceptionally made sides (like the black-eyed pea salad), and a decadent banana pudding and you can see what all the fuss is about.

AMERICAN, \$\$, MIDTOWN, SYLVAN PARK >>>





A Room That Is the View

Ambience, for some, is just as important as the food. These are the places where the setting makes the meal. —E.B.M.

PRIMA

Walking into the dining room at Prima feels like slipping into an elegant and well-made evening gown. Designed by architect Nick Dryden, it's a study in lines and space, crowned with a stunning, multipiece Bruce Munro chandelier. In a room like this, it's hard not to have a fantastic meal. (700 12th Ave. S., 615-873-4232; primanashville.com)

THE TREEHOUSE

Knowing that owners Matt Spicher and Corey Ladd have a long history with this East Nashville house (Matt's dad, Buddy Spicher, lived there for 25 years) and revived it with their own hands only fuels our appreciation for the airy, comfortable dining room and bar. The namesake tree house

out back now offers seating, too, making it one of the more unique tables in town. (1011 Clearview Ave., 615-454-4201; treehousenashville.com)

MARGOT CAFE

When there's a wait for tables at Margot, you get to know the folks at the bar, since that's whom you're cuddled up with as you stand by. And that's part of the charm. Everything about this room reads cozy, warm, and inviting—which makes it the perfect neighborhood haunt. (1017 Woodland Ave., 615-227-4668; margotcafe.com)

WATERMARK

As The Gulch continues to flourish, Watermark's patio remains one of the best all fresco perches around. Plus, with its white linens and comfortable seating, there's a sense that the sophistication of dining at Watermark carries on even when the roofline ends. (507 12th Ave. S., 615-254-2000; watermark-restaurant.com)

All About the South

The South is having a moment, and you needn't look far to see that upscale Southern cuisine is where it's at: fare that prominently features locally sourced, in-season produce, playing up the best parts of the region. And—you guessed it—every last one cooks up its own take on the classic deviled egg.

At **The Farm House** (210 Almond St., 615-522-0688; thefarmhousetn.com), conveniently located across from the Country Music Hall of Fame and catty-corner to Bridgestone Arena, chef Trey Cioccia keeps things imaginative with fun shareable plates (think pimento cheese beignets, crispy pig ears, and pork belly Pop-Tarts) as well as

a menu of rotating entrees, like octopus with seafood sausage and hot chicken atop a bed of biscuit puree—an ever-present fan favorite.

Up on Rutledge Hill, **Husk** (37 Rutledge St., 615-256-6565; husk-nashville.com) goes the more classic route with plates of oysters, fish, and game accompanied by heaping portions of vegetables.

Opened in 2013 by celebrity chef Sean Brock, Husk's second outpost (the original is in Charleston) kicked off the upscale Southern trend in this town. The kitchen changes the menu twice daily; from aged beef tartare to shrimp and grits, you never know what you might find—but you can bet it will be good.

Set inside Cummins Station, **M Restaurant** (209 10th Ave S., Ste. 223, 615-678-1591; mrestaurantandbar.com) is like the white-cloth version of its sister restaurants, Southern mainstays Mack and Kate's and Kate's Kitchen. M offers a weekday \$12 blue plate special for lunch (go on Mondays for the buttermilk fried chicken) in addition to a handful of sandwiches and entrees. What's more, the Strawn family, which owns M along with those other properties, are pros at doling out true Southern hospitality. —K.L.



ANNUAL ONLINE READERS' POLL
You voted, we listened. Here are the results of your favorite places in town.

