

DALLAS

MODERN LUXURY

FOOD DRINK | CLASSICS

Plucky Seven

They're hanging tough and tasting terrific—these era-defining restaurants defy capricious dining tastes and still pack the house. | *By Doty Griffith and Connie Dufner* |



1 Pyramid Restaurant & Bar

If there were a talent draft for chefs, The Fairmont Dallas hotel's Pyramid Restaurant & Bar would be an NFL (national food league) winner. The restaurant, which first parted from its glitzy past in 2008, now boasts a roster of three award-winning Rising Star chefs. Rising Star Chef awards are given annually as part of the Dallas Wine and Food Festival. Executive Chef André Natera won in 2003 at a previous post. Executive Sous Chef Paul Peddle and Sous Chef Andrew McDonald were winners this year. That's a lot of talent under one roof. And speaking of roofs, The Fairmont's 3,000-square-foot terrace garden grows an amazing variety of herbs, fruits and vegetables that underpin much of what the star chefs bill as a fresh market approach to dining. The chefs draw on this resource, which they tend themselves, to drive many of their menus and inspire their dishes. That fits right in with Natera's philosophy: If it grows together, it goes together. Basil and tomatoes, for example. This trio of Rising Star chefs sparkles in the kitchens at one of downtown Dallas' iconic hotels. 1717 N. Akard St., 214.720.5249, pyramidrestaurant.com



AT THE PEAK From top: Pyramid Restaurant & Bar's 2008 revamp focused on farm-to-table fare and debuted a rooftop herb garden; Executive Chef André Natera.

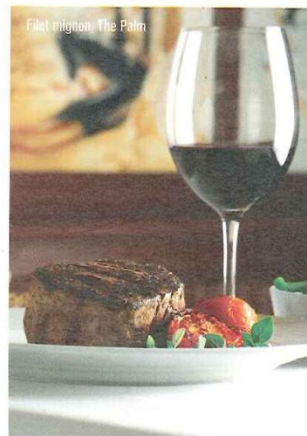


Heirloom tomatoes with goat cheese fritter, Stephan Pyles

3 Stephan Pyles

Dallas culinary legend Stephan Pyles started Fuego last year, a restaurant within his restaurant. The chefs experiment with food that they couldn't pull off as regular menu items or even nightly specials. Still some of the ideas are being adapted for the regular menu at Stephan Pyles,

open since 2004, such as compressed watermelon with *hoja santa*, a large herbal leaf. "Fuego has been exciting for the staff because it's a different style of cooking with new techniques and ingredients," says Pyles. The chef says he's "looking to re-create the old Star Canyon brand but with a fresh, new contemporary approach." Stay tuned! 1807 Ross Ave., Ste. 200, 214.580.7000, stephanpyles.com



2 The Palm

Despite its presence in 24 cities and anchor location at the gone-to-tourists' West End, The Palm still feels reassuringly, authentically like 1980s Dallas, and a visit there will happily remind you that the decade wasn't all bad. Long-time Dallas residents will see the city's life flash before them, period hairstyles and all, in the hundreds of caricatures that fill the walls of the 27-year-old restaurant. But the true stars here are the flavorful, meltingly good steaks, decadent sides and heaping portions of, well, everything. The restaurant will undergo a "brand refresh" this month, with new tableware, traditional tan uniforms, leather menus, homemade gelato and even a new logo. And, yes, only the shiniest, most exotic cars still claim the coveted spaces outside the hopping West End corner. 701 Ross Ave., 214.698.0470, thepalm.com/dallas

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4 Local

Deep Ellum got scary and nearly disappeared. The economy tanked. But a little light still shone on Elm Street. Well before “locavore” became the *Oxford Dictionary*’s word of the year in 2007, Tracy Miller’s restaurant, founded in 2003, was walking the walk. The beauty of Local remains its refreshing lack of pretentiousness. (No valet-in-a-strip-center phenom here; park for free in the lot next door.) The restaurant whips up wholesome, locally relevant dishes with infectious enthusiasm. In fact, you had us at “hello” with the buttery rosemary nuts. The fried green bean starter offered intriguingly crunchy, sweet legumes and tangy thyme and garlic dipping sauce. The burger arrived with a high-rise tower of Gruyère-spiked beef, caramelized onions and horseradish sauce. Take time to look around the renovated, 103-year-old historic Boyd Hotel building. Need more Local in your life? Miller’s planning to open a breakfast and lunch spot any day now, just down the street. 2936A Elm St., 214.752.7500, localdallas.com



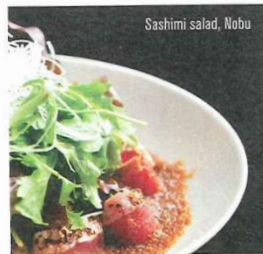
LOCAL TREASURE From top: The interior of the Deep Ellum restaurant skillfully integrates the historic hotel building’s features; rosemary-infused Colorado lamb chops with roasted fingerling potatoes and haricot verts



Classic trio of sole almondine, three onion-crusted sea bass and short-smoked Bay of Fundy salmon, Café Pacific

5 Café Pacific

Earlier this year, Café Pacific got a makeover. Owner Jack Knox says he told the designer: “Treat it like an English men’s club. Make it new and fresh but not different.” That’s exactly what happened. More upscale, yet the 31-year-old neighborhood favorite is as familiar as ever. Executive Chef Bill Trevino maintains the classic East Coast seafood menu. Although one of the city’s leading purveyors of shell and fin fish, over the years the menu has grown to include more four-footed options as well. In some ways, Café Pacific has morphed into a mini-steakhouse. The 8-ounce filet mignon is a business lunch legend. For dinner, options include rack of lamb, a New York strip or pepper-crusted filet mignon. Or drop in for the signature Ramos Gin Fizz. Capped by foam of egg white and cream, the blend of gin, lemon, lime and orange flower water gets a splash of soda to give it fizz. Knox is planning an improved patio for cocktail and dining next year. 24 Highland Park Village, 214.526.1170, cafepacificdallas.com



Sashimi salad, Nobu

6 Nobu

Yes, we know. In local-obsessed Dallas, Nobu’s part of a chain. Not from here. Still we crave the savory Asian fusion dishes served up in stylish surroundings. The Rosewood Crescent Hotel restaurant, open since 2005, attracts locals and guests alike; even business dinners are in full swing again. Whether sidling up to the busy sushi bar or settling in for the *omakase* tasting menu, Nobu still serves up a meal worthy of Dallas. 400 Crescent Court, 214.252.7000, noburestaurants.com/dallas



Interior, The French Room at The Adolphus

7 The French Room

The Adolphus hotel, the baroque masterpiece of St. Louis beer baron Adolphus Busch, celebrates its century mark next year. At its storied French Room restaurant, glittering décor and peerless service elevate dining to culinary fantasy. Chef de Cuisine Marcos Segovia maintains a classic French menu with New American and Southwestern touches such as a trio of veal with medallion, cheek and sweetbreads with hickory smoked potato. Jackets are still required in this outpost of civility. 1321 Commerce St., 214.742.8200, hoteladolphus.com