

Guide



MOVIES

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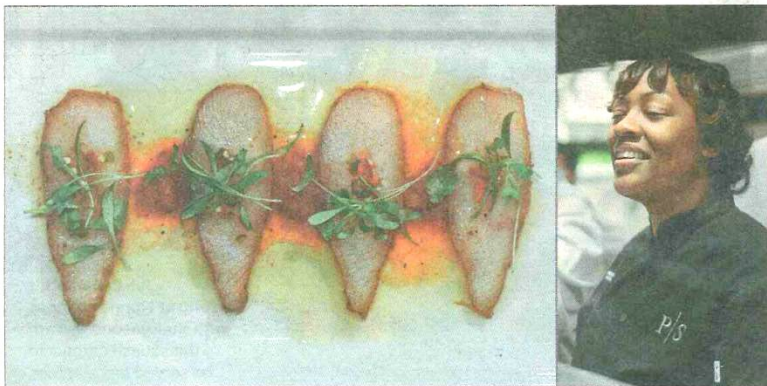
EASY PULLOUT PAGES

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WHO ARE
DALLAS'
TOP CHEFS?



LESLIE BRENNER REVEALS HER PICKS



Photos by Rex C. Curry/Special Contributor

Private Social's Tiffany Derry turns out sophisticated dishes like pastrami-cured hiramasa with coriander vinaigrette.



Dean Fearing's exuberant style shows in his "Farm to Fearing's" salad.

Photos by Brad Loper/Staff Photographer



Photos by Brandon Wade/Special Contributor

Ellerbe's Molly McCook delights with dishes like crumbled buffalo meatballs en brodo with soffritto and mascarpone-filled ravioli.

■ Hilton Anatole Hotel, 2201 N. Stemmons Freeway, Dallas. 214-761-7470. www.nanarestaurant.com.

Bruno Davailon

The Mansion Restaurant

Davailon is a class act, and everything that comes out of his kitchen impresses. His dishes are formal and luxurious, as in a parfait of caviar, silky house-smoked salmon, avocado and an egg custard that he cleverly serves in a caviar can. His idea of a peasant dish? Slow-roasted pheasant breast garnished with baby chanterelles, emerald-green Brussels sprouts petals and marinated, peeled red grapes. On the side is a foie-gras-enriched shepherd's pie made with the pheasant leg. There's always something unusual at play, like the bright-flavored pomegranate reduction that plays off perfect seared foie gras and glazed Bandera squash, with a velvety butternut squash purée that acts as a sauce.

■ 2821 Turtle Creek Blvd., Dallas. 214-443-4747. www.mansiononturtlecreek.com.

Tiffany Derry

Private Social

It's been exciting to watch this young chef's talents develop. Her cooking started to really take off with the menu she introduced at the erstwhile Go Fish Ocean Club once she returned from her first run on *Top Chef* last year. And now that she is executive chef at Private Social, her plates — sophisticated, soulful and original — really stand out. One of her strengths is using the vibrant flavor of an unexpected ingredient as a fillip to send the dish to another level: pomegranate seeds in a rich scallop dish, for instance, or radishes braised with a touch of vinegar as a counterpoint to sweetbreads in a rich ham broth. Both are among the most memorable dishes I've had this year.

■ 3232 McKinney Ave., Dallas. 214-754-4744. privatesocial.com.

Dean Fearing

Fearing's

The esteemed chef works on a bigger canvas than most — oo-

dles of elements on each plate, all with exuberant flavor. Texan with an Asian accent, or with a Middle Eastern accent, or an Italian accent: It's a great challenge, no doubt, to make this kind of cooking work, but this year Fearing's dishes have been more harmonious, and as a result, more thrilling than ever.

■ The Ritz-Carlton, 2121 McKinney Ave., Dallas. 214-922-4848. www.fearingsrestaurant.com.

