



TO LIVE & DINE IN
boston

AT AN EXPLOSIVE CULINARY TIME FULL OF INSPIRED OPENINGS, THE EMBRACING OF WORLD FLAVORS, NODS TO OUR HERITAGE AND TRENDS PUSHED TO THE LIMIT, HERE ARE THOSE THAT STAND OUT RIGHT NOW.

By Alexandra Hall

UNI PHOTO BY ANDREA MERRILL

1. Seasoned sashimi at Kamakura 2. Shared plates at Shore Leave 3. Jonah Crab Cocktail at Alcove 4. Inside scene at Uni. Opposite page: Shima Aji at Uni



10 MOST EXCITING
 new restaurants

1. KAMAKURA

THE BUZZ Chef-owner Youji Iwakura has pulled out all of the stops in this three-level emporium—a temple to intricate, artful Japanese creations.

THE DRINK Order up one of the Koshu wines—a rare variety from Japan’s Yamanashi region.

MENU HIGHLIGHT Hamachi pastrami with fig tempura at dinner; at lunch, the Maine littleneck clam aka dashi miso shiru.

WHY WE LOVE IT Eating bigeye tuna from Boston, Ora King salmon from New Zealand, lubina from Spain and hobo from Japan all in one meal reminds us that Boston is, in fact, an international city.

CHEF’S SPECIALTY The Cha Kaiseki dinner, a modern spin on the age-old Japanese tradition, which spotlights sustainability, delicate dishes and clean flavors. 150 State St., 617.377.4588, kamakuraboston.com

2. SHORE LEAVE

THE BUZZ Putting the fancy in fancy-free—with killer food and more Tiki chic than you can shake a mini umbrella at.

THE DRINK The house concoction, aptly named The Shore Leave Cocktail: white rum, Jamaican rum, passionfruit, lime, aromatic bitters, molasses and a dram of Madeira. Whew.

MENU HIGHLIGHT Pork belly bao laced with pineapple hoisin, and full of fire (jalapeno) and crunch (cucumber).

WHY WE LOVE IT Boston needed a spot that took its food and drink seriously, but not its atmosphere.

CHEF’S SPECIALTY If you’ve got a small group (or are just unreasonably hungry), go all in for the Rohan duck pancakes, complete with baos, house sauces and myriad delish accoutrements. 11 William E. Mullins Way, 617.530.1775, shoreleaveboston.com

3. ALCOVE

THE BUZZ Finally, a heavy hitter with top-notch food and a gorgeous view of the Zakim Bridge, all in the shadow of TD Garden.

THE DRINK Hard-to-find vintages like the Wieninger Wein Gemischter Satz “Rosengartl Nussberg” from Vienna.

MENU HIGHLIGHT The whole-roasted branzino, wrapped in speck and flanked by asparagus and fava beans, is a marvel of flavors and textures—crispy, tender, sweet and salty in one bite.

WHY WE LOVE IT Owner Tom Schlesinger-Guidelli has helped create gems in the treasure trove that is Boston’s restaurant scene. Now, he rightfully has one of his very own.

CHEF’S SPECIALTY The charred avocado arrives stuffed with a velvety harissa aioli, reined in by the bitterness of delicate red-veined sorrel. 50 Lovejoy Wharf, 617.248.0050, alcoveboston.com

4. UNI

THE BUZZ It’s been seven years since executive chef Tony Messina joined up with Ken Oringer in the quest to create a new dimension of global sushi artistry, and he’s by no means resting on his laurels. Case in point: The James Beard Foundation just crowned him best chef in the Northeast.

MENU HIGHLIGHT The stinging nettle cacio pepe dumpling with peas, ricotta and fermented black bean.

THE DRINK For Messina’s sushi menu, the sake list is right where you want to be.

WHY WE LOVE IT It’s a complete delight for any Bostonian to witness the evolution of what Oringer started decades ago with Clio. He replaced that icon with Uni in this same space.