BEST BRUNCH

Tavern
The Southern
Steak & Oyster
Marché



BEST BREAKFAST

Biscuit Love Brunch
Loveless Café
Nashville

BEST STEAKHOUSE

Kayne Prime
Bob's Steak and Chops
Ruth's Chris Steak House

Josephine

2316 12TH AVE. S., 615-292-7766;
JOSEPHINEON12TH.COM



Here's what we know: **Andrew Little** is a really talented chef who is not afraid to inject into Nashville the robust Teutonic-laden flavors of his Pennsylvania upbringing. But it's really not that weird to link the rural traditions from there to here. What's more, we think that chef Little is building a good team around him that just plain gets it and can move his vision forward. Nowhere is that more evident than in his large-format menu for groups of six, with platters of tongue and marrow to curry emotional outbursts of joy. **NEW AMERICAN, \$\$, 12 SOUTH**



Lockeland Table

1520 WOODLAND ST., 615-228-4864;
LOCKELANDTABLE.COM

Some restaurants feel instantly comfortable and lived in from the moment they open their doors. Lockeland Table, which served its first food-fied pizzas and chicken liver pâté in 2012, is such a place due partly to the good bones of a historic building and partly to the good stock running the place, with chef Hal Holden-Bache in the kitchen and Cara Graham welcoming regulars up front. And a comfortable spot means comfortable food. Holden-Bache was making a version of chimichurri long before Lockeland opened, yet with its bright bits of green set alongside a juicy strip steak, it's a taste that always feels fresh.

AMERICAN, \$\$\$, EAST NASHVILLE

Kayne Prime

1103 MCGAVOCK ST., 615-259-0050;
MSTREETNASHVILLE.COM

You can thank the team behind M Street Nashville for kick-starting The Gulch's culinary revolution. Restaurateur Chris Hyndman was considered a groundbreaker when he opened Whiskey Kitchen in 2009. As his empire's grown, changed shape, and improved, Kayne Prime has consistently offered some of the city's best steaks—from American filet to Australian wagyu. What's more, the sides can make a meal all on their own: Creamed spinach gets a fried egg and bits of truffle, while risotto tater tots are crusted in brown butter bread crumbs.

STEAKHOUSE, \$\$\$\$, THE GULCH >>>



BEST BARBECUE

Martin's
Bar-B-Que Joint
Edley's Bar-B-Que
Peg Leg Porker

BEST ITALIAN

Moto
Caffe Nonna
Valentino's



BEST VEGETARIAN SELECTION

The Wild Cow
Sunflower Café
The Silly Goose

BEST MEXICAN

Cantina Laredo
Taco Mamacita
Mas Tacos



Mas Tacos Por Favor

732 MCFERRIN AVE., 615-543-6271;
FACEBOOK.COM/MASTACOS

Tough lunchtime decisions happen while standing at the chalk-wall menu at Mas Tacos. Will you go chicken taco or sweet potato quinoa? Chicken tortilla soup or pozole verde? After the food truck version of this restaurant went cinderblock-and-mortar on a gritty corner in East Nashville, the chicken tortilla soup nearly blew up the Internet with tales of its shredded chicken in limey broth. Then came the pozole: Among a pond of warming spice and tang sits a tuft of shredded cabbage over an island of soft hominy. Add sliced avocado and crunchy radish rounds, and it's one bowl of a decision you can feel good about.

MEXICAN, \$, EAST NASHVILLE



Nashville Farmers' Market

900 ROSA L. PARKS BLVD., 615-880-2001;
NASHVILLEFARMERSMARKET.ORG

Change isn't easy, and the fits and convulsions over the market's plans to redefine what is local have a lot of folks on edge. However it shakes out, we think the interior Market House is on a good track. The classics are the stalwart offerings, like the spicy goat curry at Swagruha, as well as newer selections, like the Sloco sandwiches. An all-time favorite? The pizzas at Bella Nashville. Their meat pizza with Hamery ham from Bob Woods, great cheese from Bloomy Rind, and fantastic dough is worthy of a regular pilgrimage. ECLECTIC, \$, GERMANTOWN

