

Atlanta Restaurant Guide



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Dear Executive,

For those of you who have never seen our Restaurant Guides before... let me explain. While Chuck Klein Productions provides turnkey promotional solutions for companies launching new products, attending tradeshow, and aggressively building brand awareness; CKP staffers travel constantly and are never too busy to enjoy a fine meal and a great restaurant. And we consider sharing these finds to be our responsibility to fellow food-lovers.

While most of our clients are in the Entertainment and Cable TV industries, we have also worked in consumer electronics, high tech, and fashion. These projects have benefited from the fresh and exciting promotional direction that our entertainment industry orientation provides. We can either help you execute your promotional strategies, or work with your staff to develop tactics that will satisfy your marketing

objectives. In any case, our proven track record makes me confident that you will be very pleased with the results.

Since it costs no more to start speaking with us earlier vs. later... you should call us as soon as you start thinking about a new exhibit, promotional event (large or small), or some kind of traffic building tradeshow stunt. We can provide everything from spokespeople and models to imaginative hospitality suites, to the mega parties and special events that have made us famous. The sooner you start to move, the more options you have.

As always, our restaurant recommendations are a compilation of personal favorites, top picks of local and national food and wine critics, and input from Atlanta friends and associates. We hope you enjoy our recommendations, and we'd like to hear from you about anything you especially loved or loathed. Plus, we're always interested in any new finds you come across (in any city) that are not currently in our guide. Let us know by phone, fax or email to guide@ckponline.com. Also remember, we post past and present guides on our website, www.ckponline.com... plus, it's a good place to learn more about CKP, and what we may be able to do for your company.

Shelley Babcock

Chuck Klein

Lizzy Klein

While we have tried to make specific comments in the brief reviews, ratings, from K – KKKKK, are overall ratings, most heavily influenced by the food, but also factor in ambiance, décor and service. Our \$ estimates are based on one dinner with a cocktail & tip. \$ inexpensive, under \$18; \$\$ moderate, \$18 to \$30; \$\$\$ expensive, \$30 to \$50; \$\$\$\$ very expensive, over \$50.

Keep in mind that in Atlanta, as everywhere, restaurants and clubs can open and close, change hours, credit card policies, and even move with very short notice. Many restaurants are closed Sundays and Mondays, or even Tuesdays. We recommend calling ahead to address any special needs. Feel free to mention Chuck Klein Productions.

The following location abbreviations should help you as you try to plan your dining. **(BH) Buckhead; (DT) Downtown; (IP) Inman Park; (L5) Little Five Points; (MT) Midtown; (VH) Virginia Highlands; (WE) West End**

Atlanta Fish Market – 265 Pharr Rd. (BH) 404-262-3165 www.buckheadrestaurants.com/afm.html KKK \$\$ – You know you're there when you spot the 65' copper carp (be impressed - it cost over \$360,000). Ok, it's noisy, and there are often waits for a table, but no one seems to care once they've tasted the seafood. Don't miss the Key West Stone Crab Claws served with "Better than Joe's" Sauce (and if you've ever been to Joe's Stone Crabs in Miami, you know that's a mighty big claim.) We like the raw bar and the house specials like Popcorn Candied Rock Shrimp on Fried Rice Noodles or Carolina Salmon Trout. Dinner 7 days, Lunch Mon-Sat.

Atlanta Grill – Ritz-Carlton Downtown, 181 Peachtree St. NE (DT) 404-221-6550 KKKK \$\$\$ – A clubby spot for a Southern take on old boy dining, we recommend this one if you want to close the deal. The food is always wonderful, service is discreet, and the plush setting makes everyone feel like a winner (though the place isn't as high profile as the Buckhead Dining Room.) The prix fixe Sunday brunch is also popular. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner 7 days.



* **Bacchanalia – 1198 Howell Mill Rd. (MT) 404-365-0410 www.starprovisions.com KKKKK \$\$\$** – Likely the toughest reservation in town, and maybe the best foodie value, too (prix fixe is \$68 or \$110 with wines.) Created by award-winning chef/owners Anne Quatrano and Clifford Harrison, the Contemporary American cuisine dazzles and the gussied up factory setting totally works (they moved from that cute cottage in 1999). A March 2006 menu included Virginia Black Bass Crudo with D'Avignon Radish and Honey Tangerine and Piquin Pepper Granita; Veal Sweetbreads Meunière; and Blue Crab Fritter with Thai Pepper Essence (thankfully, these fritters are almost always on the menu.) Did you save room for Meyer Lemon Upside Down Cake with Buttermilk Sorbet and Oatmeal Soufflé with Apple Cider Sorbet & Caramel Ice Cream? Good luck getting that reservation, and you'll probably feel more comfortable in a jacket (if you didn't bring yours, try their more casual Floataway Café.)

Dinner Mon-Sat.

BED Atlanta – 110 Marietta St. (DT) 404-222-7992 <http://atl.bedrestaurants.com/> KK \$\$\$ – While we're all for breakfast in bed, we like ours private and aren't crazy about the horizontal dining trend that spread from NYC to Miami and now (as of Feb 2006) Atlanta. That said, if you're staying at the Glenn Hotel downtown, the outdoor rooftop has amazing views and they are nice enough to provide slippers if you choose to eat on a bed (they have regular tables, too!) The menu is French-American, and as you might imagine, heavy on the finger food. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner 7 days.

