

The Restaurant Issue

FOOD & WINE

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Fall Dining
Out Guide

MEET AMERICA'S

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(LEFT) AND ZUBAIR
MOHAJIR AT
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OBSESSIONS

RESTAURANT of the YEAR

Photography by Alex Lau

John's Food & Wine

Friends gather inside the cozy, welcoming dining room at John's Food & Wine in Chicago.

A BETTER BUSINESS MODEL

Behind the packed dining room and unforgettable dishes at John's Food & Wine in Chicago is an ambitious experiment: a restaurant built to reward workers as much as diners.

BY KAREN SHIMIZU



A MEAL AT JOHN'S FOOD & WINE, a warmly lit restaurant in Chicago's Lincoln Park neighborhood, is one hell of a good time. The cocktails are crisp and ice-cold; the wines are poured often and generously. Each dish hits the table just seconds after leaving the kitchen: Chunks of chilled lobster salad glisten with a chile-fish sauce vinaigrette and melted leek aioli from beneath a heap of fresh herbs; tiny pillows of housemade lamb agnolotti wink from behind a veil of pecorino-infused broth; a Japanese sweet potato, baked in an espresso aioli, brûléed, and framed by a sumac-dusted haystack of thinly shaved cheddar, issues steam from its creamy, chestnutty flesh.

But ask chef-owners Tom Rogers and Adam McFarland what they're most proud of, and it's not their rollicking wine list, creative cocktails, or even their precisely executed, market-driven menu. It's their business model. Years in the making, it prioritizes paying every staff member a

competitive wage and incentivizing them to stay and grow their career at the restaurant for the long haul.

That might not sound radical, but many restaurant business models rely on paying staff minimum—or subminimum—wage, or as close to it as possible. In their nearly 20 years of working in hospitality, McFarland and Rogers had seen enough burnout, turnover, and staff barely scraping by in expensive cities to know they wanted John's to be different. At their restaurant, the majority of the money spent by guests goes into workers' pockets.

"We want to make sure people are making money," says Rogers. "Adam and I, coming from blue-collar families, understand how important that is and how much that pushes these families."

In order to achieve that goal, the duo had to rethink every inch of the way an ambitious, upscale restaurant is run. The difference is evident from the moment you walk into the space. Customers place orders at the host stand before being seated, and the person bringing your dish or drink to your table might be the chef who made it, a sommelier, or the owners themselves. There is no tipping; instead, a 20% hospitality charge added to every check is divided among every nonmanagement employee who worked that day.

Employees can earn a greater share of the hospitality charge through a points system that rewards seniority and flexibility. Any staffer can earn more if they pick up additional tasks, like cooking family meal, placing product orders, or arranging flowers. In addition to

CHEF'S POUR \$25/GL

PODERI COLLA — NEBBIOLO D'ALBA, IT

PLEASE ASK FOR FULL WINE LISTS★



Tom Rogers (LEFT) and Adam McFarland, the two executive chefs and co-owners of John's Food & Wine. OPPOSITE: Pan-roasted halibut with sugar snap peas, golden beets, and a green garlic beurre blanc, finished with lemon oil and chive blossoms

the hospitality charge, all staff receive at least \$25 an hour (significantly more than Chicago's minimum wage of \$17.05 per hour for nontipped workers and \$12.96 per hour for tipped workers).

It's a system that encourages staff to stay on long term and fosters a sense of ownership and community. "It really feels as though we are all a true team working together to achieve the same goal," says Nik Jones, a line cook at John's Food & Wine. "It's a very supportive group of people we've gotten together."

The chefs first met at Le Lan, a French Vietnamese fusion restaurant in Chicago, in 2008. They became friends and later worked together again in New York City at Gramercy Tavern under 2002 F&W Best New Chef Michael Anthony. Over the next decade, they talked about the restaurant they dreamed of opening together.

In 2022, both chefs moved back to the Windy City. They spent a year trying and failing to secure a space and struggling to get a pop-up, Better Boy (named after a tomato variety), off the ground. One day, on a walk around his neighborhood, McFarland saw that his family's favorite diner—Nookies Too, where his son, Leo, had had his first restaurant meal—had closed. He got in touch with the owner, who leased McFarland and Rogers the space.

