

Hot Tables

THE WORLD'S TOP CHEFS PICK THEIR FAVORITE NEW RESTAURANTS

HOW DOES THE SAVVY TRAVELER find out about the world's most dazzling new restaurants? Consult a brand-new iPhone app, ask those irritating friends who've been absolutely everywhere, troll the Internet tundra, or perhaps (gasp) thumb a quaint old-fashioned guidebook? But whose taste can you really trust? That's why this year *Condé Nast Traveler* went straight to the front burner, choosing four of our favorite chefs—April Bloomfield of Manhattan's John Dory Oyster Bar, Luke Mangan of Singapore's Salt Grill, Ferran and Albert Adrià of Tickets in Barcelona, and Rick Bayless of L.A.'s Red O—and then following them all around the globe.

REPORTED BY
GERALDINE CAMPBELL

With the ultimate foodie insiders as your guide to the 21 most exciting new restaurants, you can't possibly go wrong. *Bon appétit!*

AND BLOOMFIELD PICKS...

CNT PICKS...

APRIL BLOOMFIELD John Dory Oyster Bar New York

April Bloomfield has a strict no-condiments policy when it comes to burgers. In fact, she's quite specific about many things, from the dress code for her sous-chefs to the proportion of nuts to greens in her salads. But Bloomfield's precision is what makes her food so dazzling: Since opening the Spotted Pig in Greenwich Village in February 2004, she has turned out hit after hit, amassing a cult following and earning two Michelin stars. Her latest endeavor, a turn-of-the-century-style oyster bar, is a departure from her porcine obsession, but don't expect tepid flavors—there's smoked haddock terrine, eel and parsley pie, and of course her famous oyster pan roast with uni butter crostini.

Must eat: The bar's happy hour special (5 P.M.–7 P.M. or midnight–2 A.M.) includes a half-dozen oysters and a 20-ounce pint of stout or a glass of cava (\$15).

1196 Broadway, 212-792-9000; entrées, \$11–\$21.

HEAVEN ON THE HALF SHELL
Magnificent mollusks at the John Dory Oyster Bar, April Bloomfield's newest restaurant in New York.



CLOSE SHAVES Graham Elliot (left) at Grahamwich, in Chicago—try his sublime grilled cheese sandwich topped with shaved prosciutto; at Christian Puglisi's Relæ, in Copenhagen, the dish to go for is pickled mackerel with cauliflower.



AND WHITE PICKS...

MICHAEL WHITE
Osteria Morini
New York

Anyone who has eaten at Michael White's previous establishments knows that the Michigan-born chef can do fancy Italian. But his newest restaurant—rather, *osteria*—is an ode to the dairy-rich, meat-centric food of Northern Italy's Emilia-Romagna region. At Morini, explains Bloomfield, "White extrudes his pastas in-house, giving them a nice rustic texture." He also embraces simple, fatty pleasures like butter, olive oil, cream, and lard—or any other fat, for that matter. Expect deep-fried béchamel croquettes, polenta topped with *lardo*, and prosciutto and mortadella meatballs.

Bloomfield's picks: The mascarpone-stuffed pasta with black truffle, and the veal and pork ragù.
218 Lafayette St.; 212-965-8777; entrées, \$17-\$28.

AND ELLIOT PICKS...

GRAHAM ELLIOT
Grahamwich
Chicago

Graham Elliot's latest project is all about the humble sandwich—and, says White, "bringing his whimsical culinary style to a fast-casual setting." The shop smells like popcorn (in a good way) and has chalkboard bathrooms where self-expression—and toilet humor—are encouraged. Waiters call out orders for pastrami on rye and house-made sodas while Graham, in white-framed glasses, greets customers. It's the most fun you'll have pre-cocktail hour, and that's before you've tried his take on grilled cheese: Wisconsin cheddar, prosciutto, tomato marmalade, and cheese curd on Pullman bread.