Blue Ridge Grill – 1261 W. Paces Ferry Rd. (BH) 404-233-5030 www.blueridgegrill.com KKKK \$\$\$\$ – It's a pretty authentic take on a cozy mountain lodge, but the regional food is anything but rustic. Most fans recommend the grouper and trout entrées, but we loved the grilled pork chop (surprise, surprise!) Your entrée will come with tasty sides, but order a few extras like the Corn Soufflé or Grits with Smoked Tomato Sauce. Dinner 7 days, Lunch Mon-Fri, Sunday Brunch.

Bone's – 3130 Piedmont Rd. NE (BH) 404-237-2663 www.bonesrestaurant.com KKK \$\$\$ – In Atlanta's "Beef Sweep-Steaks," some feel that Bone's trails Chops by just a hoof, but it's still a place for "Power food, power people." Expect stylish, clubby ambiance, savvy service, and first-class meat. Dinner 7 days, Lunch Mon-Fri.

Brasserie Le Coze – Lenox Sq. Mall (BH) 404-266-1440 www.brasserieatlanta.com KK \$\$\$ – The beautiful Parisian ambiance lives on (in spite of the shopping mall setting,) but local sources report the food at Brasserie Le Coze has "gone South"... and even in Atlanta, that ain't a good thing. Still, when you started out as sublime, maybe your lesser days aren't so bad? Dinner and lunch Mon-Sat.

Buckhead Diner – 3073 Piedmont Rd. (BH) 404-262-3336 www.buckheadrestaurants.com/diner.html KK \$\$ – We brake for neon! The award-winning retro interior of this Atlanta favorite resembles a sumptuous 1940's railroad dining car, complete with soft deco lighting, patterned floors, and cozy leather booths. And, if you're looking for comfort food, this is your ticket. Their house specials are the way to go: Potato Chips with Warm Maytag Blue Cheese, Veal Meatloaf with Wild Mushrooms, and for dessert, White Chocolate Banana Cream Pie. No reservations. Dinner and lunch 7 days.

* **Canoe – 4199 Paces Ferry Rd. NW (Vinings) 770-432-2663 www.canoeatl.com KKKKK \$\$\$\$** – Trust us, the Chattahoochee River setting and exquisitely designed space are worth the drive, even before you taste a heavenly bite. But it's the *food*, the amazing eclectic-styled, fabulous *food* that you'll remember. Consider dishes like Canoe's Smoked Salmon (with a crispy Yukon Gold potato pancake, herb salad, and goat cheese dressing), Yellowfin Tuna Steak (with sunchoke sake puree, bok choy, roasted maitake mushrooms, and wasabi oil,) and Berkshire Pork Rack (with savoy cabbage, braised cheek and Fuji apple pocket, baby carrots, and whole grain mustard.) Reservations recommended. Dinner 7 days, Lunch Mon-Fri, Sunday Brunch.

Chops – Buckhead Plaza, 70 W. Paces Ferry Rd. (BH) 404-262-2675 www.buckheadrestaurants.com/chops.html KKK \$\$\$ – Atlanta's ultimate steakhouse—and primetime reservations are a coup. You can spot Atlanta VIPs of every sort (like Elton John, Pat Riley, and cable's own Ted Turner) on a regular basis. They come for the perfectly aged beef and sides like Hash Brown Potatoes, Signature Creamed Spinach, and Chops Famous Onion Rings. Reservations recommended. Dinner 7 days, Lunch Mon-Fri.

* **City Grill – Hurt Bldg., 50 Hurt Plaza (DT) 404-524-2489 www.citygrillatlanta.com KKKKK \$\$\$** – City Grill is one of the most beautiful dining rooms in Atlanta, with a curving marble staircase and 24-ft. ceilings. Chef Daniel Zoby's award-winning American menu changes daily, with winners for every taste like Pan Fried Georgia Quail, Asian Duck Salad, New Zealand Rack of Lamb, and Hickory Grilled Rib Eye with Georgia Brown Brown Ale Sauce. We recommend the four-course tasting menu to get a real feel for Zoby's talents (\$60, \$90 with wine.) Dinner Mon-Sat, Lunch Mon-Fri.

COM Vietnamese Grill – 4005 Buford Hwy. NE (neighborhood?) 404-320-0405 www.comgrill.com KKKK \$\$ – *Food & Wine* awarded it a "Best New Asian" restaurant in the country within four months of opening, 'nuf said? The inexpensive Vietnamese fusion menu centers on sophisticated grilled marinated meats and seafood, and offers a wide variety of bun (rice noodle) dishes and delicate spring rolls (we loved flounder and lamb) and everyone (even your waiter) seems to be having a great time at this hip spot. Dinner and lunch 7 days.