After that, things quickly fell into place. The pair named the restaurant after their dads—both coincidentally named John. The menu, rooted in 20 years of working in the best restaurants in the country, came easily: Sugar toads, tiny Chesapeake Bay puffer fish that McFarland loved from his time in D.C., are butterflied, breaded in cheesy panko, and fried, then piled high with shaved Parmesan and served over a pool of horseradish soubise. Roasted cauliflower is draped in brown butter sabayon, accented with black-garlic fudge, and goosed with bright, sweet pickled raisins. Timing is everything—the dishes frequently change depending on what's in season.

By all measures, their experiment in restaurant reform is succeeding. John's is turning an 18% profit, cooking some of the most exciting food in Chicago—and meeting the goals McFarland and Rogers set. After filing W-2s for 2025, the duo told me that they're proud to employ, in their estimation, the highest-paid dishwasher (who earned \$70K) and line cook (\$90K) in Chicago.

"We all want to be able to go home after a day's work, feel good about what we did, and be compensated for it," McFarland says. "These are the principles behind how we do things."

"We all want to be able to go home after a day's work, feel good about what we did, and be compensated for it."



OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: A caviar spread; the house martini; beef fat fries; bucatini with ragù bianco; roasted oysters with 'nduja butter; chicken with broken rice, pickled ramps, and preserved lemon jus; asparagus with vin jaune sabayon; and roasted halibut. THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: The dining room at John's Food & Wine; Rogers, McFarland, and their team; a salad with baby red romaine lettuce, ramps, ricotta salata, and hazelnuts.



BEST BITES OF 2026 (SO FAR)

Our editors eat some of the best food the United States has to offer, whether traveling across state lines to search for the country's Best New Chefs and Restaurant of the Year or seeking out new restaurants for weeknight dinners. Here are nine of the most exciting, innovative, and, most importantly, delicious bites we had along the way.



GATOR CLAW Lagniappe Bakehouse, New Orleans

Kaitlin Guerin's savory, bayou-ified take on a bear claw pastry has locals queued in front of Lagniappe Bakehouse before 8 a.m. The laminated pockets of pickled cabbage, smoked turkey, and Comté cheese are seasoned with poppy and benne seeds and a pungent alligator pepper. —KAT KINSMAN, EXECUTIVE FEATURES EDITOR



TRỨNG VÀ TRỨNG Sắp Sầu, Denver
One of the most thrilling dishes I had this year was eggs and rice—steamed white rice topped with soft scrambled eggs cooked in brown butter, fish sauce, and trout roe. Created by Sắp Sầu sous chef Ben Carolan, this Vietnamese-inspired dish reinvents the simple comfort meal with equal parts respect and finesse.

—AMELIA SCHWARTZ, EDITOR



GUACA-MOL *Popoca, Oakland, California*
Most changes to guacamole just mess it up, but Popoca's version, full of fresh herbs and shaved smoked egg yolk, is the best I've had in years. It's served with a thick house-made tortilla smeared with beef asiento (delectable crispy beef bits in hot oil). The spelling is chef-owner Anthony Salguero's nod to the Nawat-language origins of the name. —RAY ISLE, EXECUTIVE WINE EDITOR



CHILLED TAMARIND POD
Kabawa, New York City

On the Caribbean-inspired tasting menu at Kabawa, executive chef and partner Paul Carmichael serves an unadorned tamarind pod over ice. He encourages diners to crack open the brittle pod; chew on the sweet, puckery fruit; and discard the seeds to experience the foundational Caribbean ingredient on its own terms. —H.L.



GLUTEN-FREE FRIED CHICKEN
Charlie's, St. Helena, California

Chef Elliot Bell uses Cup4Cup flour (a blend of cornstarch, white rice flour, brown rice flour, tapioca flour, and potato starch), a Southern-inspired fried chicken seasoning blend, and a Korean-style double-fry cooking method—all of which add up to a sensationally crackly crust.

—R.I.



PITHIVIERS TERRE & MER *Le Chêne, New York City*
Alexia Duchêne, one of New York City's most dynamic young chefs, showcases her deft touch with Le Chêne's wine-friendly signature dish, an elegant, flaky pastry stuffed to the gills with smoked eel, pork farce, and potato gratin. The enthusiasm for it is contagious: Once diners see one Pithiviers come out of the kitchen, they can't help but order one for their table, too.

