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>> FOR THE TEX-MEX MAVEN

EL BURRO {AUSTIN}

Located in the burgeoning Lamar Union complex in South Austin—the go-to neighborhood for indulging in the city’s tastiest Mexican fare and frosty margaritas—El Burro features a menu of authentic and Texas-centric ingredients. Highlights include cold dishes like tostada de ceviche and red snapper crudo y agua chili, as well as a variety of street cart tacos and mouth-melting chicken tinga enchiladas. Do sample the chef’s take on fajitas gussied up with bacon-wrapped shrimp, lobster tail, chicken breast and thigh, flank steak or rib-eye steak. The casual space is warm and welcoming with an expansive open-air patio ideal for kicking back with amigos while sipping fresh-made margaritas and chowing down on Mexican specialties. Lunch, dinner and even brunch served daily! elburroatx.com



>> FOR THE BOURBON & BEEF FANATIC

BOSSCAT KITCHEN & LIBATIONS {HOUSTON}

After months of anticipation, this industrial modern whiskey bar with American comfort food has joined the still new Westheimer Oaks development next door to Eloise Nichols. The first Texas location sports a signature glass-enclosed Whiskey Room with 250-plus local and rare whiskeys, whiskey lockers and a 12-seat table for private dining and whiskey tastings. Notable dishes made with local ingredients include the 44 Farms Bosscat burger (bacon, cheese, black garlic sauce), Cajun brick chicken, and a fall-off-the-bone 12-hour beef short rib with Asian black pepper sauce. A popular cocktail is the Kentucky Orange Bourbon with Buffalo Trace, elderflower and orange. bosscatkitchen.com

>> FOR LOVERS OF FINE INDIAN CUISINE

KIRAN'S {HOUSTON}

Chef-restaurateur Kiran Verma’s new and improved home in Levy Park is filling fast with loyal fans who have been craving her beloved Northern Indian cuisine since her Uptown location shuttered. In the stunning new space by Gensler, lofty ceilings dominate the modern bar/lounge with mother-of-pearl and gold inlaid walls, a community table, and a striking glass wine cellar, while the elegant dining room has warm terra cotta accents with rust-colored banquettes against a wall of windows. The menu melds classic Northern Indian cuisine with Kiran’s signature upscale fusion. Expect a Street Foods of India section in addition to smoky flavored tandoori specialties like sea bass with mushroom biryani and rack of lamb with shallot marmalade and blackberry demi-glace. Regulars enjoy classic spicy chicken or lamb vindaloo and Gulf prawn Bhuna with sweet peppers, to name a few. Weekday afternoon tea brings on mango chicken salad sandwiches, smoked tandoori salmon, vindaloo deviled eggs, Kiran’s own chai blend, and Champagne. Cheers to that! kiranhouston.com

DEBORA SHYAL | SHANNON O'HARA



ROBIN BARR SUSSMAN BIO

Robin Barr Sussman is a Houston-based freelance writer who specializes in food, wine and travel. Her work has appeared in *Texas Monthly*, *My Table*, and *Private Clubs* magazine.



>> FOR THE TRATTORIA FAN

OSSO & KRISTALLA

{HOUSTON}

Houston Astros owner Jim Crane's new concept, named after his children, recently opened downtown near Minute Maid Park. The stylish and sunny all day trattoria with a pint-size patio features Italian pastries, gorgeous rustic pizzas prepared with a homemade starter, and substantial sandwiches on house-baked bread—think Italian sausage and wagyu beef burger and a towering Italian Dagwood. Other highlights by chef Michael Parker (Crane's personal chef) include a slow-roasted pork belly entrée with roasted apples and figs, and artistic desserts like chocolate Chambord torte by pastry chef David Berg, formerly with Tony's. In the same building, you'll find Crane's upscale Italian restaurant, Potente. ossoandkristalla.com

>> FOR LADIES WHO LUNCH

RISE SOUFFLE NO. 1

{DALLAS}

Shop, eat and celebrate: We can't think of a better place to take Mom on May 14 than Rise No. 1 in Inwood Village. Besides the dozens of sweet and savory soufflés, the relaxed space is charming, and almost everything you see is available for purchase. Founder and Francophile Hedda Dowd has been working with vendors across France for years helping to cultivate Rise's authentic French atmosphere. Witness torchons (tea towels) designed by Hedda herself next to European flatware, cookbooks, kitchen gadgets, aprons and one-of-a-kind fine linens. On the menu, anticipate tuna Niçoise salad, inventive soups, steak and pommes de terre with Béarnaise, and French country baguette sandwiches. There's a rolling cheese cart and the wine flaunts many French selections, Champagnes and rosés. Rise No. 2 opened recently in Houston, and a location is scheduled for Fort Worth in late 2017. risesouffle.com



>> FOR THE TEQUILA ENTHUSIAST

FONDA SAN MIGUEL

{AUSTIN}

Fine tequila, mescal and margaritas coupled with Tex-Mex specialties are the name of the game on Cinco de Mayo in the Lone Star State. Novice tequila drinkers interested in sipping the pronounced distinctions in the three varieties will relish the new Uno-Dos-Tres Tequila Flights featuring half-ounce pours of small-batch, organic blanco, reposado and añejo tequilas. Highlights include the Treasures from La Alteña Distillery created by master distiller Carlos Camarena and the Trio of T1 crafted by master distiller Germán González. Also on offer are traditional artisan tequilas such as Fortaleza Blanco and Siete Leguas Reposado, named for Pancho Villa's stallion. On the food menu at this gorgeous, upscale hacienda, don't miss the ancho relleno San Miguel, camarones in chipotle cream sauce, or the enchiladas de pato topped with shredded duck and poblano-spinach sauce. fondasanmiguel.com



SIDE SIPS

FOOD & WINE EVENTS YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS

NEW ORLEANS WINE & FOOD EXPERIENCE

The New Orleans Wine & Food Experience, May 25-28, celebrates two and a half decades of raising money for nonprofit organizations based in New Orleans. The three-day event held in various venues around NOLA attracts an impressive roster of local food and chefs, as well as national and international wineries. Foodies can enjoy educational, hands-on wine and food experiences, wine dinners, the Royal Street Stroll, the Grand Tasting and the Big Gateaux Show starring pastries, cocktails and Burlesque starlets. Let the good times roll! nowfe.com

FOOD & WINE CLASSIC IN ASPEN

June 16-18, the Aspen Food & Wine Classic will celebrate its 35th anniversary as one of America's top culinary events. The three-day event in breathtaking Aspen, Colorado, showcases cooking demonstrations, wine tastings, and panel talks by leading wine and culinary experts. Expect to rub shoulders with your favorite Food Network and Cooking Channel celebrities and epicurean insiders at receptions, cook-offs and the Grand Tasting event. foodandwine.com

FESTIVAL NAPA VALLEY

For 10 glorious days, July 14-23, music will fill the air of the famous valley in California known for world class wine and premier dining. Myriad events located around St. Helena include the opening night at Meadowood Resort with soprano Danielle de Niese, Sunday at the Symphony, and the Arts for All gala at HALL Winery with Gloria Estefan. Foodies, mark your calendars: The Taste of Napa, July 15, features more than 70 local wineries, restaurants and food artisans. Add live music, and you have a perfect summer afternoon in wine country! Check the website for all entertainment venues and ticket information, festivalnapavalley.org.