CHEF’S SPECIALTY Order the omakase, sit up straight in your chair and get ready for anything. The Eliot Hotel, 370A Commonwealth Ave., 617.536.7200, uni-boston.com



5. Pollo al mattone at Fox & The Knife 6. Tasty plates at Tallula 7. Miso Chilean sea bass at Ruka.



8. Chickadee spread
9. Prosciutto-wrapped swordfish at The Oyster Club
10. Island Creek Oysters at Trillium Brewing Company.

5 FOX & THE KNIFE

THE BUZZ An alum of *Oleana* and Myers + Chang, of *Top Chef* and a James Beard Award recipient for best chef: Northeast, Karen Akunowicz is now in her element at her own midsize enoteca. **THE DRINK** The vino list is structured to honor women winemakers, so expect a few long-overdue curveballs. **MENU HIGHLIGHT** Pasta's the magic word here. Sweet and briny dishes like zafferano spaghetti con vongole with saffron and fennel will show you why. **WHY WE LOVE IT** How refreshing to see a woman chef who's as outspoken and fearless in public as she is in her cooking. **CHEF'S SPECIALTY** Don't bypass dishes like the campanelle al pesto di pistacchio with feta and mint. 28 W. Broadway, 617.766.8630, foxandtheknife.com

6. TALLULA

THE BUZZ Understated elegance, where everything feels personal and just right—all from a chef husband and beverage guru wife who named the place after their baby daughter. **THE DRINK** Danielle Ayer has put her vino expertise to good use in the varied list. And just to be extra-nice, she offers a house Champagne by the glass. **MENU HIGHLIGHT** Veal agnolotti with roasted spinach, parsnips and Parmigiana-Reggiano. **WHY WE LOVE IT** Dishes that feel like they've been made (and served) by a gastronomically gifted friend win us over. **CHEF'S SPECIALTY** Impossible to tell. Conor Dennehy excels at going where the best available ingredients take him. 377 Walden St., Cambridge, 617.714.5584, talullacambridge.com

7. RUKA

THE BUZZ A palpable energy pervades in a worldly, cleverly decked-out outpost. **THE DRINK** The Inigo Montoya—bourbon infused with coffee, carrot, cinnamon and clove. **MENU HIGHLIGHT** Hamachi amarillo pairs spicy tuna and quinoa with grilled peppers and avocado, cukes and a cevichado sauce. **WHY WE LOVE IT** There's something fantastic about watching Bostonians lap up lusty food and let loose a little. **CHEF'S SPECIALTY** While envelope-pushing Peru-meets-Japan sushi may be the focus here, the servers will whisper to you that no dinner's complete without a bowl of dan dan noodles. 505 Washington St., 617.266.0102, rukarestobar.com

PHOTOS BY 5. BRIAN SAMUELS PHOTOGRAPHY 6. WAYNE EARL CINNOCK 7. DREW KATZ/REMI THORNTON

8. CHICKADEE

THE BUZZ Sumptuous comfort food meets seamless service in... The Innovation & Design Building? **THE DRINK** Owner and beverage director Ted Kilpatrick has curated a cocktail program with clean-flavored drinks like the gin- and grapefruit-based Tern Around. **MENU HIGHLIGHT** The harissa cavatelli with lamb merguez, chickpea, rapini and Parmigiano. **WHY WE LOVE IT** It's a rare combination of urbane, cossetting, sophisticated and unpretentious all rolled into one experience. **CHEF'S SPECIALTY** Owner-chef John daSilva and Kilpatrick met working at No. 9 Park, and the handmade pastas echo the greatness of their former home. 21 Dry Dock Ave., 617.531.5591, chickadeerestaurant.com

PHOTOS BY 8. KRISTEN TEIG 9. SASHA ISRAEL 10. GENE BUONACCORSI

9. THE OYSTER CLUB

THE BUZZ Decorated chef and seafood wizard Chris Parsons open his first fish resto in the space once belonging to legendary spots Biba, Via Matta and Doretta. **THE DRINK** Toast the icy sea-wrought delicacies with a glass of any of the house's chilly rosés. **MENU HIGHLIGHT** In lieu of the usual plat du jour, the lobster of the day rollout puts the spotlight on our regional treasure. **WHY WE LOVE IT** We feel like we're kicking back at a contemporary, cool yacht club. **CHEF'S SPECIALTY** Parsons has built much of his career wowing diners with exemplary takes on New England seafood classics, and here he's one-upping even himself. *The Heritage on the Garden*, 79 Park Plaza, theoysterclubboston.com