* **The Dining Room – Ritz-Carlton Buckhead, 3434 Peachtree Rd. NE (BH) 404-237-2700 KKKKK \$\$\$\$** – As befits the Ritz, the food is divine, the wines are superb, and the pampering is non-stop. Chef Arnaud Berthelier's inventive prix fixe menus are show-stoppers, and include dishes like a ceviche of Citrus-cured Maine Cod, Little Neck Clams, Fennel Froth, and Chorizo Dust; Lobster and Citrus Cocotte (casserole) with Banana Polenta and Verbena Broth; and a surprisingly fantastic dessert called "Pesto Composition" that included Pain De Gene, Olive Oil Ice Cream, Basil Gelée, Pine Nuts, and Lemon Cream. Magnifique! Reservations are de rigueur. Dinner Tues-Sat.



dish – 870 N. Highland Ave. (VH) 404-897-3464 www.dish-atlanta.com KKK \$\$ – Chef/owner Sheri Davis takes casual patio dining to a whole new place with an emphasis on local, seasonal ingredients at this popular spot (don't worry, there's indoor seating, too). The New American cuisine is creative, but not intimidating (Rosemary Pinenut Popcorn, Freeform Lobster "Lasagne", and Grilled Lamb with Peruvian Potato Salad, to give you an idea,) and the service is terrific. Dinner 7 days.

Emeril's Restaurant Atlanta – One Alliance Center, 3500 Lenox Rd. (BH) 404-564-5600 www.emerils.com KKK \$\$\$\$ – It's a hot spot (some of the Braves hang here) and you'll have a good "New New Orleans" meal, but don't compare this branch of Lagasse's empire to the incomparable experience of dining at the flagship Emeril's in New Orleans... service is spotty

and the food just isn't on the same level. (NOTE: We hear Emeril's in South Beach is unbelievably good, if you're headed that way.) Dinner 7 days, Lunch Mon-Sat.

ENO – 800 Peachtree St. (MT) 404-685-3191 www.enorestaurant.com KK \$\$\$ – This hip wine bar gets packed on Tuesday nights for wine tasting flights, but while the wine list wins all kinds of awards, the Mediterranean small plates are "just ok". Dinner Tues-Sat, Lunch Tues-Fri.

Enoteca Carbonari – 710 Peachtree St. NE (DT) 404-810-9110 KKK \$\$ – We haven't been yet, but foodie friends in Atlanta recommend this brand-newcomer from the owners of popular Baroanda around the corner. The menu is heavy on grilled fish and meats and they've got a strong wine list.

*** Food Studio – Kings Plow Arts Center, 887 W. Marietta St. (MT) 404-815-6677 www.thefoodstudio.com KKKKK \$\$\$ –** Ok, the name's a little pretentious, but the New American food is creative and visually striking at this spectacularly revamped 90-yr. old farm equipment factory, and the crowd is très cool. Try dishes like House-made Fettuccine with Grilled Tevisio, Speck Ham, Poached Quail Egg, and 6-year-old Balsamic Vinegar; Seared Sea Scallops with Rock Shrimp Brindade, Micro Herb Salad, and Carrot-Ginger Butter Sauce; and Chocolate and Caramel Molten Cake with Caramel Banana Ice Cream and Salted Caramel. Reservations recommended. Dinner 7 days and super-reasonable takeout lunch available at the Food Studio Bar.

*** Floataway Café – 1123 Zonolite Rd. NE (VH) 404-892-1414 www.starprovisions.com KKKKK \$\$\$ –** Another winner from the genius chefs behind Bacchanalia, Floataway offers a more casual (and out of the) way to enjoy their talents. (It's in an industrial area and a little hard to find.) The seasonal Mediterranean/Italian-ish menu combines superfresh local ingredients with delicacies from around the globe to produce compelling dishes like Georgia White Shrimp Bruschetta, Potato Gnocchi with Veal Sweetbreads, and Roasted Yellow Snapper with Preserved Lemons. Deserts are special, too. Reservations recommended. Dinner Tues-Sat.

The Flying Biscuit Cafe – 1655 McLendon Ave. (L5) 404-687-8888 www.flyingbiscuit.com KKK \$ – Great, cheap and fun... and, as you may have guessed, this kitschy café bakes some really tasty biscuits. But you might not have guessed how vegetarian- (and even vegan-) friendly it is from the down-home looks of the place. Breakfast is served all day long (which is a good thing because you're likely to wait a while,) with evolved and unexpected offerings like Free-Range Chicken and Sage Sausage, Organic Oatmeal Pancakes, and Love Cakes (Black Bean and Cornmeal Cakes with Tomatilla Salsa and Raw Onion Spears.) Breakfast, lunch, and dinner 7 days. (And now there's a Flying Biscuit in Midtown – 1001 Piedmont Ave NE, 404-874-8887.)

Fogo de Chao – 3101 Piedmont Rd NE (BH) 404-266-9988 www.fogodechao.com KKK \$\$\$ – We've been to one of the original Fogo de Chao's in Sao Paulo (it's a Brazilian chain), and this one comes awfully close to the mark with an obscenely bountiful salad bar and the traditional parade of meat after meat, carved tableside. If you're not familiar with the churrascaria (steakhouse) modus operandi, you pay a fixed price (\$45.50 at dinner and \$29.50 at lunch, in this case) and the food keeps coming, as long as you leave your personal on/off disc on the green side (you flip it to red when you need a breather.) Our favorites are the Fraldinha (sirloin), Linguica (pork sausage), and the decadent warm cheesy pão de queijo. Dinner 7 days, Lunch Mon-Fri.