Pinewood Social

33 PEABODY ST., 615-751-8111; PINWOODSOCIAL.COM

It's hard to deny Pinewood Social's star power. Open for three meals a day—and all the hours in between—seven days a week, it's a much-needed constant in the ever-changing downtown landscape, particularly for the remote worker who can take full advantage of Pinewood's living room, outfitted with comfy couches and workstations and conveniently located next to the Crema coffee counter. (We like our coffee cut with Fernet-Branca, as found in the wildly popular **Easy Like Sunday Morning**.) Pretty soon, the outdoor lounge and adjoining pool area—complete with a tiki-style Airstream trailer bar boasting its own drinks menu—will be back in business, too, giving us even more excuses to hole up at Pinewood on those balmy spring afternoons. AMERICAN, \$\$, DOWNTOWN



ANNUAL ONLINE READERS' POLL

You voted, we listened. Here are the results of your favorite places in town.

BEST INDIAN

Chauhan Ale & Masala House
Woodlands Indian Vegetarian Cuisine
Bombay Palace Cuisine

BEST SUSHI/JAPANESE

Nama Sushi Bar
Virago
Koi Sushi & Thai

BEST HOTEL RESTAURANT

Mason's
Capitol Grille
1808 Grille

BEST THAI

Smiling Elephant
Thai Esane
Thai Phooket

Room Service

Hotel dining has a bit of a reputation for being uninspired. But these three spots stay packed with visitors and locals alike—and raise the bar for all the other hotel restaurants in town. —*K.L.*



1808 GRILLE

The sun-drenched, contemporary-style 1808 Grille is every bit as fun and swanky as the Hutton Hotel that houses it. Open for three meals daily, the restaurant and lounge has a menu that changes seasonally, plenty of vegan and vegetarian options, an extensive wine list, an impressive cocktail program, and top-notch service. (1808 West End Ave., 615-340-0012; 1808grille.com)

CAPITOL GRILLE

The Hermitage Hotel's upscale Capitol Grille is one of the city's longest-running restaurants, open for 115 years and counting. Here, chef Tyler Brown serves up consistently fresh, sustainable cuisine; many ingredients are sourced directly from the 65-acre Glen Leven farm, which the hotel helps fund through the Land Trust for Tennessee. Just be sure to pop next door to Oak Bar for a nightcap when you're through with dinner. (231 6th Ave N., 615-345-7116; capitolgrillenashville.com)

MASON'S

Chef Brandon Frohne tests the limits of Southern cuisine by putting his own spin on things, like adding kimchi collards to a traditional shrimp and grits dish. With the restaurant on one side of the hotel lobby and Mason Bar serving light bites like crab corn dogs on the other, one thing's for certain: You won't leave the Loews Vanderbilt hungry. (2100 West End Ave., 615-321-1990; masons-nashville.com) >>>

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CELEBRATE CINCO DE MAYO!



POP

604 GALLATIN AVE., STE. 201,
615-454-3946; POPNASHVILLE.COM

Sarah Gavigan already had a tried-and-true concept with her pop-up ramen shop, Otaku South (look for a brick-and-mortar rendition, Otaku Ramen, to open in The Gulch later this year). But she took it one step further when she debuted POP, a convertible kitchen, event space, and pop-up restaurant, in a repurposed building on Gallatin last spring. What we love about POP is that it features a rotating cast of characters, like New York chef Zak Pelaccio and *Chopped* judge Maneet Chauhan, chef-owner of Chauhan Ale & Masala House. Gavigan's City Meets Nashville

series, in which she hosts visiting chefs six times a year, became an instant hit, as have her other special one-off events, such as last month's vodka-infused Russian POP Dinner Party. Much to the delight of ramen fans across the city, Gavigan also serves her Otaku South menu for lunch and dinner from Tuesday through Saturday. And for the breakfast lover, the brand-spankin'-new Toast & Jams brunch service—featuring hearty bites like corned beef latke, sweet potato pancakes, egg tartine, and bacon marmalade over biscuits—is a Sunday morning must-do. **ECLECTIC, \$\$, EAST NASHVILLE**