10. TRILLIUM BREWING COMPANY

THE BUZZ This is no mere beer hall; the sleek 18,000-square-foot, three-floor behemoth is an ode to spectacular craft beer and equally upscale, meticulously crafted dining. **THE DRINK** Craft beer, natch. **MENU HIGHLIGHT** The pastrami with a sunny egg is something we could eat for breakfast, lunch, dinner or even dessert. **WHY WE LOVE IT** It's taken Boston brewery dining to a new, civilized level. **CHEF'S SPECIALTY** Executive chef Michael Morway is the real deal when it comes to farmhouse-driven creations, and his dry-cured heritage ham and salamis (like fennel and wild boar with coriander and nutmeg) are proof. 50 Thomson Place, 857.449.0078, trilliumbrewing.com

Tag, you're it.

Who says top chefs are obsessed with only their own creations? Starting with seasoned kitchen wizard Michael Schlow (who brought us the erstwhile Radius and Via Matta, among others), we asked for a favorite dish currently being served by another chef, and repeated the process from there.



MICHAEL SCHLOW

"Bar Mezzana's salmon crudo with green chile salsa verde, by chef Colin Lynch. The salmon is pristine and expertly sliced, and the salsa verde is herbaceous, a little spicy and the perfect complement to the rich fish. The combination results in a dish that is exciting and refreshing. I order it every time I'm lucky enough eat there."



COLIN LYNCH, BAR MEZZANA

"At Chickadee, chef John daSilva makes a smoked sea trout dip with salt and vinegar rye chips, horseradish and dill. It's a dish I first had at Spoke when John was cheffing there. Calling it a dip does not do it justice. This is more like a beautifully composed first course, and it surprises you in a lot of ways. First, it's not a whipped paste. It's a few pieces of perfectly cooked smoked trout covered in a kind of sabayon with some paper-thin rye crisps to place the delicate pieces on." 360 Harrison Ave., 617.530.1770, barmezzana.com



JOHN DASILVA, CHICKADEE

"The omakase at Cafe Sushi is my go-to. Chef Seizi Imura there works hard at sourcing the best seafood and produce for his thoughtfully curated tasting menu. I'm a big fan of the classics such as the hiramasa crudo with aged balsamic, basil and grape tomato, or the seared saba with shuto, shoga, cilantro and lime. The best part of the omakase at Cafe Sushi are the creations that change with the seasons. Chef Seizi is at his best when he's tinkering in the lab, highlighting the unconventional and flexing his creative muscles." 21 Drydock Ave., 617.531.5591, chickadeerestaurant.com

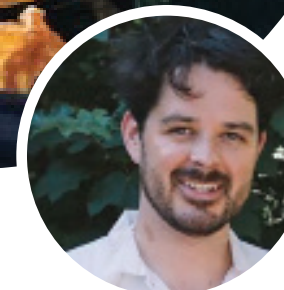
MICHAEL SCHLOW PHOTO COURTESY OF SCHLOW; COLIN LYNCH & CRUDO PHOTOS BY REAGAN BYRNE; JOHN DASILVA & SMOKED TROUT DIP PHOTOS COURTESY OF CHICKADEE



SEIZI IMURA & OMAKASE PHOTOS COURTESY OF CAFE SUSHI; ANDREW BRADY'S STEAK TARTARE PHOTOS COURTESY OF FIELD & VINE; CARRIOT SALAD PHOTO COURTESY OF CAFE DU PAYS

SEIZI IMURA, CAFE SUSHI

"Steak tartare from chef Andrew Brady at Field & Vine in Somerville. As I rarely eat raw fish outside of the restaurant, I am a huge fan of raw beef and I enjoy theirs. It is perfectly seasoned and the crunchy elements really make it sing. It's not trying too hard but is interesting and simply delicious." 1105 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, 617.492.0434, cafesushicambridge.com



