

ATLANTA 100

THE RESTAURANTS THAT APPEAR IN THIS SECTION ARE CHOSEN EVERY MONTH BY RESTAURANT CRITIC **CHRISTIANE LAUTERBACH**. ATLANTA MAGAZINE ACCEPTS NO ADVERTISING OR OTHER CONSIDERATION IN EXCHANGE FOR A LISTING. FOR AN EXPANDED LIST OF RESTAURANTS, VISIT ATLANTAMAGAZINE.COM.

KEY TO SYMBOLS

Unless otherwise noted, all restaurants listed accept reservations and take major credit cards.

A GUIDE TO PRICING

- \$ **INEXPENSIVE**
most entrees under \$10
- \$\$ **MODERATE**
most entrees \$10-\$15
- \$\$\$ **EXPENSIVE**
most entrees \$15 and up
- \$\$\$\$ **VERY EXPENSIVE**
most entrees over \$20

NEW & NOTEWORTHY

111 MLK 111 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, 404-523-0109. Space is at a premium in this won-

gourmet-to-go items, snacks and cookies. The cheerful and stylish design is just what one expects from the multitalented former owner of Heaping Bowl 'n' Brew. \$

BOLLYWOOD MASALA GRILL HOUSE 2201 Lawrenceville Highway, North DeKalb Square, Decatur, 404-636-6614. Video clips and snippets from made-in-Bombay musicals play on the large screen at the rear of this studio-themed restaurant related to Madras Saravana Bhavan. The food comes from all over India and includes fun snacks (e.g., baby samosas and hard-boiled eggs deep-fried in chickpea flour) as well as seriously wonderful Chettinad curries and Goan fish dishes. Thanks to exotic cocktails, fun desserts and a clientele with a taste for late dining, this newcomer is an excellent weekend destination for all-around merriment. \$\$

249-1506. Part sports bar, part Italian restaurant, this amazingly efficient new spot showcases a dream team. Scott McCray, a veteran of the club scene, and Toni LaRocco, the man who brought Fratelli di Napoli and The Tap Room to Atlanta, truly know their stuff. Rigatoni, meatballs, homemade potato chips with melted Gorgonzola, and killer hot dogs (New York Sabretts) await the hungry. Forty-five beers on tap quench the thirsty. The staff is trained within an inch of its life. And despite the grumblings about yuppies taking over Midtown, there is a real clientele for this type of quality. \$

MOSAIC, 3097 Maple Drive, 404-846-5722. Just about everybody connected with this new, one-of-a-kind Mediterranean restaurant emerged on the scene as a fresh talent. Executive Chef David Farrell cooks as if he were still in San Francisco.

re often affected. er execu- or hospi- oung but arismat- an espe- reflect on o experi- eggplant h shrimp n-spiced ched figs buckhead

chnology hly mod- ractive to ave acad- s such as apore fry up, and Chinese tempura,

teriyaki chicken, BBQ steak or tofu). The Asahi Low Carb Drum Roll with spelt bread and fish is a big fave with the grown-ups. The decor is fresh and citrusy, the streetscape multi-cultural and the management favors a fast pace. From Midtown, the place is easily found and, a rarity in Atlanta, one can stroll pleasurably past a bevy of new stores and restaurants. \$

TWO: URBAN LICKS, 820 Ralph McGill Blvd, behind the Telephone Factory Lofts, 404-522-4622. First we got One Midtown Kitchen and

Vegan, upscale and definitely not preachy, this wonderful newcomer has major crossover potential. Mock lobster, "lawn prawns," and "tuna" loin show up in refined dishes prepared by a true chef who also loves to use flowers and herbs on the plate. The social scene is lubricated by real cocktails, good wine and fresh sangria. Don't stay away because you normally eat meat. You will be thrilled by your walk on the vegan side. \$\$

MCCRAY'S 6TH ST. TAVERN, 98 Sixth St., 404-



FIRST IMPRESSION

GRACE 17.20

[5155 Peachtree Parkway, The Forum at Peachtree Corners, Norcross, 678-421-1720]