Molly McCook

Ellerbe Fine Foods

This talented chef's cooking is even more impressive than it was when she opened her Fort Worth restaurant in 2009. Inspired by the best ingredients in season, McCook cooks with assurance and grace, turning out dishes that are loose-limbed, freewheeling and utterly delicious; she changes her menu constantly. Lately I've been wowed by her crumbled buffalo meatballs in a soffritto-flecked brodo, paired with luscious mascarpone-filled ravioli, like something you'd eat in an Umbrian farmhouse. And I loved her tarragon-perfumed salad that layered lots of sweet, blue gulf crabmeat with bibb lettuce, fried capers and applewood smoked bacon. And a thick, rich, tender pork short rib that was pick-it-up-and-gnaw-the-bone good, served on buttery pepper-jack grits.

■ 1501 Magnolia Ave., Fort Worth. 817-926-3663. www.ellerbefinefoods.com.

André Natera

The Pyramid Restaurant

Over the past year, this fine young chef, a native of El Paso in love with his hotel rooftop garden, has made remarkable things happen in the kitchen at the Pyramid. His starters can be astoundingly good, like a salad of peeled, lightly blanched heirloom cherry tomatoes topped with a delicate celery salad that slayed me last summer; set atop a silky tapenade, it was paired with a wedge of Texas blue cheese, resulting in an enchanting alchemy. Lately, a pitch-perfect dish of gyoza-style foie gras dumplings in a spicy sauce

accented with Thai herbs was absolutely smashing and original. His main courses are just as wonderful, whether roasted cod with a perfect caper beurre blanc and deep-flavored tomato marmalade, or rosy slices of peanut-crusted duck breast set atop udon in a rich, peanutty sauce.

■ The Fairmont Hotel, 1717 N. Akard St., Dallas. 214-720-5249.
www.pyramidrestaurant.com.

Stephan Pyles

Stephan Pyles and Samar

Chef Pyles is a Dallas treasure. I've been less impressed with dinners I've had from the regular menu of his namesake restaurant this year, but recently I was floored by Fuego, the tasting menu he offers there on Friday and Saturday nights. Technically brilliant and utterly delicious, the dishes make use of both molecular gastronomy and a wood-fired oven. He's been using Fuego as a laboratory to develop ideas for both Stephan Pyles and Samar, his spice-route-themed restaurant. What started out as a small-plates restaurant has added large plates to the mix, and the cooking is as impressive as when it opened just over two years ago. A parfait-style "vaso" that layered delicate garlic custard with huitlacoche (corn fungus) en escabèche and corn foam connects the dots with Fuego. Samar's large plates, like one starring tandoori-roasted Maine lobster tail with its claws tempuraed in a super-light chickpea batter, are equally compelling.

■ Stephan Pyles, 1807 Ross Ave., Dallas. 214-580-7000.
www.stephanpyles.com.

■ Samar by Stephan Pyles, 2100 Ross Ave., Dallas. 214-922-9922.
www.samarrestaurant.com.

Teiichi Sakurai

Tei-An

I'm always afraid I'll be disappointed by Tei-An: It can't possibly be as wonderful as I remember it. But it always is. You can pretty much place your finger anywhere on Sakurai's ever-changing list of specials and find yourself facing something amazing, like a Dungeness crab flan

that suspends sweet Pacific crabmeat in an unfathomably light and delicate custard; Sakurai baked and served it in the crab's shell. Or an ethereally light tempura of hamo eel. Autumnal, deep-flavored and preternaturally tender, his 48-hour braised Angus beef in a rich, winey sauce was another recent stunner.

■ One Arts Plaza, 1722 Routh St., Dallas. 214-220-2828.
www.tei-an.com.