—HUNTER LEWIS, EDITOR IN CHIEF



KOTTEH TABRIZI *Azizam, Los Angeles*

Azizam's hefty braised beef-and-rice meatball is stuffed with stone fruits and walnuts and served in a broth laden with warming spices. The Persian dish from chef-owners Cody Ma and Misha Sesar feels familiar and homey, even if it's the first time you've ever had it. —*SAM GUTIERREZ-CURRAN, SOCIAL MEDIA DIRECTOR*



BEEF TARTARE *Wildweed, Cincinnati*
It's not often that I'm impressed by a tartare, but chef David Jackman's was an exception. Somehow, the combination of raw beef, caramelized yogurt, pickled alliums, root vegetable chips, and buttery Alpine-style Tomme d'Evanston cheese reminded me of the nostalgic, fatty flavor of Cheez Whiz in the best possible way. —A.S.

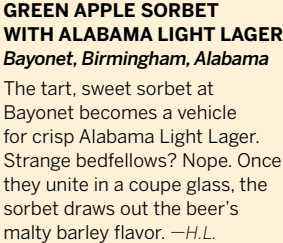


WAGYU BEEF SKEWER
Monteverde, Chicago

Executive chef Bailey Sullivan's menu at Italian restaurant Monteverde has a section for *stuzzis* ("snacks"), and this beef skewer is a must-try. The long, thin ribbon of Wagyu is threaded onto a skewer and charred. It's juicy on the inside and crispy on the outside, topped with crushed coriander seeds, and paired with a bright, lightly spicy sauce of pickled cherry pepper and toasted cumin. Perfection on a stick! —KAREN SHIMIZU, EXECUTIVE EDITOR



DURIAN MOUSSE
Moon Rabbit, Washington, D.C.
Durian fruit (sầu riêng) can require a deft hand to balance its pronounced funk. But this mousse, with passion fruit granita, white chocolate streusel, microdill, and dill oil, could win over any durian skeptic. —K.K.



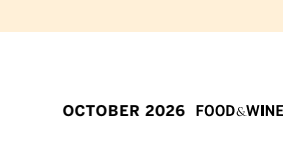
**STRAWBERRY SHERBET
& STRAWBERRY
MERINGUE CAKE**
Creepies, Chicago

Served with a buttermilk crème anglaise and strawberry coulis, this pink frozen cake gave me a *Ratatouille*-style flashback to the strawberry shortcake ice cream bars of yore. —A.S.



BASQUE CHEESECAKE
Zurito, Boston

This cheesecake slice comes out of the kitchen warm and jiggly, oozing with rich cheese and just a hint of sweetness. It's the closest in Boston that I've come to La Viña in San Sebastián, Spain, and it was worth the wait. —*ERIKA ADAMS, RESTAURANT EDITOR*



Dish of the Year

The rules of the iconic Caesar are being rewritten at these five restaurants.

BY ERIKA ADAMS

CASTELFRANCO SALAD

Hellbender, New York City

In the Ridgewood neighborhood of Queens in New York City, chef Yara Herrera of Hellbender pays homage to the Caesar's Mexican origin. "When we decided to expand the menu, it was the first salad we thought about," she says. Her version has Castelfranco (a bitter, purple-flecked chicory), Cotija cheese, and, instead of black pepper in the dressing, earthy cascabel chile powder.

CELERY SALAD

Babbo, New York City

Inspired by Campo de' Fiori, the historic Roman square, executive chef Mark Ladner's Caesar riff includes thin strips of pink celery—just as it's cut in a Roman puntarelle salad—and a punchy dressing featuring elephant garlic and Sicilian brown anchovies. It's finished off with a handful of crunchy, 4-inch-long breadsticks made from baguette crusts.

GREEN PAPAYA SALAD

Recoveco, Miami

The Thai-inspired Caesar at Recoveco was primarily put on the menu to make use of heaps of local green papayas. Chefs Maria Teresa Gallina and Nicolas Martinez combine candied, nixtamalized, semiripe papaya with fresh green papaya and anchovies. It's topped with shaved Parmesan, sourdough croutons, and an extra-hot datil pepper salt.

WOOD FIRE CAESAR

Amá, Philadelphia

At modern Mexican restaurant Amá, chef Frankie Ramirez chars Little Gem lettuce over a wood-burning fire. It's showered with Parmesan, pipicha (a Mexican herb), and a masa crunch made from nixtamalized corn that takes the place of croutons. "This salad was never about reinventing the Caesar," says Ramirez. "It was about making one that felt true to the way we cook."

CHICKPEA SALAD

Cafe Olli, Portland, Oregon

Cafe Olli's chef and co-owner Taylor Manning pulls out all the stops with this vegan Caesar. He tosses a base of charred kalettes—a kale and brussels sprouts hybrid—with a tahini-based dressing, chickpeas, pickled red onions, fried shallots, puffed rice, parsley sprigs, fistfuls of sesame, and nutritional yeast in place of Parmesan.