White's pick: Beef short rib with baby watercress, shoestring potatoes, and pickled shallots on pretzel bread.
615 N. State St.; 312-265-0434; sandwiches, \$10.

AND PASSERINI PICKS...

GIOVANNI PASSERINI
Rino
Paris

In Paris, fancy restaurants are out (for now) and tiny bistros in outlying arrondissements are in. And the most exciting *table du jour* is Giovanni Passerini's 26-seat modern Franco-Italian Rino. "It encompasses so many dining trends that are taking off right now in Paris," says Elliot of the self-taught chef's first venture, in an increasingly arty but still working-class pocket of the eleventh arrondissement. Elliot loves the "laid-back vibe paired with the simple seasonal menu," which touts sexy market-based dishes like sardine ravioli in fennel consommé, and crispy lamb sweetbreads with beets and roasted endive.

Elliot's pick: Homemade ravioli with *brandade de morue*.
46 rue Trousseau; 33-1-48-06-95-85; prix fixes, \$52-\$76.

AND AIZPITARTE PICKS...

INAKI AIZPITARTE
Le Dauphin
Paris

When Inaki AizpitarTE decided to open another restaurant just steps from his groundbreaking Le Chateaubriand, Paris foodies took note. Passerini calls Le Dauphin, also in the eleventh arrondissement, "the place I want to eat most at this moment," adding, "Inaki is in Olympic form. His cooking is fantastic, full of taste, difficult to define, always evolving." It doesn't hurt that starchitect Rem Koolhaas reimagined the space—formerly a nondescript café-bar—as a modern boîte constructed entirely of Carrara marble.

Passerini's pick: Revisited French classics such as *boeuf bourguignon* and *blanquette de veau*.
131 ave. Parmentier; 33-1-55-28-78-88; tapas, \$7-\$35.

CHRISTIAN PUGLISI
Relæ
Copenhagen

Copenhagen's Noma was recently ranked the world's best restaurant—so it's no wonder that the city's hottest table is the brainchild of Noma expats. Just over a year ago, Christian Puglisi and Kim Rossen left their posts as sous-chef and waiter, respectively, at René Redzepi's acclaimed restaurant to open Relæ. Expect rigorously seasonal pared-down dishes like broccoli with parsley puree or veal hearts with pepper sauce, fare that AizpitarTE describes as "both frank and singular. Relæ has a real culinary culture, a true *cuisine d'auteur* that is dynamic like Puglisi's personality."

AizpitarTE's pick: Pickled mackerel with shaved cauliflower and lemon peel puree.
Jægersborggade 41; 45-3696-6609; prix fixe, \$60.



Rule Britannia: It's finally time to retire that weary old cliché about English food running a close second to the weather. Chefs from around the globe—San Francisco to Singapore—named restaurants in London (not New York or Paris or Rome) as their top dining destinations.

SOUP TO NUTS Steamed pork meatball soup (left) at Harold Dieterle's Kin Shop, in New York, and prep time at Tim Siadatan's Trullo, in London.



CNT PICKS...

AND MANGAN PICKS...

AND BATALI PICKS...

AND DIETERLE PICKS...

AND OLIVER PICKS...

LUKE MANGAN
Salt Grill
Singapore

Singapore's food hawkers have long been the source of many a blogger obsession, but a recent blitz of celebrity chef-helmed restaurants has put the tiny nation at the center of the food world. Our favorite new arrival is Luke Mangan's Salt Grill & Sky Bar, a hot spot where the Aussie chef serves a mod-Oz menu, mixing classic French techniques with local ingredients like coriander, ginger, and chili. And then there's the view: Perched atop the gleaming art-and-retail complex ION Orchard, the restaurant is a glass-domed jewel box with unparalleled views of Singapore's urban surroundings.

Must eat: Yellowtail kingfish sashimi with ginger, shallot, and goat's feta.