The Globe – 75 5th St. NW (MT) 404-541-1487 www.globeatlanta.com KKK \$\$ – Sleek and sexy, it's one of the best see-and-be-scenes in town, but skews fairly young (but then, most of Atlanta does...) There's something for every appetite on the eclectic bistro menu and it's also a good spot for a light bite with a glass of wine (\$13 for a glass and two apps.) We prefer the lively bar/café to the dining room. Try Salt Cod and Garlic Potato Croquettes, Grilled Flat Iron Steak & Frites, or the Seared Lamb and Caramelized Onion Sandwich on olive bread. We like their Pimms Cocktail, too. Dinner and lunch Mon-Sat.

Havana Sandwich Shop – 2905 Buford Hwy. (BH) 404-636-4094 \$ KKK – We always have to have at least one "joint" in our lists, and this is it. The converted garage isn't pretty, (far from it!) but the fabulous Cuban sandwiches sure are. Also mighty tasty... the Boliche (sliced steak, onions, peppers, and cheese) and the Milansa (breaded steak). It gets crowded at lunch, so show up early, place your order, check out the groceries, and get ready for a treat. Dinner Mon-Sat, Lunch 7 days.

Horseradish Grill – 4320 Powers Ferry Rd. (BH) 404-255-7277 www.horseradishgrill.com KKK \$\$\$ – The sophisticated New Southern cooking keeps 'em coming back for more at this Atlanta institution (it's been around forever.) Small, but filled with sunshine, Horseradish Grill has a well-deserved feel-good, eat-good reputation, with winners like Jumbo Gulf Shrimp & Logan Turnpike Grits sautéed with fire-roasted red peppers and caramelized onion in a spiced sherry sauce; Grilled Atlantic Salmon with sweet corn succotash and ginger shrimp butter; and, of course, Fried Green Tomatoes. Save room for the Kentucky Oatmeal Spice Cake with Caramel Ice Cream – yum! Dinner 7 days, Lunch Mon-Fri, Sunday Brunch.



Joël – 3290 Northside Pkwy. (BH) 404-233-3500 www.joelrestaurant.com KKKK \$\$\$\$ – Immaculate, upscale French with Mediterranean and Asian flavors served in quiet, chic elegance make this a good pick for a business dinner (or the express lunch service.) You can't go wrong with the chef's weeknight \$39 three-course menu, but the service isn't always what we expect for fancy French. We loved the Roast Hare Tenderloin with Mushroom Cannolis and Civet Sauce; Sautéed Veal Sweetbreads with Gnocchi Romaine, Dried Pears, and Truffle Sauce; and a decadent Praline Napoleon. We did not, however, enjoy the foot-triggered water faucets in the rest room – they made us feel silly. Dinner Mon-Sat, Lunch Tues-Fri.

Krog Bar – 112 Krog St. (IP) 404-524-1618 www.krogbar.com KKKK \$\$ – The closest you'll find to a Spanish wine bar south of the Mason Dixon, tiny Krog has wonderfully authentic tapas (NOT small plates of bar food!) and is backed by the Rathbun's folks, so we know there's talent in the house. Oh, the Prosciutto de Parma, Manchego cheese, Boquerones (white anchovy filets), and tasty olives! Dinner Mon-Sat.

Kyma – 3085 Piedmont Rd. NE (BH) 404-262-0702 www.buckheadrestaurants.com/kyma.html KKKK \$\$\$ – Son of Atlanta's restaurant king, I. Pano Karatossos (Buckhead Life Restaurant Group), Chef Pano II trained under Thomas Keller (French Laundry and Per Se), Eric Ripert (Le Bernadin), and Jean-Georges Vongerichten (too many to list)... he couldn't have a stronger background when he went out on his own with this "shining pantheon built around fresh fish." The Contemporary Greek is out of this world (dare we say "the stuff of gods"??) even if the dazzling décor is a smidge over the top. Reservations recommended. Dinner Mon-Sat.

La Grotta – 2637 Peachtree Rd. NE (BH) 404-231-1368 www.lagrottaatlanta.com KKKK \$\$\$ – Long considered the first and last word in luxe Italian dining, La Grotta is always a pleasure, marked by an exceedingly gracious staff and superior food. Pastas like Black and White Linguine with Calamari; Tortelloni Stuffed with Braised Onions, Prosciutto, Thyme, and Mascarpone; and Fettuccine with Grilled Chicken and Porcini Mushrooms will knock your socks off, but save room for the house special entrées – they're worth it. Wear a jacket and make a reservation. Dinner Mon-Sat.