Make these brown butter-miso brûléed sweet potatoes with maple syrup or Torani brown sugar-cinnamon syrup. Scan the QR code for the recipe.



Ingredient of the Year

Chefs are transforming the humble sweet potato into iconic mains.

BY AMELIA SCHWARTZ

WE ARE EXPERIENCING PEAK sweet potato. In our home kitchens, we're stuffing them with cheese, and creators are going viral for dunking them in ice baths to make them soft and custardy. And at restaurants, chefs are giving them the main-character treatment, sourcing the best-quality potatoes, roasting them to perfection, and topping them with creative, unexpected ingredients.

At our 2026 F&W Restaurant of the Year, John's Food & Wine (p. 19), chef-owners Adam McFarland and Tom Rogers baste Japanese sweet potatoes with espresso-spiked "red-eye aioli," then broil them until the top is crispy and brûléed. 2026 F&W Best New Chefs Omar Tate and Cybille St. Aude-Tate of Honeysuckle in Philadelphia (p. 94) barbecue their sweet potatoes and serve them with a pile of sorghum, cashews, dates, and caraway. And at Rory's Place in Ojai, California, Meave McAuliffe tops her roasted sweet potatoes with miso butter, bonito flakes, finger lime, and scallions. She says, "If you want to get more decadent, then add a generous dollop of yogurt and a sprinkle of Maldon salt, too."



At Cafe Olli in Portland, Oregon, the chickpea salad is a vegan re-creation of the beloved Caesar, complete with nutritional yeast and a tahini-based dressing.

(SALAD): COURTESY OF CAFE OLLI. (SWEET POTATO) PHOTOGRAPHY: GREG DUPREE; FOOD STYLING: MARGARET MONROE DICKEY; PROP STYLING: JOSH HOGGLE

Restaurant Trend of the Year

Inside the rise of hi-fi eateries

BY PAOLO BICCHIERI

IN A TIME OF AI-GENERATED PLAYLISTS, many restaurateurs are opting for something a little bit more offline: vinyl. Across the country, new matcha shops, moody wine bars, and cool-kid restaurants are investing in high-fidelity listening experiences.

The trend can be traced back to Japan in the late 1800s, with the opening of the first *kissatens*—Japanese-style cafés or tea rooms. After World War II, some kissatens showcased Western jazz and classical music while still serving a café menu in a space where listening to records was more important than talking. Eventually, the concept evolved, becoming well-designed spaces for post-work whiskeys—the precursors to today’s hi-fi bars.

When chef Sean Brock traveled to Tokyo, he was particularly inspired by Bar Martha, with its cocktails, no-photo policy, strict noise constraints, and a dance floor for enjoying the rotating jazz and soul DJs. He was so transformed by that experience that he bought the same vintage McIntosh amplifier and Tannoy loudspeakers for his office.

Brock has since opened three listening bars of his own. The first, Bar Continental at Nashville’s Grand Hyatt, opened in 2023 with a library of more than 5,000 vinyl records—the majority of which came from his own collection. He closed the concept within a year, for which he faults not having a more robust dinner menu. According to Brock, Americans aren’t as interested in soaking up the music without any food. “That’s just the way [Americans] operate,” he says.

Lesson learned: At Darling, his new restaurant in Los Angeles, the Southern-inspired menu plays just as big of a role as the vinyl. Brock designed the dishes to be unstuffy, approachable, and largely hand-held, so they play well with the requisite

PHOTOGRAPHY: STEPHEN DEVRIES



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: DJ Suaze spins vinyl at High Dive HiFi Lounge in Birmingham, Alabama; Niman Ranch Ibérico Pork Katsu Sandwich at High Dive; High Dive’s dining room.

lounging and vibing. There’s mixed nuts spiced with Japanese curry, deviled eggs with bluefin tuna, a dry-aged steak burger, and french fries.

Beyond the food program, a good listening bar requires investment. “Anyone can play music,” says Brock. “It’s more than that. It’s the intention of a space where people can enjoy music to its full possibilities. Every seat in the house has to have unbelievable sound, where they can hear and feel the different musicians and artists. That’s harder to achieve than most people think.”

Brock thinks that the best listening bars should be designed like a recording studio. For instance, the floors at High Dive, a hi-fi lounge in Birmingham, Alabama, that Brock consulted on, are cork—one of the best materials for absorbing sound. Plus, the walls are acoustically paneled, and there’s no refrigeration hum—all the compressors are on the outside of the building.