DANIEL AMIGHI, CAFE DU PAYS

"Brian Gianpaolo's bagna cauda at Giulia. I love Frank's food, and this is one of my favorite things he makes—especially the seasonal vegetables in the dish." 233 Cardinal Medeiros Ave., Cambridge, 617.314.7297, cafedupays.com

ANDREW BRADY, FIELD AND VINE

"Cafe du Pays has a shredded carrot salad with smoked onion and currants from Daniel Amighi. It has great texture and loads of depth using only a few ingredients, which is something really hard to do." 9 Sanborn Court, Somerville, 617.718.2333, fieldandvinesomerville.com

4 SEAFOOD showstoppers



SEAFOOD TOWER AT BOSTON CHOPS Landmark towers often become legends for a reason, and this one's no exception. It's stacked to its multitiered top with sweet lobster, littleneck clams, briny local oysters, king crab legs, and lump crab meat. Then there are the kitchen's fixings: tuna sashimi, moules vinaigrette and assorted ceviches. It's then pushed still further into the stratosphere with the addition of golden osetra caviar—a shining star for an iconic creation. 1375 Washington St., 617.227.5011, bostonchops.com

THE HEMINGWAY AT SELECT OYSTER

Picture, if you will, a deluge of two dozen oysters, a dozen plump jumbo shrimp, daybook scallop ceviche, blue crab salad, Maine lobster, salmon crudo and yellowfin tartare. And then picture more because, yes, it keeps coming: avocado toasts. Spanish octopus. Sauteed clams. P.E.I. mussels. Blue prawns. The whole magnificent shebang feeds six to eight. So gather up some friends and order it all from the Back Bay restaurant's back open-air patio. 50 Gloucester St., 857.239.8064, selectboston.com



OMAKASE AT NO RELATION

Who needs a grand sushi palace when all of the wow factor you need comes in such a sleek, chic and discreet li'l package? No Relation is an enclave hidden inside Shore Leave—almost a sushi speakeasy, if you will—that sees chef Colin Lynch and his team doling out seriously impressive nigiri from waters both local and far-flung in his 90-minute presentation. 11 William E. Mullins Way, 617.530.1772, norelationboston.com



CRUDO TASTING AT BISTRO DU MIDI

Le Bernardin alum and partner-executive chef Robert Sisca's deft touch with seafood shines brightly in the magnum opus that is comprised of his crudos. Sisca plucks whatever's best and fresh primarily from local sources like Wulf's Fish and Rocky Neck Seafood, sometimes rotating in other gems like Santa Barbara uni or hiramasa (yellowtail kingfish). When local live scallops are available, he serves the sweet, fleshy delicacy simply—with olive oil, lemon and sea salt—to let the flavor truly shine. 272 Boylston St., 617.426.7878, bistrodumidi.com



4 DESSERT masterpieces

BAKED ALASKA AT YVONNE'S It takes a fearless hand to do justice to the baked Alaska. Pastry chef Liz O'Connell leans into the challenge, pairing chocolate cake with vanilla semifreddo, and brings in candy bar nougat, pistachios, chocolate almonds and salted caramel. Then she covers the whole thing with meringue and torches it to create an igloo that's delightfully delicious. 2 Winter Place, 617.267.0047, yvonesboston.com

DECONSTRUCTED CANNOLI AT NEBO Sisters Carla and Christine Pallotta may hail from the North End, but the chef-owners don't stand on ceremony when it comes to reinventing certain stalwarts. In their latest rendition of the cannoli, they flatten out the traditional shell, fill it with rich ricotta cream between each layer and shower everything with confectionary sugar. 520 Atlantic Ave., 617.723.6326, neboboston.com

BUTTERSCOTCH BREAD PUDDING AT EASTERN STANDARD Elevating a humble New England classic to heights like this is no easy task. You've got to nail the balance between the custardy base, the spongy cake and the candylike notes of the butterscotch, and make sure all of it has enough structure to stand up to the cold creaminess of a scoop of praline ice cream. 528 Commonwealth Ave., 617.532.9100, easternstandardboston.com