David Uygur

Lucia

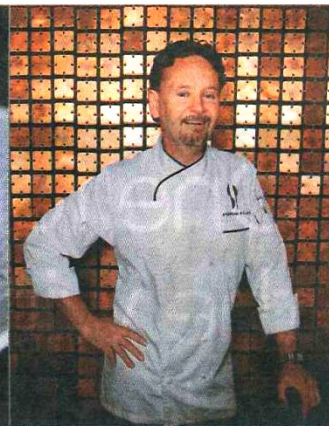
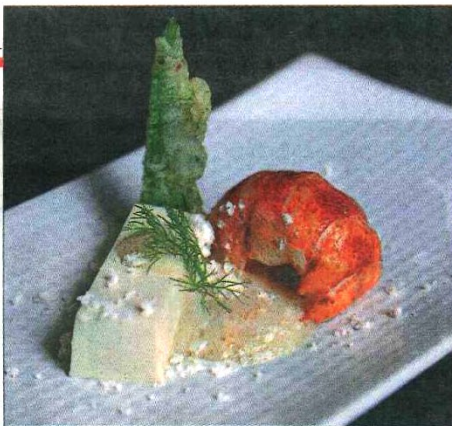
From Uygur's tiny kitchen in Oak Cliff comes some of the most impressive cooking in town. The party might start with tiny foie-gras filled prunes (dreamy texture, outrageous flavor) and end with a silken buttermilk panna cotta with ripe figs and a bright fig sorbetto. What's amazing is the breadth of Uygur's palette, his incredible range and unrelenting imagination and mastery within an idiom that's loosely Italian. What's more wonderful, a seafood salad — hot-smoked arctic char with slices of red and yellow beets, plus greens and sea beans, all bathed voluptuously in horseradish cream? Or tender, ravioli-like francobolli filled with sweet potato and set in brodo strewn with salty, rich Guinea hen confit? Impossible to say. Let's discuss it over a juicy veal chop set on creamy escarole set off by thick batons of fabulous pancetta. Fried sage leaves send it out of this world.

■ 408 W. Eighth St., Dallas.
214-948-4998. www.luciadallas.com.

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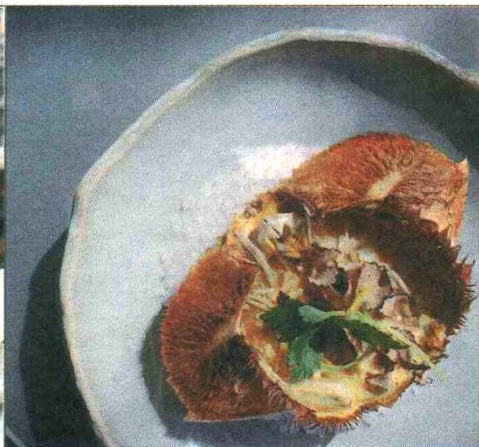
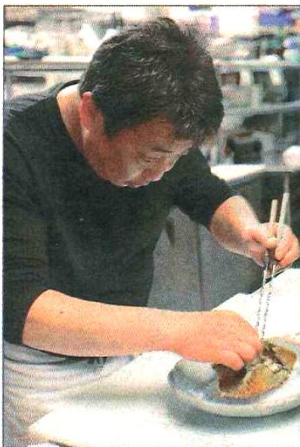
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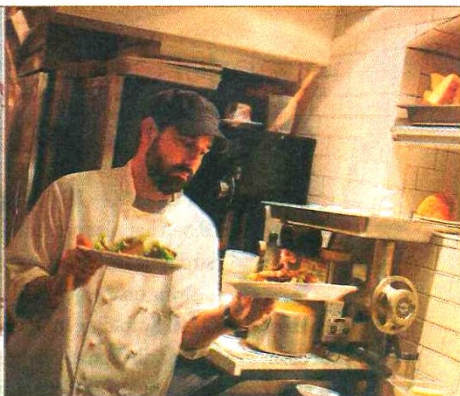
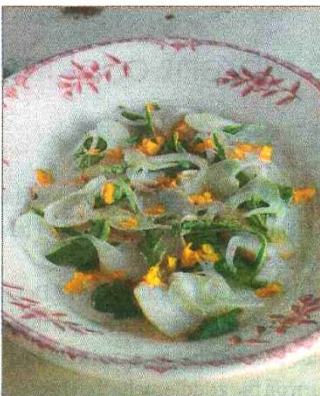
Photos by G.J. McCarthy/Staff Photographer

At Fuego, Stephan Pyles thrills with dishes such as brown-butter poached lobster with fennel panna cotta. Ideas from Fuego make their way onto his menus at Samar.



Photos by Taylor Glascock/Staff Photographer

Tei-An's masterful Teiichi Sakurai puts the final touches on a delicate, unfathomably light Dungeness crab flan.



Rex C. Curry/Special Contributor

G.J. McCarthy/Staff Photographer

From David Uygur's tiny kitchen at Lucia comes some of the most inspired cooking in town, such as a smoked-scallop salad with fennel, sea beans and flowering tarragon.