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the moon

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THE  
DISCERNING  
GUIDE

# A-list



## Kaleidoscope Bistro and Pub

FRESH ON  
THE SCENE

1410 DRESDEN DRIVE, 404-474-9600, K-PUB.COM. Versatile and casual, this new addition to the thriving scene on the eastern fringe of Brookhaven offers just the right kind of food to a well-heeled crowd looking for an alternative to Buckhead. Chef-owner Joey Riley recycles some of the dishes he cooked at such places as Buckhead Diner and Tom Catherall's defunct Tom Tom. While the whole sizzling catfish; veal meatloaf; tuna tartare with feta, yuzu, and avocado; and sensational arctic char over artichoke salad are all fine for a leisurely dinner, some of the bar bites are even more inspired. Riley's Kaleidoscope burger is a masterpiece, with your choice of one or two reasonably sized patties in a soft bun with pimento cheese, slaw, green tomato chowchow, and butter pickles. Craft beers and delicious fries crisped in duck fat sustain customers idling around the giant bar area. \$\$ —Christiane Lauterbach

PHOTOGRAPH BY CAROLINE KILGORE

### NEW & NOTEWORTHY

#### ALPINE BAKERY

12315 Crabapple Road, Alpharetta, 770-410-9883, [alpinebakeryandpizzeria.com](http://alpinebakeryandpizzeria.com). Last summer, Alpine Bakery moved half a mile to a corner space in the Silos shopping center. It seems an odd choice that the owners draped white curtains over the windows to block any view inside. Surely they want passersby to see that the business has grown from a modest storefront to a full-service Italian American restaurant. Then again, the place doesn't seem to need much advertising: Expect waits at prime-time lunch and dinner hours. Beyond sprightly starters such as a shaved fennel salad with lemon vinaigrette and wonderfully lumpy crab cakes (ask them to go easy on the lemon-mustard beurre blanc), the entrees need fine-tuning. Veal Parmesan is skimpy on sauce, and pappardelle Bolognese doesn't need the off-kilter addition of goat cheese to smooth out its robust flavors. The best news? The pizzas—as well as calzones and stromboli—remain the crusty, gooey paeans to East Coast traditions that they've always been, and the desserts are as dreamy as ever. Those cakes are so humongous, you'd think they'd been engineered more for looks than flavor, but they're wonders of moist richness. \$ —Bill Addison

The restaurants that appear in this section are reviewed and recommended by our dining critics and have no connection to advertising.

### Key to Symbols

#### >> PRICING

Price classifications are approximate and are based on a typical three-course dinner (appetizer, entree, dessert) for one person, exclusive of alcohol, tax, and tip.

e Under \$15  
\$ \$16-\$30  
\$\$ \$31-\$49  
\$\$\$ \$50 and over

#### >> RATINGS

Star ratings are determined by food quality, creativity, service, ambiance, and value.

★★★★ Superlative  
★★★ Excellent  
★★ Very good  
★ Good  
● Classic

We welcome your suggestions and comments. Please write us c/o "Dining Out," *Atlanta* magazine, 260 Peachtree Street, Suite 300, Atlanta, GA 30303; or e-mail us at [diningout@atlantamag.com](mailto:diningout@atlantamag.com). [emmis.com](http://emmis.com)



**CAFE JONAH AND THE MAGICAL ATTIC**

3188 Paces Ferry Place, 404-343-3107. Fans of Buckhead's Souper Jenny will immediately notice that Jennifer Levison's second venture forgoes her signature food: There's no soup on the menu. The omission allows other aspects of Levison's culinary personality to take center stage. The cafe, named for her seven-year-old son, serves create-your-own fruit salads and steel-cut oatmeal for breakfast, and quiches, herbaceous frittatas, daily changing salads, and overstuffed sandwiches for lunch. Order at the counter, and a staffer delivers your meal to one of the tables in this converted house's many charming nooks. Unlike Souper Jenny, where the line constantly trails out the door, Cafe Jonah's vibe is relaxed and mellow—at least for now. After noshing, explore the attic dedicated to spiritual inspiration, which includes books, candles, and a tarot reader or psychic set up in a cozy corner. \$ —B.A.