According to Brock, our nervous systems are able to register these microadjustments. “When you feel the music go through your body, you have this almost psychedelic experience,” he says. “Sound is precious. Distractions are the enemy.”

Elon Admony, a restaurateur, DJ, and producer, sought out a similar vibe at Moondog HiFi in the East Williamsburg neighborhood of Brooklyn. To wit, he intentionally found a space without a lot of foot traffic, off the beaten path. The warm, plant-accented bar is equipped with Fyne Audio Vintage Classic XII speakers and an Ex Machina sound system. His sister, chef Einat Admony of Balaboosta, provides the food—small dishes like burekas, cheese plates, and chips and salsa.

Elon Admony is convinced this trend in the United States reflects an aging millennial crowd that is tired of raving and going to shows. “They still want discovery, community, and a transcendent music experience, but maybe with better sound, better drinks, and without having to take out a small loan to see a show through Ticketmaster,” he says. Bay Area mainstays Bar Shiru and Phonobar and Chicago’s Dorian’s Through the Record Shop were ahead of that curve.

A few years back, when Admony asked one of his audio installation pals to scope out Moondog HiFi, the friend told him he was getting similar requests all over the country, from hotels in Atlanta to bars in Michigan. “He said that this is just a trend. That I shouldn’t do it,” Admony says. “But that isn’t where I’m coming from [with Moondog]. I’m building something curated for the community.”



Classiest Cutlery

Sabre Paris’ Bistrot flatware is adding a colorful, retro flair to dining rooms.

—NICK DESIMONE

Picture your favorite restaurant. Now, what do the forks look like? If they’re hard to visualize, then they’re probably plain metal forks. But when it comes to curating a dining room, small details like flatware can make a major impact.

“Like everything at a café, the cutlery is part of the storytelling,” says Nicole Bassis, chef-owner of Cafe Mutsi in Andes, New York. Bassis, like many other restaurateurs, chose the Bistrot collection, a retro, vintage-inspired cutlery line from Sabre Paris. “We strive to offer a fine-dining level of care in a more casual, welcoming setting, and the cutlery helps communicate that right away.”

In 2025 alone, Sabre produced more than 3 million pieces, and the brand projects 30% growth in 2026. Sabre currently supplies Bistrot cutlery to about 300 restaurants worldwide, but it has an even larger following among home cooks. The collection is sold online and at major retailers, including West Elm, Williams Sonoma, and Pottery Barn.

“I think Sabre has quietly bridged the gap between everyday simplicity and genuine elevation,” says Neilly Robinson, managing director of New Jersey-based Good Trouble Hospitality. She sources Bistrot flatware for the group’s Italian restaurant, Judy & Harry’s, in Asbury Park, New Jersey.

“In an industry that can lean toward the disposable,” Bassis says, “choosing something timeless and thoughtfully crafted feels meaningful.” (\$75 for a four-piece set, us.sabre-paris.com)

CUTLERY PHOTOGRAPHY: GREG DUPREE; PROP STYLING: JOSH HOGGLE

SANDRA HANSON



ERNESTO CUANETL



JUSTIN BARTGES



"Every day and every guest is different, and there's something incredibly rewarding about being able to read the room, solve problems in real time, and make people feel genuinely welcome."

—JUSTIN BARTGES

VICTOR VASQUEZ



"My favorite moment on the job is when my regulars walk in with their smiley faces and say, 'Hi, Jo!' They are so happy to see me, and I immediately feel happy to see them, too. They're just like my friends."

—JOSEPHINE TIN

JOSEPHINE TIN



MARTIN HERNANDEZ



2026 HOSPITALITY HEROES

We reached out to hundreds of restaurant professionals to find the most outstanding workers in the industry. From the host stand to the prep station, these six individuals embody the spirit of hospitality. They create unique guest experiences, make their restaurants more efficient, and spread joy every step of the way.

BY AMELIA SCHWARTZ

JUSTIN BARTGES

EVENT COORDINATOR AND LEAD SERVER
Musafer Houston

At Musafer Houston, a Michelin-starred Indian restaurant, Bartges has committed himself not only to learning the cuisine and dining customs but also to sharing that knowledge with his team. "Justin has a special ability to personalize the guest experience through cultural awareness," says Khadijah Khalil, Musafer's assistant general manager. When he noticed two guests wearing hijabs on the first night of Ramadan, he brought them dates to break their fast—a thoughtful gesture that made them feel valued.