2 Orchard Turn, 65-6592-5118; entrées, \$27-\$70.

MARIO BATALI
Osteria Mozza
Singapore

Mangan admits, "I'm a big fan of anything Mario Batali does"—and he's particularly enthralled by Batali's Singapore export. As at the Los Angeles original, the restaurant's star is the central mozzarella bar, which turns out more than 15 varieties of handmade mozzarella, while a sound track of U2 thumps in the background. "I love how you can sit at the bar while watching all the fun in the kitchen area," Mangan notes. It doesn't hurt that Osteria Mozza has an impressive 700-bottle wine list.

Mangan's pick: "I love the mozzarella cheese with braised leeks for its simplicity."

2 Bayfront Ave., No. B1-42-46; 65-6688-8522; entrées, \$25-\$43.

HAROLD DIETERLE
Kin Shop
New York

Batali skips across continents in pursuit of the perfect prosciutto, but this year the restaurant that most impressed him was close to home. "Harold Dieterle is cooking simply delicious Thai-inspired food that feels more Thai than a lot of 'authentic' places," says Batali. Most items on Kin Shop's menu are either interpretations of traditional dishes or wholly new creations that fuse Thai ingredients with Western cooking methods, but Dieterle masters the balance between spicy and sweet.

Batali's pick: "The duck *laab* salad skates that thin line between insanely hot and divinely delicious."

469 Sixth Ave., 212-675-4295; entrées, \$14-\$27.

JAMIE OLIVER AND ADAM PERRY LANG
Barbecoa
London

Pit master Adam Perry Lang has teamed up with Jamie Oliver to bring to England a range of barbecue techniques—from Japanese *robata* to Texas smokers. Dieterle says of the duo, "Both are great chefs, and with Barbecoa, they are diving into a wide range of international grilling styles." Look for American imports like beer-can chicken and pulled pork shoulder, as well as riffs on British bar snacks, including fried pork scratchings served with mole dipping sauce.

Dieterle's pick: Charred hot wings.

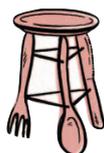
20 New Change Passage; 44-20-3005-8555; entrées, \$25-\$56.

TIM SIADATAN
Trullo
London

Britain's hometown hero, Oliver has been spending a lot of time across the pond changing the way Americans eat. He's left the crown in good hands, though. As he reports, "One of my students from the first year [of Fifteen], Tim Siadatan, has set up a restaurant that's had amazing reviews." The 28-year-old chef's Trullo has acquired cult-like status due to its ingredient-driven, Italian-leaning food. The 40-seat utilitarian space buzzes with British tastemakers, starched financial types, and writers, actors, and artists, while James Dean look-alikes cheerily serve chili-spiked tagliarini and perfectly charred lamb.

Oliver's pick: Slow-cooked lamb with grilled eggplant and salsa verde.

300-302 St. Paul's Rd.; 44-20-7226-2733; entrées, \$25-\$32.



Simple pleasures: Whether it's fried chicken or lobster rolls, chefs crave comfort food when they're off duty. You'll find the world's top toques noshing with friends in gastropubs and obscure dives, not glossy temples of haute cuisine.

CROSS-CULTURAL José Andrés's *China Poblano* (left), in Las Vegas, mixes Chinese and Mexican food; the fried chicken at Max Levy's *Apothecary*, in Beijing, is not to be missed.



CNT PICKS...

AND ALBERT ADRIÀ PICKS...

FERRAN AND ALBERT ADRIÀ
Tickets
Barcelona

El Bulli may be closing, but Ferran and Albert Adrià already have another project in Barcelona. Tickets, named for its theater district location, is an homage to tapas, with six dining areas, including a futuristic bar serving avant-garde bites and a space the brothers call the "madhouse" or the "Marx Brothers" cabin," reserved for regulars and "rogues" (a.k.a. friends of the owners) who the chefs predict will act as a peanut gallery of sorts. Albert's brainchild is the amusement park-like dessert fairyland, La Dolça, with cotton candy machines, ice-cream carts, and display windows full of decadent sweets.