**H. HARPER STATION**

904 Memorial Drive, 678-732-0415, [hharperstation.com](http://hharperstation.com). Go for the cocktails; stay for the food. This new venture in Reynoldstown's old railroad depot may not be the first to pair Southern vittles and small-batch bourbons, but many of the ideas behind what it calls a "modern watering stop" are fiendishly clever. Kentucky country ham and bacon bread, crawfish hush-puppies with cauliflower tartar sauce, a fun twist on fish and grits featuring seared trout and Swiss chard, and a witty bacon and egg fettuccine with mustard greens anchor the menu. Gather a few friends to polish off punch drinks made with fun spirits such as Korean sochu and pisco and served in an old-fashioned glass bowl with dainty cups. Take advantage of the broad hours (4 p.m. to 2 a.m.; 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Sundays) to avoid the prime-time crowds that immediately materialized. \$\$ —C.L.

**LA FOURCHETTE**

3133 Piedmont Road, 404-748-1229, [lafourchette.com](http://lafourchette.com). It's heartening when a new restaurant improves mightily after its first months in business. La Fourchette opened in Buckhead last October with ambitious, uneven "Mediterranean cuisine"—a mosaic of French, Italian, and American creations. But executive chef Jeffrey Wall, an alum of defunct Joël Brasserie, quickly refined his vision and execution. Cheese fritters—a hybrid of gougère and cheese straws dusted with Parmesan—and a glass of Champagne kick off the meal with a sense of occasion. Wall shows off his chops with seafood in dishes such as Scottish salmon with pommery mustard and octopus stewed in marinaralike tomato and pepper sauce that may require refills of the bread basket for giddy sopping. The casually elegant, softly lit interior has helped attract the Buckhead multitudes; reservations are now necessary even on Monday night. \$\$ —B.A.

**PICO AUTENTICO**

590 Mimosa Boulevard, Roswell, 770-650-7877, [picoautentico.com](http://picoautentico.com). In an age when restaurateurs frequently reorient their businesses from mid-scale boîtes to affordable crowd-pleasers, one hopes that traces of culinary thoughtful-

ness and ambition can still remain after the transition. Those qualities were hard to find at early visits to Pico, run by chef-owner Andy Badgett and his Condiment Group. Badgett transformed his Southern-themed Relish into a taqueria concept featuring sandwiches, tamales, quesadillas, nachos, and, of course, tacos. It's a fine place to munch on guac and toss back a margarita, but meats such as chicken "tinga" (simmered in tomato, onion, and spices), carne asada, and pork carnitas all lacked the careful, layered seasoning of true Mexican cooking. Small fried spheres filled with pepper jack cheese, chorizo, and roasted pepper—a reinvention of Relish's pimento cheese fritters—taste the way they sound: gimmicky. Badgett is a laudable chef. I have a habit of mourning restaurants too long, and I still miss the inspired fine-dining feats he pulled off at Roswell's Asher, which closed in 2003. But Pico needs a more genuine sense of authenticity if it hopes to attract those of us looking for more than a quick, hum-drum bite to eat. \$ —B.A.

**TAQUERIA IZTACCHUATL**

2 West Broad Street, Fairburn, 770-964-9909. Named after a volcano, this simple Mexican joint specializes in gigantic, feather-light tortas (sandwiches made on a round bun) crammed full of grilled steak, chorizo, thin chicken cutlets, tangy Oaxacan cheese, or roast pork with refried beans, tomato, onion, pickled peppers, avocado, lettuce, and sometimes Mexican crema. They are some of the best anywhere in the metro area, let alone on the southside. Thick tacos made of freshly pressed masa dough and chips fried to order round out the other don't-miss items. Once you've covered the basics, diversify with burritos, hand-patted sopas (masa boats), and big glasses of cloudy white horchata (rice drink laced with cinnamon). \$ —C.L.