La Tavola – 992 Virginia Ave. (VH) 404-873-5430 www.latavolatrattoria.com KKK \$ – You won't find any surprises at this casual and popular Italian spot, but that's not a bad thing as Tavola consistently delivers high-quality, one-step-past-boring dishes like Linguini with Manila Clams, Leek Risotto, Butternut Squash Ravioli, Swordfish Piccata, and Pork Saltimbocca. Warning: the dessert sampler is enormous and could put you in a coma. Dinner 7 days, Sunday Brunch.

Lobby at TWELVE – TWELVE Hotel, 361 17th St. (MT) www.lobbyattwelve.com KKK \$\$\$ – So stylish for a hotel restaurant! Head here for chic cocktails and fancy wood-oven pizzas (think Boursin and smoked salmon or truffle oil and arugula.) The rest of the menu is even more ambitious, tempting us with Pulled Braised Lamb with Crème Fraîche; Seared Yellowtail Tuna with Olive Emulsion and Pine Nuts; and Braised Beef Cheeks. Breakfast, lunch, and Dinner 7 days.

Lobster Bar – Buckhead Plaza, 70 W. Paces Ferry Rd. (BH) 404-262-2675 www.buckheadrestaurants.com/chops.html KKK \$\$\$ – Right downstairs from its macho big brother, Chops, the Lobster Bar is a beautiful space, crowned by vaulted tile ceilings. The room caters to a mostly male, doing-very-well-thank-you business crowd that orders a LOT of flash-fried lobster tails and shrimp cocktails. Beefaholics can order any dish from the Chops menu. Cigar smoking areas are available. Dinner 7 days, Lunch Mon-Fri.

Maggiano's – 3368 Peachtree Rd. NE (BH) 404-816-9650 www.maggianos.com KK \$ – Maggiano's in Buckhead serves over 1,000 family-style Southern Italian dinners every weekend night, to give you an idea of its popularity. This national chain is known for "Little Italy" ambiance, huge portions of solid homestyle cooking (you can order half-portions and still take some home!), and reasonable prices. Dinner and lunch 7 days.

Mary Mac's Tea Room – 224 Ponce de Leon Ave. NE (MT) 404-876-1800 www.marymacs.com KK \$ – This "meat-and-three" Southern has been around for 60 years and is starting to show its age, though one of our Southern friends claims "it's as close to my grandmother's cooking as I've found in a restaurant." We can't resist down-home Fried Okra, Chicken & Dumplings, Fried Catfish, Collard Greens with Cracklins, and really good Macaroni and Cheese and we have to wash it all down with sweet tea. No reservations or credit cards are accepted. Dinner and lunch 7 days.

McCormick & Schmick's – ONE CNN Center (DT) 404-521-1236 www.webguide.com/mccormick.html KKK \$\$\$ – Though the chain is not the most exciting place for seafood in any city, the fish couldn't be fresher and the service is consistently excellent. The wood and brass room is comfortable for lunch or dinner, and we love the Dungeness crab cakes, no matter which city we're in. Dinner and lunch 7 days.

MF Sushibar – 265 Ponce de Leon Ave. NE (MT) 404-815-8844 www.mfsushibar.com KKK \$\$\$\$ – Sushi Chef Chris "Magic Fingers" Kinjo and his brother Alex opened this superhot, supercool temple of sushi in 2004 and it's been packed since day one. Fans rave about the adventurous sushi specials but wish they didn't have to wait so long for a table. Don't let the techno music and hipsters throw you, there's substance behind the style. Dinner 7 days, Lunch Mon-Fri.

MidCity Cuisine – 1545 Peachtree St. (MT) 404-888-8700 www.midcitycuisine.com KKKK \$\$\$\$ – We almost don't want to tell you about MidCity's ridiculously reasonable \$10 all-you-can-eat gourmet Pizza Night (Sunday) because we fear it will cheapen your view of the otherwise sophisticated spot. To keep it in perspective, they've also got one of the largest champagne lists in the country and serve 15 varieties by the glass. We love a place that is "just as comfortable in jeans as it is in black tie," and the stylish Contemporary American food is consistently great. This is a great pre-theater spot, with a \$35 3-course prix fixe menu before 7pm on weekends. Dinner 7 days, Lunch Mon-Fri.



Morton's, The Steakhouse – 303 Peachtree Ctr. Ave. (DT) 404-577-4366

www.mortons.com KKK \$\$\$\$ – Reliable first-class Chicago beef with all the trimmings in a man-drenched, clubby atmosphere. Always a winner, but we wish they could get over displaying pre-cooked ingredients... especially the live ones. Dinner 7 days. (There's another Morton's in Buckhead – 3379 Peachtree Rd. NE, 404-816-6535.)

*** Nam – 931 Monroe Dr. (MT) 404-541-9997 www.namrestaurant.com KKK \$\$\$** – The second entry from the multi-talented Kinjo brothers, hot after their MF Sushi success, is another sophisticated hit, offering up Nouvelle Vietnamese in a seductive setting. The Rice Flour Tamale, steamed in banana leaves and stuffed with pork, shrimp, and mushrooms is a popular starter, and the "Shaking" Filet Mignon (stir-fried) is the hands-down favorite entrée.

Reservations recommended. Dinner Mon-Sat, Lunch Tues-Fri.