Must eat: Rabbit ribs with *allíoli*.

Avinguda Paral·lel 164; ticketsbar.es (no phone; reservations are made online); entrées, \$3-\$16.

AND ANDRÉS PICKS...

JOSÉ ANDRÉS
China Poblano
Las Vegas

Not long after opening L.A.'s sleek multi-concept Bazaar, Jose Andrés is taking on Sin City with a restaurant that marries Chinese and Mexican food. Andrés's friend and mentor Albert Adrià says, "The best street food comes from China and Mexico, and *China Poblano* has both—and of the highest quality." In practice, Andrés's restaurant is less about fusion than about serving the cuisines side by side: In addition to the main kitchen, two separate kitchens turn out *dan dan mian* (hand-cut noodles with spicy meat and peanuts) and *sui mai*, scallop sevicehe, and *cochinilla* tacos.

Albert Adrià's pick: The Rou Jia Mo Street Sandwich, a traditional braised meat burger.

3708 Las Vegas Blvd. S.; 702-698-7900; entrées, \$8-\$17.

AND LEVY PICKS...

MAX LEVY
Apothecary
Beijing

Max Levy, the U.S.-born, Japanese-trained chef behind Beijing's Bei, the sleek mod-Asian restaurant at the Opposite House, shows his Big Easy roots with his latest project. *Apothecary* is one part cocktail bar, one part down-home eatery, serving classic tipples alongside fried favorites. Chef Andrés, who stumbled upon the casual joint in Beijing's Chaoyang while researching his own new restaurant, reports, "Levy is an American from New Orleans, now cooking in Beijing." Translation: Expect plenty of andouille, tasso ham, and gumbo to go with your Sazerac.

Andrés's pick: Fried chicken dinners on Sundays.

3/F Nali Patio, 81 Sanlitun Lu; 86-10-5208-6040; entrées, \$9-\$30.

AND ING PICKS...

HOWARD ING
Uo Kura
Shanghai

Restaurateur Howard Ing has brought together a three-Michelin-star chef and a sushi master to create the ultimate Osaka-style restaurant in Shanghai's new Sinan Mansions development. Levy describes the *kaiseki* menu, chef Hideaki Matsuo's domain, as "spot-on," with a "succulent poached oyster floating in dashi that's the pure essence of the sea." But, Levy says, "the real magic is at the beautiful sushi bar, where you can have the best sushi outside Kansai." It doesn't hurt that the restaurant has views of the former residence of Sun Yat-Sen and Fu Xing park.

Levy's pick: Chef Yutaka Kinjo's *unagi*—rapidly steamed eel grilled over an open fire, then baked over Koshihikari rice.

507 Fu Xing Rd. Central, Building 1, 3rd Fl.; 86-152-2133-1369; entrées, \$14-\$122.

BRAD TURLEY
Goga
Shanghai

Chef Ing calls *Goga*—the tiny restaurant named after San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge—"a no-frills establishment that's all about the food." In fact, the 20-seat French Concession eatery is so bare-bones that it doesn't even have a bathroom. But regulars don't mind, lauding the fact that chef Brad Turley is always in the kitchen (in his Hawaiian print shirt), turning out delicious dishes like torched tuna sashimi and the off-menu Brad burger.

Ing's pick: Lobster rolls with green papaya salad.

1 Yueyang Lu; 86-21-6431-9700; entrées, \$24-\$56.



New generation: 2010 was the year of the sous-chef, when Jamie Oliver's, Thomas Keller's, and Ferran Adrià's students opened their own restaurants with runaway success. The student may not (yet) be the teacher, but these new young chefs are all set to challenge the masters.

SWIMMINGLY Faux shark's fin soup (left) at Corey Lee's Benu, in San Francisco, and the interior of Gabriela Cámara's MeroToro, in Mexico City.



CNT PICKS...

AND BAYLESS PICKS...

AND BAÑOS PICKS...

AND CÁMARA PICKS...

AND PERELLO PICKS...