**THREE BLIND MICE**

1066 Killian Road, Lilburn, 770-696-4139, [tbmrestaurant.com](http://tbmrestaurant.com). Nothing for miles compares to this sophisticated wine-driven restaurant on a road that runs between U.S. 78 and Lawrenceville Highway. The design, as modern as anything found in Midtown Atlanta or downtown Decatur, flows easily into clearly defined areas for wine retail, a bar, and a dining room featuring plump banquettes with clever pillows made of sacking material. Young chef Matthew Murphy, who cooked at New York's Le Cirque 2000, lets his technique shine in attractive pairings: pork schnitzel with red cabbage, apple, and horseradish sauce; cast-iron skillet scallops with French lentils, watercress, and celery root cream; pork rillettes with red wine-poached prunes; crab cakes with pink grapefruit, radish

salad, and brown butter-mustard hollandaise. The restaurant opens early for breakfast and hosts a terrific weekend brunch, and the ambitious wine program includes tastings offered every Wednesday evening. \$\$ —C.L.

**TOM'S FOLLY**

1954 Howell Mill Road, 404-549-7731, [tomsfolly.com](http://tomsfolly.com). This tiny neighborhood restaurant, which masquerades as a sports bar, is ambitious enough to make all its food from scratch. And not just the fat crab cakes and the pot stickers stuffed with sausage and goat cheese: It also crafts its own ketchup and a variation on Tater Tots, cures salmon on the premises, and makes all the desserts (which frequently include beignets and crème brûlée). The atmosphere is spare; most of the decor budget looks to have been invested in the six televisions mounted overhead. Specials such as a \$16 lamb shank in red wine sauce cost half the price of those at more fashion-forward competitors. \$ —C.L.

**VICTORY SANDWICH BAR**

280 Elizabeth Street, 770-676-7287. This spare Inman Park newcomer is part of a cultural phenomenon that's especially popular in the Pacific Northwest: the hipster bar meets sandwich shop. If you like massive deli sandwiches and something soft to plunk down on, nothing much will appeal about Victory's park-bench-style seating or its mini sandwiches that are barely bigger than sliders. (But, hey, they cost only \$4 and don't skimp on the fillings.) Instead, come anticipating nibbles like white anchovies and arugula on ciabatta, followed by a bun-sized Cuban with roast pork and chased with Coca-Cola and Jack Daniel's slushies poured into mason jars. The hours (11 a.m.-2 a.m.) accommodate many different lifestyles, and recreational bonuses include surfer movies projected on the wall, a Ping-Pong table, and a punching bag. \$ —C.L.

**Bill's Top 12**

Our restaurant critic's current fave Atlanta restaurants:

- » ANTICO PIZZA NAPOLETANA
- » BACCHANALIA
- » BOCADO
- » CAKES & ALE
- » EMPIRE STATE SOUTH
- » HOLEMAN AND FINCH PUBLIC HOUSE
- » KYMA
- » LA PIETRA CUCINA
- » MILLER UNION
- » RESTAURANT EUGENE
- » SARAVANA BHAVAN
- » TOMO

**THE A-LIST**

**4TH & SWIFT ★★**

621 North Avenue, 678-904-0160, [4thandswift.com](http://4thandswift.com). When Jay Swift opened this restaurant in the summer of 2008, the unusual location in the former Southern Dairies compound fueled Atlanta's passion for rehabbed buildings with plenty of safe parking. Nearly three years later, the menu is still exquisitely written according to the seasons, but the cooking—too much bacon in a sweet bass dish and tough Wiener schnitzel on our last visit—seems to have coarsened. But the pastry kitchen continues to delight with tiny cheese biscuits, dinner rolls, and fun reinterpretations of childhood favorites such as s'mores and Creamsicles, and