Nan – 1350 Spring St. NW (MT) 404-870-9933 www.nanfinedining.com KKKKK \$\$\$ – Wow, this one's good. The gorgeous, elegant room takes a back seat to the outstanding, authentic Thai flavors and cushy service. The soups and curries are delicious, but we recommend stepping outside of your comfort zone and trying one of Chef Nan's selections. Reservations recommended. Dinner 7 days, Lunch Mon-Fri. (Tamarind is the first jewel in Chef Nan's crown.)

Nava – Buckhead Plaza, 3060 Peachtree Rd. (BH) 404-240-1984 www.buckheadrestaurants.com/nava.html KKK \$\$\$ – Everybody's vote for Best Margarita (they are killer,) Nava is still going strong in its tenth year. The innovative Southwestern menu includes notes from Chef Tom Harvey's Latin American and Native American cooking experience and includes dazzlers like Masa Crusted Oyster Chalupas with Peruvian Chile Remoulade and Jicama Mango Slow; Mustard Mojo Rubbed Duck Breast with Sweet Corn Pudding and Roasted Pepper Polenta Fries; and Grilled American Kobe Flank Steak with Fire Roasted Onions and Chipotle BBQ Sauce. Dinner 7 days, Lunch Mon-Fri.

Nikolai's Roof – Atlanta Hilton and Towers, 255 Courtland Street. (DT) 404-221-6362 www.nikolaisroof.com KKKK \$\$\$\$ – First-rate service, opulent décor, excellent Continental fare, and a breathtaking view of the city add up to what some of our friends call the ultimate romantic date spot. The extravagant tasting menus are the best way to immerse yourself in Chef Olivier de Busschere's and Sommelier Herve Pennequin's talent pools. Reservations recommended. Dinner Tues-Sat.

ONE.midtown kitchen – 559 Dutch Valley Rd. (MT) 404-892-4111 www.onemidtownkitchen.com KKK \$\$\$ – Executive Chef Richard Blaise's hotspot got a few snarky reviews, but we think the less-than-best reviews came *before* he toned down what is still a seriously experimental menu. Small plates like Steak Tartare with tiny cubes of Asian pear and a Worcestershire gelatin of sorts; and Pressed Pork with country pate and mustard ice cream might be a little much for the average Tom, Dick, and Harry, but entrées are friendlier (Roast Chicken, Steak Frites, Tuna Filet Mignon,) and, hey, there's always the burger. Dinner 7 days.

Pano's and Paul's – W. Paces Shopping Ctr., 1232 W. Paces Ferry Rd. (BH) 404-261-3663

www.buckheadrestaurants.com/pp.html KKKK \$\$\$ – A first-rate Atlanta classic (in its 3rd decade) that specializes in Continental cuisine. Top food awards from all over... Mobil 4-Star, AAA 4-Diamond, *Connoisseur*, *Esquire*, and *Travel* magazines. Regulars are Atlanta's heaviest politicians and dealmakers alongside local society types... folks used to the kind of pampering that's standard operating procedure here. *Everything* is good but do not miss the decadent Signature Battered Lobster Tail with Honey Mustard and Drawn Butter. Dinner Mon-Sat.

Pie Bar – 2160 Monroe Dr. (BH) 404-815-1605 www.piebar.com KKK \$\$\$ – The over-the-top futuristic design is pretty cool, here (and ALL the cool kids are here), but it's probably better for drinks and a bite than a dinner. The creative thin-crust pizzas (one pie comes topped with duck confit, balsamic onion, bleu cheese, and grapes), create-your-own antipasto assortments, and small plates of Mediterranean-inspired dishes are ideal for sharing. No reservations, but you can call ahead to get your name on the list and they have drive-thru carry out. Dinner and lunch 7 days.

Prime – Lenox Square Mall, 3393 Peachtree Rd. (DT) 404-812-0555 www.heretoserverestaurants.com KK \$\$\$ – Get your protein on here with Prime's own version of surf and turf, that includes both sushi and steak. The superb sushi bar up front is always packed (no reservations needed,) the bar/lounge is filled with savvy regulars, there's a back room reserved for local players, and a beautifully appointed, soothingly lit main dining room that manages to be both intimate and spacious at the same time. Reservations are a must for the dining room. Dinner 7 days, Lunch Mon-Sat.

Pura Vida – 656 N. Highland Ave. NE (VH) 404-870-9797 www.puravidatapas.com KKKK \$\$\$ – In Costa Rica, "pura vida" translates to something akin to "don't worry, be happy", and this fun-loving place is right on track with a dj spinning salsa on Fridays, Argentine tango dancers on Thursdays, dominoes and mojitos on Mondays, and potent sangria every night of the week. Puerto Rican Chef/owner Hector Santiago tempted us with sophisticated Pan-Latin tapas dishes like Prince Edward Island Mussels and Arbol Peppers in Smoked Herring-Garlic Butter; Asparagus "Linguini" with Pickled Garlic and Shallots, Mint, Cashews, Hibiscus Salt, and Diablo Blanco Sauce; and delish empanadas and cured hams. Reservations recommended. Dinner 7 days.