RICK BAYLESS
Red O
Los Angeles

Rick Bayless is often credited with changing the face of Mexican food in America—and hungry Chicagoans still line up for his creamy pumpkin mole and deep-fried churros. His latest venture, however, was met with a fair amount of skepticism: Angelenos are reluctant to pay for white-tablecloth Mexican when there's ample (and delicious) street food to be had. But even diehards admit that the food at Red O sings, whether it's the sopes—fried tortillas with raised edges, topped with pork belly and short ribs—or the goat cheese caramel and bacon atop soft-serve ice cream.

Must eat: *Tinga poblana*, a tender duo of pork shoulder and belly with homemade chorizo and smoky chipotle sauce.

8155 Melrose Ave.; 323-655-5009; entrées, \$14–\$32.

JOSÉ MANUEL BAÑOS
Pitiona
Oaxaca, Mexico

Bayless calls José Manuel Baños Mexico's "most promising rising star," and the 31-year-old chef delivers, combining traditional flavors with modern technique learned at El Bulli. *Sopa de fideos* comes with capsules of liquid cheese that burst in the mouth, while the lamb chops in Oaxacan green mole are served with white bean foam. The setting, like the cuisine, is Old World and New: In a restored colonial house in the historic district, the restaurant has white walls and contemporary art to make it current. And almost everything, from the vegetables to the 43 varieties of mesal, is local.

Bayless's pick: The six-course tasting menu, with mesal pairings.

Cinco de Mayo 311; 52-951-514-4707; entrées, \$7–\$20.

GABRIELA CÁMARA
MeroToro
Mexico City

Gabriela Cámara, the star restaurateur behind Mexico's impossibly hip seafood shack Contramar, is tackling a new protein. Its name derived from the Spanish words for fish and bull, MeroToro is the Slow Food queen's take on surf and turf. Still, expect a similar combination of refined food in an informal Condesa setting. Cámara's executive chef, Jair Téllez, combines the flavors of Baja with the best possible ingredients—chef Baños describes the restaurant's short seasonal menu as "Mexican cuisine in a Mediterranean style."

Baños's pick: Grilled octopus with pickled vegetables, sea beans, and green chiles.

Amsterdam 204; 52-555-5564-7799; entrées, \$15–\$26.

MELISSA PERELLO
Frances
San Francisco

After a rapid rise in the San Francisco restaurant world, culminating in the Michelin-starred Fifth Floor, Melissa Perello took a break. But she's back in a big way with her 46-seat Frances, in the Castro. Cámara says, "It's extraordinary food in a casual restaurant, cooked by people who obviously know all about fine dining." The modern Californian menu changes weekly and might include bacon beignets with maple crème fraîche or lamb with butter beans, artichokes, and olives. The thoughtful wine list includes a house red and white; blended by sommelier Paul Einbund and wine maker Marco Cappelli, it's priced at \$1 an ounce.

Cámara's pick: If they are on the menu, the sardines.

3870 17th St.; 415-621-3870; entrées, \$18–\$25.

COREY LEE
Benu
San Francisco

Corey Lee spent four years as chef de cuisine at the French Laundry, earning a James Beard Rising Star Chef of the Year award and the attention of fellow toques—including Perello. Now Lee has his own place, Benu, where he's painstakingly planned every detail, from the minimalist decor to the imported Korean tableware. Chef Perello, who admits to being envious of his huge kitchen, describes Lee's Eastern-leaning food as "unique, creative, and cutting-edge without being pretentious or weird." His is a modern take on fine dining (a sign, perhaps, that fancy is making a comeback?), and the \$160 tasting menu is worth every penny.

Perello's pick: Faux shark's fin soup with truffle custard.

22 Hawthorne St.; 415-685-4860; entrées, \$24–\$40.



Small is the new big: The size of restaurants has been on the decline for quite some time now—in fact, this year we're finding that the trend toward intimate dining is accelerating, with most places coming in at fewer than 50 seats.