



# FOOD *for* THOUGHT

Hold on to your napkin—it's time for our annual list of Chicago's hottest restaurants.

There is a sea change in the Chicago dining scene, and we're excited to ride that wave. The new year has stripped everything down this past year—young, ambitious chefs are creating soulful, rustic dishes that speaks to the times and, especially, to a new generation of diners. It was definitely the year for stars: Giuseppe Tentori wants you to ditch that steak in favor of fish; Stephanie Izard and her meat menu continue to draw the crowds; and the best dishes sing with simplicity. Other trends we love right now: sommeliers taking risks with their wine lists that expand your palate but not your wallet; hotel dining going haute and brunch becoming the new black. Don't forget to bring your appetite.

| By Lisa Shames | Photography by Anthony Tablier |

## ◎ BEST NEW RESTAURANT

### NEXT

First, the good news: All those breathy accolades you've been hearing about Next—the new restaurant from Grant Achatz, Nick Kokonas and Executive Chef Dave Beran—are true. From the food, including the one-bite-wonder hors d'oeuvres and incredible pressed duck, to the unstuffy service and sleek yet comfortable space, Next nails it. The bad news? The first menu, Paris 1906: Escoffier at the Ritz, is gone (a Thai-inspired one is rumored next), and all the great press means it'll be even more difficult to get into. But unlike many things in life, the effort is totally worth the end result.

953 W. Fulton Market, 312.226.0858, nextrestaurant.com

### Pig Tale

As its name suggests, pork is all over the menu at **The Purple Pig**. But there's more than just pig's ears and porchetta paninis at this cozy (i.e. miniscule) Mag Mile meat and wine bar; chef Jimmy Bannos Jr. has a way with vegetables and seafood too. The dishes on the rustic Mediterranean menu are meant to be shared, but more often than not we don't want to. 500 N. Michigan Ave., 312.464.1744, thepurplepigchicago.com

### New Fish

Opening Executive Chef Laurent Gras has left the building, but that doesn't mean **L2O** is a fish out of water. With chef Francis Brennan in command—the Charlie Trotter's vet has been at the restaurant since day one and created the acclaimed bread program—we predict plenty of smooth sailing ahead. 2300 N. Lincoln Park West, 773.868.0002, l2orestaurant.com

### Logan's Run

The hipster set is all over Logan Square restaurant **Longman & Eagle** is more than a see-and-beer; Chef Jared Warworth is some of the city's most creative food, ranging from playful board shippy joes—to Maine lobster with red wine sauce. 2657 N. Kedzie Ave., 773.276.7110, longmanandeagle.com

### In its Prime

**David Burke's Primehouse** is by all accounts a steakhouse. But someone forgot to tell Executive Chef Rick Gresh, who routinely breaks with the meaty tradition by incorporating fun specials and events. From his playful bacon fat candle and dim sum brunch to collaborating with Goose Island Brewery on a beer, Gresh is always open to new ideas. Oh, and his steaks are pretty tasty, too. 616 N. Rush St., 312.660.6000, jameshotels.com/chicago

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