

Esquire

LOVE YOUR
PARENTS,
HATE THEIR
POLITICS
BY GARY SHITEYNGART

HOW
WE
DRESS
NOW
REAL
GUYS
IN THEIR
REAL
CLOTHES

keanu Reeves

KNOWS THE SECRETS OF THE UNIVERSE

JUST DO IT
THE RELUCTANT
MAN'S GUIDE
TO THERAPY



THE BEST
*New Restaurants
in America*

THE BEST
Bourbons
Under \$40





the best NEW restaurants

2021

THE
HARVEY
HOUSE,
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NANA'S
BAKERY &
PIZZA,
page 60



MARCH,
page 56

NICOLE FRANZEN (THE HARVEY HOUSE), JOSHUA BEHAN (NANA'S), JULIE SOEFER PHOTOGRAPHY (MARCH).

WANDERLUST IS A REAL THING. HUNGER IS A REAL thing. And in a year when you couldn't stand to look at your Instant Pot anymore and had to delay that vacation to Paris, when you craved something more than travel shows and take-out, the most satisfying way to feed the need for a journey was to go to a restaurant, feel taken care of, and try at least one thing from the menu that you'd never had before.

The transportive power of food, the soul-stirring nature of hospitality—real things, too. This is all to say that in these not normal times, we need both the normalcy and the escape of restaurants now more than ever.



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esmeralda

ANDOVER, VERMONT

The day begins with dirt, fire, stones. Then, once the morning fog has burned off, chef JuanMa Calderón, partner Maria Rondeau, and chef Victor Guadalupe (left) gather in their backyard among the Green Mountains and layer in hunks of pork, fava beans, and other vegetables. This is the pachamanca, a Peruvian tradition of cooking food underground. Hours later, as the guests arrive, all hands get involved in extracting a meal that is, miraculously, perfectly cooked. Esmeralda is further proof that a restaurant doesn't need four walls. 740 Stigers Road—K.S.

MOON RABBIT

WASHINGTON, D. C.

When the fish sandwich arrived—a catfish fillet, delicately flaky in the middle, crunchy on the outside, scented with turmeric and lemongrass, hugged by a pillow curry milk-bread bun—it was devoured, and immediately we asked for another, and some extra milk bread, too. We did the same with the simple charred cabbage with pineapple and even got another epic ga chien fried chicken, layered with a chile-maple fish sauce, for the road. Chef Kevin Tien's dishes are an exploration not only of Vietnamese cuisine but of maximum craveability. 801 Wharf Street SW—K.S.



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Red snapper crudo.



25

Chirashi.



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GAGE & TOLLNER

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

A resurrected restaurant can be a Dr. Frankenstein mess or something Christlike. Chef Sohui Kim's glimmering second coming of Brooklyn's historic steakhouse is, praise be, the latter. Walk through the door and the mirrored, fabric-walled dining room opens before you much as it did in 1879, when the restaurant first opened. (It closed in 2004.) The team has inhaled much of what made G&T so beloved, including favorites from the eighties, when culinary giant Edna Lewis was head chef, like the she-crab soup (above), creamy as ever and laced with roe. But this isn't just historic-steakhouse cosplay. Kim's major twist is grass-fed steaks that, under their handsome darkened swirls of char, reveal great tenderness. 372 Fulton Street—J.D.S.

ROSELLA

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Earth-friendly sushi is Rosella's calling card. You won't find large-carbon-footprint items flown in from a Tokyo fish market here. And while delicious nigiri from local and sustainable ingredients—like scallops from Montauk—is worth snagging a seat for in the jewel-box-sized space, it's everything else on Rosella's tight menu that leaves the bigger impression. Fish paitan, made from the heads, is a briny, soul-warming broth reminiscent of the ocean. The spicy XO sauce conjured from shellfish is so umami-rich, you'll wish you could take a bottle home and make everything better. 137 Avenue A—K.S.

PEARL RIVER DELI

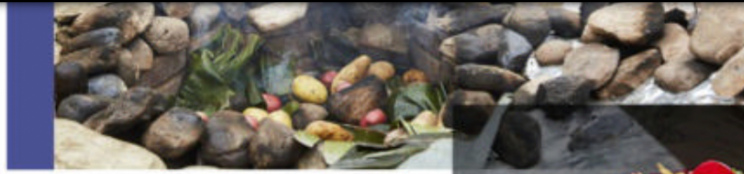
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

There's a bit of magic happening at Pearl River Deli, in Los Angeles's Chinatown, where you'll find chef Johnny Lee's soulful, intensely flavorful take on Cantonese cuisine. His char siu (left) features pork collar cooked sous vide, then roasted, so that it's simultaneously juicy and chewy. The Macau pork-chop bun is slathered with creamy, umami-maggi-infused mayo and topped with a sofrito of stewed tomatoes, onion, and garlic spiked with capers—a nod to the Portuguese influence on the region. 936 North Hill Street—O.M.



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COURTESY ESMEERALDA (22); COURTESY MOON RABBIT (23); LIZZIE MUNRO (24); COURTESY ROSELLA (25); COURTESY PEARL RIVER DELI (26)



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