EMILY B. HALL

Meet the Panel

It's become our favorite tradition in putting this issue together. We invite a handful of food writers, fans, and expert eaters to a panel and sit around the table to hash out all that we love (or don't, in some cases) about the current dining scene. This year, we were joined by an esteemed group, including **Jim Myers**, the food and drink columnist at the *Tennessean*; longtime Nashville food writer **Jennifer Justus**; regular contributor **Chris Chamberlain**; and **Vivek Surti**, a pro eater, chef, and wine lover who also works with the Nashville Wine Auction. From our team, food lovers **Kristin Luna** and **Erin Byers Murray** provided some structure as well as a strong opinion or two while **The 404 Kitchen** kindly offered up their space and a few plates of ham and biscuits to fuel our discussion. >>>



Nashville Lifestyles
RESTAURANT GUIDE

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Rolf and Daughters

700 TAYLOR ST., 615-866-9897;
ROLFANDDAUGHTERS.COM

Chef Philip Krajeck has made very few changes to his Germantown restaurant, Rolf and Daughters, since it opened in 2012. And those he has made seem to have been carefully plotted and quietly installed. There was the addition of a chef de cuisine from New York, Owen Clark, last summer. Then, the menu shifted gears ever so slightly, with dishes being listed from small to hardy and pastas standing out on their own (well warranted, considering those pastas are typically the stars of a

meal there). Guest chef dinners featuring some of the country's top culinary talent—like Jonathan Benno (Lincoln) and Ari Taymor (Alma)—continue to sell out with little more than a casual email invite sent by manager Mollie Ward. All this is to say that Krajeck has his head on straight when it comes to both his business and his food—meaning you can expect a consistent and exceptional experience with every visit. Just don't forget to order the pasta. **ITALIAN/NEW AMERICAN, \$\$\$, GERMANTOWN**

Photo Contributors



Nashville Lifestyles' contributing photographer **Ron Manville's** interests include culinary, environmental portraiture, nature, performances, products, abstracts, infrastructure, aging, boomers and veterans, medical, and all of the creative community.



Emily B. Hall is a Georgia native and recent transplant to Nashville, along with her soon-to-be husband. She is a frequent contributor to the Nashville editorial scene. When not photographing people, food, or spaces, Emily spends time in her kitchen, recipe testing, or in the backyard garden with her six chickens and dog, Gus.



Justin Chesney is a freelance photographer and full-time creative. He enjoys cooking pasta for his wife, listening to NPR, and finding just the right light. You can connect with him online at JustinChesney.com or via social media @TheRealJustinC. >>>

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The Silly Goose

888 EASTLAND AVE., 615-915-0757;
SILLYGOOSENASHVILLE.COM

In the six years this Eastland Avenue restaurant has been around, it's become an East Nashville anchor thanks to its comfort-meets-healthy cuisine. Though the Goose has since expanded to include a long list of dishes, chef-owner Roderick Bailey still sticks to what he knows best: sandwiches and couscous. The best-selling King Kong, a classic sesame couscous dish with curried shrimp and other flavorful touches, is second only to the Mexico City couscous with red chili, grilled chicken, poblano peppers, cilantro, goat cheese, mango, and lime. The Bird—grilled chicken, sundried tomato, peppered goat cheese, and bacon on wholegrain bread—is always a hotly requested item, but there are plenty of wraps and salad options for the gluten-adverse, too. Dinner is a heartier extension of lunchtime, with seasonal vegetables and produce dressing up dishes like the Abraham (braised and seared pork belly on a bed of greens) and Jubilation (a pan-roasted salmon accompanied by a smattering of squash, beets, sweet potatoes, and more). And if there's a long line at Jeni's next door, diners needn't worry: The Silly Goose keeps plenty of housemade ice cream flavors on hand, in addition to desserts like the Reverse Cowgirl (a flourless dark chocolate torte) and Tender Time (a butter biscuit). The cozy 42-seat restaurant is open for lunch and dinner five days a week, and Bailey recently added a Sunday brunch service, too. **AMERICAN/VEGETARIAN/VEGAN, \$\$\$, EAST NASHVILLE** >>>