ERNESTO CUANETL

FOOD RUNNER
Shuka and Shukette, New York City

"Since joining us in 2019, Ernesto has been an anchor of our floor operation," says Shuka and Shukette chef and partner Ayesha Nurdjaja. Cuanetl has an encyclopedic knowledge of the menu and acts as the final checkpoint before dishes are brought to tables. When the restaurants pivoted to take-out during the pandemic, he oversaw packaging and quality control. He trains new front-of-house staff in both restaurants. "The profound care he invests in his duties drastically elevates the efficiency of both dining rooms," says Nurdjaja.

SANDRA HANSON

HOST
Brigtsen's, New Orleans

Sandra Hanson has worked at Brigtsen's, an iconic New Orleans restaurant, since day one—more than 40 years ago. As the host, Hanson oversees the fully analog system. She takes reservations over the phone and in person, then writes them down by hand. "In her storied career, Sandra has exemplified warm hospitality and made every guest feel special," says 1988 F&W Best New Chef Frank Brigtsen, the restaurant's cofounder. "Although she is our most senior staff member, she is still the youngest at heart."

VICTOR VASQUEZ

PREP COOK
Mr. Tuna, Portland, Maine

"In an industry that often celebrates what's seen, Victor represents the excellence behind what's felt," says 2025 F&W Best New Chef Jordan Rubin, co-owner of Mr. Tuna. Vasquez is the first to arrive each morning, to cook more than 40 quarts of rice and slice fruits and vegetables with exactitude. "He is constantly refining technique—rethinking knife skills, improving efficiency, and elevating standards for the kitchen," Rubin says. Vasquez is also well connected in the Portland restaurant community, acting as Mr. Tuna's "unofficial talent scout," according to Rubin.

JOSEPHINE TIN

BARTENDER
Harborview Restaurant & Lounge, Charleston

"Jo is the bartender at Harborview, but she also tends to all the tables, has a steel-trap memory, and makes you feel like a regular from the first visit," says Executive Features Editor Kat Kinsman, who visited the inn's rooftop bar during the F&W Classic in Charleston. Femi Oyediran and Miles White, co-owners of Tutti Pizza and Graft Wine Shop & Wine Bar, called Tin one of the best hospitality professionals in Charleston. They are among the restaurant's devoted local clientele, largely because of Tin.

MARTIN HERNANDEZ

DISHWASHER
Uchi, Austin

While Hernandez doesn't often interact with guests, for the 17 years he's worked at Uchi's flagship location, he has always kept the restaurant in pristine condition. "Martin keeps our compost bins sparkling, coordinates with managers about deep cleans, understands what products we need, and lets us know if we are overordering something," says 2005 F&W Best New Chef Tyson Cole. "We've used 'What would Martin do?' as a mantra. He never cuts corners, he stays until the job is done, and he shows care through his actions every single day."

The Most Memorable Hospitality

Five thoughtful touches that made our dining experiences unforgettable

THE DESSERT CARD

Azizam, Los Angeles

As a counter-service restaurant, Azizam has devised a clever way for guests to finish their meal with dessert without having to go back in line: a dessert card. Raise it once you're ready to switch into sweet mode, and the kitchen will fire your order. —SAM GUTIERREZ-CURRAN, SOCIAL MEDIA DIRECTOR

GREEN TEA SOUVENIR

Mori Nozomi, Los Angeles

As if 25 courses weren't enough, chef Nozomi Mori also sends guests home with a packet of hōjicha tea imported from Japan. The personalized, handwritten note on the packaging, complete with brewing instructions, makes the gesture feel all the more special. —S.G.

POLAROID KEEPSAKE

Kiln, San Francisco

At Kiln, every guest can get a Polaroid photo taken of them. They'll get the photo back at the end of the meal, fully developed and customized with their name and the date. It's a charming way to ensure that the meal will be remembered for years to come. —AMELIA SCHWARTZ, EDITOR

WINE EDUCATION

Sunn's, New York City

After you dine at Sunn's, you receive a thank-you email the next morning. It details the wines you drank—many of which you can purchase online from Sunn's wine partner, Parcelle, with a code for \$15 off. —MELANIE HANSCHKE, EDITORIAL DIRECTOR, SPECIAL PROJECTS

RESTAURANT BOOMERANG

Corima, New York City

The parting gift at Corima is a vial of the restaurant's café de olla syrup, plus a card filled with dining recommendations and a map to Corima's sibling spot, Bar Chucho. Take the syrup to the nearby bar, and they will mix up a nightcap for you. —ERIKA ADAMS, RESTAURANT EDITOR