CHERRY BLOSSOM ENTREMET AT THE HARVEST Joshua Livsey, the 28-year-old sugar wunderkind and renowned cake whisperer, mixes cherry mousse with almond creme, milk chocolate hazelnut dacquoise crunch and bergamot preserves. Catch him in action on Food Network's *Best Bakers in America*. 44 Brattle St., Cambridge, 617.868.2255, harvestcambridge.com



Baked Alaska at Yvonne's



Dover sole a la meuniere with shrimp at Deuxave

3 OVER-THE-TOP dining experiences

TASTING MENU AT DEUXAVE

It kicks off with caviar, quickly moves into four ever-changing, seasonal courses punctuated by truffles and foie gras, swerves through a course of three sublime cheeses and winds down with mignardises and a meticulously composed dessert. And no, of course you don't have to order all of the above luxury add-ons (including wine pairings), but we bet you'll regret it if you don't. 371 Commonwealth Ave., 617.517.5915, deuxave.com

OMAKASE AT O-YA

Even with so many admirable and ambitious sushi dens popping up all over the city, O-Ya's omakase still makes the heart pound with anticipation as each new, personalized course in its luxury-laden parade arrives. Maybe it's a well-known foie gras nigiri one minute; maybe it's wagyu with white truffle the next. Either way, this is one deliciously over-the-top experience that arguably has no top. 9 East St., S. Boston, 617.654.9900, o-ya.restaurant.com

AMARO TASTING TOUR AT BENEDETTO

Head bartender Charles Coykendall has been quietly amassing a collection of amari from villages all over Italy since Benedetto opened in 2016. Reserve a tasting, and Coykendall will pour and talk you through five of his latest acquisitions, paired with small bites from chef Michael Pagliarini's sfizi menu, all the while sharing vivid stories about the herbs, spices and history behind each small town's signature creation. *The Charles Hotel*, 1 Bennett St., Cambridge, 617.661.5050, benedettocambridge.com

PHOTO BY ANDY RYAN

THE HOST STAND AT RUKA

Carved from one gargantuan, labyrinthine piece of teak root brought over from Indonesia, it's but one of the many exotic and otherworldly details in Ruka's multilayered landscape. But it's the one that reminds us that diners aren't the only ones that make an entrance at a restaurant. 505 Washington St., 617.266.0102, rukarestobar.com



3 DESIGN elements



HANDPAINTED MURALS AT CITRUS & SALT

Who knew coastal Mexican cuisine required glamour and out-and-out artistry? Erica Diskin did, apparently. She designed chef-owner Jason Santos' hot spot, and set the whole thing ablaze with chandeliers dripping violet diamond light, botanicals painted across the floors and bewitching wall murals. 142 Berkeley St., 833.324.8787, citrusandsaltboston.com

THE GREENS AT NAHITA

Ever wish you could eat lunch in the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, but just couldn't get there by noon? The tastefully verdant vibe in Nahita's main dining room will make you happy you never bothered to book a flight. 100 Arlington St., Back Bay, Boston, 617.457.8130, nahitarestaurant.com



4 LITTLE bites

Steak tartare at The Hawthorne



RUKA PHOTO BY HELISSA OSTROW; NAHITA PHOTO COURTESY OF NAHITA; CITRUS & SALT PHOTO BY MIKE DISKIN; THE HAWTHORNE PHOTO BY EMILY HAGAN

FOOL'S ERRAND Crispy potato mille-feuille with truffle, sour cream, caviar and lobster gravy? You bet. Sammies of smoked beef tongue with raclette and house hots? Yes, please. Without question, chef Tiffani Faison knows just where to aim to keep us coming back. 1377 Boylston St., foolserrandboston.com

OAK LONG BAR + KITCHEN As if just sitting in Copley Plaza Hotel's storied, elegant boîte isn't reason enough to smile, wait till you dig into the kitchen's merguez lamb meatballs. They arrive with onion crostini and napped in a sultry Tunisian tomato sauce and gremolata so good, you may feel a little badly about not sharing with your fellow patrons. But only a little. *Hotel Fairmont Copley Plaza*, 138 St. James Ave., 617.585.7222, oaklongbarkitchen.com