Quinones at Bacchanalia – 1198 Howell Mill Rd. (MT) 404-365-0410 www.starprovisions.com KKKK \$\$\$\$ – We haven't been yet, but we have high hopes for this rarefied foodie experiment from the Bacchanalia team. The single seating nightly prix fixe tasting menu (\$95, \$165 with wine) is meant to showcase Chef de Cuisine Drew Balline's mighty talents as well as Executive Chef/Owners Anne Quatrano's and Clifford Harrison's New Southern philosophy and farm-grown produce. Considering what they've done at Bacchanalia and Floataway Café, we have no doubt that you'll be blown away. Reservations required. Dinner Tues-Sat.



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*** Rathbun's – 112 Krog St. (IP) 404-524-8280 www.rathbunsrestaurant.com KKKKK \$\$\$\$** – Rathbun's does a great job, end-to-end, and we love it. It's got a great vibe, delicious New American food, a beautiful renovated factory setting, and they make you feel so welcome. We adore acclaimed chef Kevin Rathbun's cooking. Our favorite starters were Yaya's Eggplant Steak Fries and the Roasted Bone Marrow with Horseradish and Irish Bleu Cheese. The scallop entrée wowed us and then the pastry chef's dessert sampler sent us to the moon. Reservations recommended (way in advance) for the dining room, but not accepted on the patio which is a little quieter. Dinner Mon-Sat.

*** Restaurant Eugene – The Aramore, 2277 Peachtree Rd. (BH) 404-355-0321 www.restauranteeugene.com KKKKK \$\$\$+** – An understated, intimate feel sets Restaurant Eugene apart from some of the other stars on our list. Chef Linton Hopkins co-owns this jewel with wife Gina Hopkins and serves expertly prepared New American that incorporates seasonal local flavors every day. A recent tasting menu included Pan Roasted North Georgia Trout with Gulf Blue Crab Gratin, Braised Swiss Chard, and Saude Maltaise; Slow Roasted Tamworth Pork Belly with Savoy Cabbage, Georgia Apple Sauce and Crispy Shallots; and ended with Heirloom "Carolina Gold" Rice Pudding flavored with Saffron Dried Apricot Chutney and Toasted Almonds. Their \$35 3-course "Sunday Supper" is a steal. Reservations recommended. Dinner 7 days.

Seeger's – 111 W. Paces Ferry Rd. (BH) 404-846-9779 KKKK \$\$\$\$ – Celebrated Chef Gunter Seeger's place has been packed since it opened (after his 12-year starring role at the Ritz-Carlton), and it just got a facelift in Fall 2005. It's still extravagant and expensive, with three nightly multi-course menus and an extensive wine list. The elegant, deftly-prepared Continental food will wow you, but the service isn't always as warm as we'd like. Reservations required. Dinner Mon-Sat.

Silk – 919 Peachtree St. (MT) 678-705-8888 www.silkrestaurant.com KKK \$\$\$ – Glass and silk, limestone and bamboo, and a wall of tiny, inset TV's in the bar are featured design elements in this stunning, stylish, and highly lauded Asian-fusion eatery. The menu, created in part by James Beard award winner, Jim Lock, and executed to perfection by Executive Chef, Kochi Chiba, includes wonderfully exotic appetizers, myriad sushi creations, and exquisite beef entrées. Filet, Kobe, and Bone-in Ribeyes are delish, and if you've overdosed on meat (or avoid it altogether,) the Seared Tuna is perfection. Dinner 7 days, lunch Mon-Fri.

Soto – Peachtree-Piedmont Crossing, 3330 Piedmont Rd. (DT) 404-233-2005 KKK \$\$\$ – Atlanta sushi-hounds are passionate about the wondrous sushi and other Nobu-style Japanese delicacies Chef-owner Sotohiro Kosugi (the third generation of master sushi chefs in his family) serves at this pearl, but be prepared to wait—you'll exercise your patience. And be aware that the menu is a la carte Mon-Wed and prix fixe on weekends. Either way, we recommend sitting at the sushi bar so you can watch Chef Soto in action. Dinner Mon-Sat.

Sotto Sotto – 313 N. Highland Ave. (IP) 404-523-6678 www.sottosottorestaurant.com KKKK \$\$\$ – "Absolutely fabulous" Italian. The simple, traditional preparations are the best, with dishes like Fagiano Arrosto (roasted free-range baby pheasant with polenta, endive, and Mostarda di Cremona), Salmone in Cartoccio (salmon baked in parchment with oranges, onion, and fennel), and Tagliatelle ai Funghi (tagliatelle with mushrooms) stealing the show. Dinner Mon-Sat.