It isn't divine intervention that brought this impressive new restaurant named for a Bible verse to a manicured shopping center in a fast-growing part of Gwinnett. Barbara DiJames, her partners and their chef take their inspiration from the **California wine country**. Polished and quietly ambitious, the menu doesn't talk down to the clientele. Instead of indulging the suburbs' taste for big portions and family fare, **Chef Charles Schwab** delights with perfectly portioned **mussels and grits**, eggplant bruschetta with blue cheese and Dijon gastrique, ahi tuna tartare with wasabi nori chip, and seared scallops with lemon ricotta ravioli and sauteed escarole. Beautifully calibrated dishes such as a more-solid-than-liquid seafood chowder, a vegetarian cassoulet with challah toast points and admirable steaks with refined garnishes are carried off with brio. The wine list is on par with the food, the desserts perhaps not as strong as they should be. The **country French dining room** is surprisingly noisy given that Grace 17.20 is an expensive restaurant. In Matthew 17:20, the amount of faith needed to move a mountain is compared to a mustard seed. As far as I am concerned, the mountain has already moved! —C.L.

PHOTOGRAPH BY LAUREN RUBINSTEIN

soon we will see Trois. Bob Amick and Todd Rushing know how to throw a great party and this newcomer is the talk of the town, a cavernous restaurant with a dark, club-like interior and a huge custom rotisserie. With a major in fiery American food and a minor in shareable snacks, the menu appeals to just about everyone, and the wine program (everything by the barrel) is a wonderful innovation without par. The warehouse environment and the view of the city are hard to beat, and the enclosed courtyard has a huge romantic potential. Quiet types won't like the scene, but everyone else ought to give it a try. \$\$\$

UNCLE HARRY'S ON AUBURN, 590 Auburn Ave., 404-221-0444. This self-styled "Home of the Authentic Chicago Sandwich" is only a block from Studioplex. Immaculate, eccentric, intensely personal and likeable, and way too tiny for a crowd, this neighborhood spot serves an irresistible Beef & Roasted Red Peppers on crusty baguette with hot relish and Italian gravy on the side. All the sandwiches are made to order, and the veggie tacos with "meatless meat" greens are a nice counterpoint to the Old World all-beef hot dogs. The owner also offers fresh pies, pastries and Greenwood sangria sorbet amidst a smattering of art from the neighborhood. \$

WAHOO GRILL, 1042 West College Ave., Decatur, 404-373-3331. There isn't a sweeter or cozier dining room anywhere near this exceedingly well-run, European bistro where the prices are as appealing as the dishes. The signature dish (grilled wahoo medallions with salsa verde, buttermilk mashed potatoes and fresh vegetable of the day) is an astonishing value. Owner Pamela Ledbetter has poured her soul into this inviting and warm space. Her menu includes Charleston-style shrimp and grits, vegetable plates and New York strip au poivre with crumbled bleu cheese. Buffet brunch and a lovely patio attract hordes on the weekend. \$\$

ZUMA 701 Highland Ave., 404-522-2872. This splashy newcomer embedded in a tony virgin development is almost entirely devoted to the art of sushi and sashimi. The glam, modern dining room looks like a lair, the hours are fashionably late, and the sushi chef (the lone Japanese in an almost exclusively Korean team) works with expensive products. The extraordinary collection of sakes is, on the whole, more interesting than the food. Within a certain price point, one expects artistry and originality. Buying super-fatty o-toro so marbled it is almost white is easy; doing something great with it asks for a master. Save your money for the skinny traditional rolls made with pickled vegetables and the drinks! \$\$\$

BUCKHEAD

ANTICA POSTA 519 East Paces Ferry Road, 404-262-7112. No one has come up with a better or more authentic Tuscan restaurant than Marco Betti, whose family owns a small albergo and ristorante outside of Florence and whose brother is in the kitchen here. Rich folks can't wait to be fed beans, chicken livers and rustic pastas characteristic of a humble countryside in this inspirational gastronomic hot

style! *Bohemian Luxe, Barneys, Big Belts, Best Facials & more*

Atlanta

BEST PARKS

THE AUTOMATIC 313 Boulevard, 404-588-9062. There is now one more way to wake up and smell the coffee. This adorable drive-thru brews a fabulous cup (the training and the beans come from Aurora Coffee) and hands out all sorts of goodies, including breakfast superbagels and, later in the day, freshly made gourmet sandwiches like a great Thai basil on pretzel bread and a stellar grilled three-cheese sandwich. The Automatic delivers to the neighborhood via a cute red scooter and stocks a few