THE HAWTHORNE Even if owner-bar guru Jackson Cannon weren't overseeing one of the most dapper operations in town, we'd still come in to tuck into the kitchen's duck liver mousse with pickled radish and violet mustard, or a plate of potatoes gaufrette with Russian dressing and Parmesan. 500A Commonwealth Ave., 617.532.9150, thehawthornebar.com

OYSTER SLIDERS AT ISLAND CREEK OYSTER BAR One order of these miniature snacks—with their crispy coating, fluffy brioche roll and zesty chile-lime aioli—is enough to change our mood entirely. Another order and we may not go back to the office for the rest of the day. 500 Commonwealth Ave., 617.532.5300, islandcreekoysterbar.com

STAR confection

MACARONS, BERRY SORBET & STRAWBERRIES

Katherine Hamilburg, pastry chef extraordinaire at Mooncusser Fish House (don't let the humble name fool you; the place is pure sophistication), is that rare kind of sugar whiz who can make difficult, meticulous work look like child's play. Case in point: desserts like this one that may appear whimsical and simple, but in fact require multiple levels of artistry. Above all, Hamilburg—who also turns out equally elegant desserts as the pastry chef at Mooncusser's sister restaurant, 80 Thoreau in Concord—loves to unite complex, classic European techniques with lusty, natural elements like perfectly ripe local fruits. “The process for plated desserts can seem daunting because there are often many components,” she shares. “But if done in a logical order, it's less complicated than it seems. I make the sorbet first, then the macarons themselves and then the smaller finishing garnishes like the almond cake, candied almonds and Champagne gelee.” As for the flavors and textures she's spotlighting, they all come back to the macarons: “The macarons already have a lot going for them,” she points out. “A crispy and chewy texture, sweet and salty flavor, creamy buttercream. I wanted to choose flavors and garnishes for the plate that would highlight them and also make the dessert fitting for summertime.” The result? An abstract tableau in which light-as-air, salty-sweet caramel and delicately balanced sorbets, juicy berries and luscious meringue all seem to dance across both your plate and your palate. 304 Stuart St., 617.917.5193, mooncusserfishhouse.com



PHOTO COURTESY OF MOONCUSSEUR



1



2



3

5 SIGNATURE DISHES we still love

PHOTOS 1. BY MARIAN SJUEHOLM 2. BY KRISTEN TEIG 3. COURTESY OF TORO

1. BEEF TOURNEDOS AT CATALYST Since opening in 2011 and introducing Kendall Square to fine dining, chef William Kovel hasn't been able to take his beef tournedos off the menu. So instead, he shows them off with roasted mushrooms, green garlic smashed fingerling potatoes, braised escarole, black garlic puree and a silken bordelaise. 300 Technology Square, Cambridge, 617.576.3000, catalystrestaurant.com

2. FRIED MUSSELS AT OLEANA It's amazing that more cooks aren't whipping up fried mussels after

the raging success chef Ana Sortun has had with the dish. It certainly doesn't hurt that she jacks it up with hot peppers and a spicy Turkish tartar sauce that has diners angling for every last crumb off their plates. 134 Hampshire St., Cambridge, 617.661.0505, oleanarestaurant.com

3. MAIZ ASADO AT TORO When Toro opened in Boston just under 15 years ago, an addiction took hold of almost all who went there: the irresistible whole ears of corn smothered in aioli, lime, espelette pepper and aged cheese. It's so sweet and rich, it's a side dish and dessert all in one. Order enough of the stuff (as we've been known to) and it's suddenly an entree too. 1704 Washington St., 617.536.4300, toro-restaurant.com

4. BRISTOL BURGER AT FOUR SEASONS If you can manage, feast your eyes (and stomach) on the Lounge's iconic burger—justifiably an obsession among everyone from captains of industry to kids with superior taste. And we're all in too—for the burger's blend of dry-aged New York strip, short rib and brisket. Four Seasons Hotel Boston, 200 Boylston St., 617.351.2037, fourseasons.com/boston

5. LOBSTER PIZZA AT SCAMPO At this point in America's history, you could fill a book with what's been written about legendary chef Lydia Shire's lobster pizza. Yet, it still lives up to its own hype. Few American icons can still say as much. The Liberty Hotel, 215 Charles St., 617.536.2100, scampliboston.com