Soul Vegetarian Restaurant – 879 Ralph David Abernathy Blvd. (WE) 404-752-5194 KKK \$ – Delicious, imaginative, strictly vegan cuisine served by Black Hebrews dressed in gorgeous African garb. Soul Vegetarian has a great reputation and a die-hard (but live long) fan club. The small storefront shop offers tasty dishes like commmeal fried vegetables, barbecued kalebone (their own wheat gluten protein), wonderful onion rings, a cabbage roll stuffed with rice and peas, a split pea soup so creamy you'd swear it was full of forbidden dairy products. Dinner and lunch Tues-Sun. (Soul Veg Two opened in the Virginia Highlands - 652 N Highland Ave NE, 404-875-4641)

*** South City Kitchen – 1144 Crescent Ave. (MT) 404-873-7358 www.southcitykitchen.com KKKKK \$\$\$** – Sensational New Southern cuisine (done just about perfectly) in a renovated Old Southern townhouse. Draws a cool local clientele for both lunch and dinner, with an active (and attractive!) bar scene. The menu is also pretty tantalizing... start with fanciful Gulf Shrimp "Corn Dogs" with chipotle ketchup, horseradish mustard and crispy tater tots and then move on to the Crab Hash of jumbo lump crab, poached eggs, Idaho potatoes, crushed tomatoes, and chive hollandaise. We loved the Chocolate Caramel Sticky Buns (with cinnamon ice cream and root beer syrup) for dessert. Dinner and lunch 7 days. (And now there's South City Kitchen Vinings - 1675 Cumberland Pkwy, 770.435-0700.)

Spoon – 768 Marietta St. (WE) 404-522-5655 www.spoonatlanta.com KKK \$\$\$ – It just opened in November 2005, but it's already a hit with those in the know. Spoon serves really affordable, really good Thai in a modern, casual setting. The concise menu includes traditional dishes like Pad Thai, Massamun Curry, and Chicken Penang, as well as their terrific seafood specials like gingery Golden Red Snapper. Dinner 7 days, Lunch Mon-Fri.

Table 1280 Restaurant and Tapas Lounge – Woodruff Arts Center, 1280 Peachtree Rd. (MT) 404-897-1280 www.table1280.com KKKK \$\$\$ – Patrons of the (culinary) arts applaud Table 1280 at the Woodruff Arts Center, whether they've just been to the symphony, High Museum, Alliance Theater, or 14th Street Playhouse. The restaurant's American brasserie menu and the lounge's tapas menu cover all bases and both dining rooms enjoy a view of the Center's main piazza and 1280's open kitchen. Dinner Tues-Sun; Lunch Tues-Sat, Sunday Brunch.

Tamarind Thai Restaurant – 80 14th St. NW (MT) 404-873-4888 www.nanfinedining.com KKK \$\$\$ – Until Nan came on the scene (Tamarind's new sister,) this was the best Thai in town. And it's still pretty damn good, but we can't guarantee that the service will be all that. We loved the Tamarind Yum Ped Yang salad (roasted boneless duck with chili peppers, onions, cashews, lemon juice, pineapple chunks, and sliced apples), Tom Yum Kung (shrimp soup), and Gang Khew Whan (chicken,



beef, or pork green curry), but the menu is long, so there's still tons to try. Reservations Recommended. Dinner 7 days, Lunch Mon-Fri.

Taurus – 1745 Peachtree Rd. (MT) 404-214-0641 www.taurusrestaurant.com KKKK \$\$\$
– Where's there's bull, there's beef. Chef/owner Gary Mennie earned his stripes at Canoe, which is one of our favorites, so it didn't surprise us that he got it right when he opened his well-priced "American chophouse." Sink into a swanky red booth and kick the week off with Monday's special Salt Crusted Prime Rib. Tuesday's Slow Roasted Pork ain't bad, and then Wednesday's Oak Roasted Veal Rack keeps things going strong. You get the idea. And for a welcome, value-oriented break with steakhouse tradition, the big meats come with sides. Reservations recommended. Dinner 7 days, Lunch Mon-Fri, Sunday Brunch.

TWO.urban licks – 820 Ralph McGill Blvd. (Poncey Highland) 404-522-4622 www.twourbanlicks.com KKK \$\$\$ – The 14-foot flaming rotisserie at the center of the striking, industrial room sets the scene for Chef Scott Serpas' "fiery American" cooking. The open kitchen turns out huge portions of smoky brisket, New Orleans-Style BBQ Shrimp, and delish Bronzed Scallops. It can get a little loud Wed-Sat when they host a live blues band, but, hey, you didn't come here for the conversation. Dinner 7 days.

Veni Vidi Vici – 41 14th St. (MT) 404-875-8424 KKK \$\$\$ – This big (5000 sq. foot) and beautiful downtown space welcomes you for some of the best Northern Italian food in Atlanta. The handmade pastas are terrific, and you won't go wrong with anything from the rotisserie, especially the herb-marinated Half Maple Leaf Farms Duck and the house special Suckling Pig.. Dinner 7 days, Lunch Mon-Fri.

Wisteria – 471 N. Highland Ave. (IP) 404-525-3363 www.wisteria-atlanta.com KKKK \$\$\$ – The rustic Contemporary American theme carries through the hearty menu and the brick-walled, exposed-beam room. Service is savvy and friendly and they know their extensive and reasonable wine list. We like the Caramelized Onion Tart with melted Asiago cheese and mixed greens tossed with horseradish vinaigrette and the Molasses-Rubbed Pork Tenderloin over sweet potato soufflé topped with Vidalia onion, apple, walnut relish. Dinner 7 days.

*** Represents a CKP Top Ten Pick**