

**Isaiah Thomas**  
THE CELTICS'  
MINI MARVEL

**The Teamsters**  
ATTEMPT AN EXTREME  
MAKEOVER

**WHY DOES BOSTON**  
**Need Children,**  
ANYWAY?

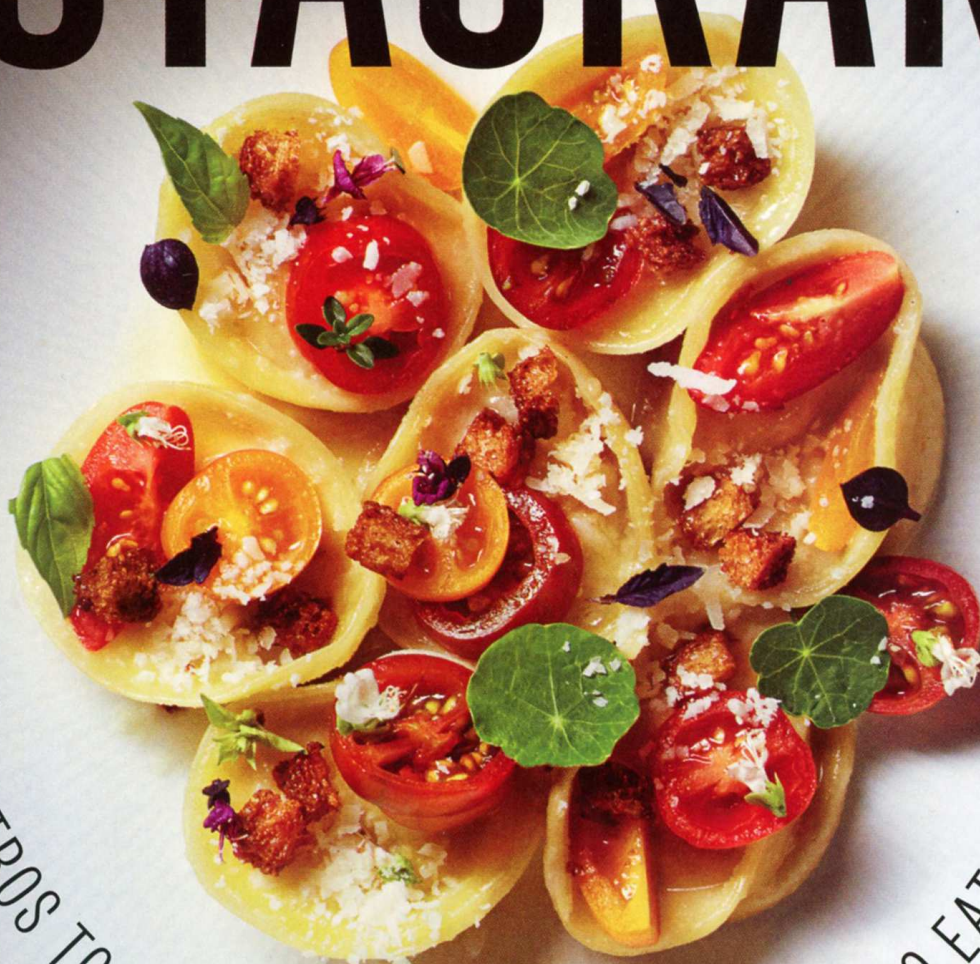
**Aly Raisman**  
TALKS OLYMPIC  
DOMINATION

# Boston

## TOP 25 NEW RESTAURANTS

FROM BISTROS TO

NTS, THIS IS WHERE TO EAT RIGHT NOW.



From #19  
on our list:  
Fonduta-stuffed  
cappelletti with Sun  
Gold tomatoes and  
butter-toasted  
bread crumbs.



# 25 THE TOP NEW RESTAURANTS

## 2016

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*From South End indie-Indian fusion to hipster Jewish deli in Kendall, presenting our road-tested, thoroughly vetted, highly subjective guide to the 25 new tables most deserving of reserving right now.*

Scenes from the *omakase* chef's-tasting menu at Uni.









**T**wo...neighborhoods...away. That was the mantra our team of testers kept in mind as we set about whittling this year's bumper crop of restaurant newbies down to an elite 25. Meaning: Would we send a discerning foodie not one but *two* neighborhoods away to eat there?

While it took strength of conviction to let sparkling new neighborhood gems fall away in the same curatorial purge as the fledgling messes, even tougher was ranking the ones still standing. Defining "new" as opening between September 1, 2015, and September 1, 2016, meant pitting seasoned one-year-olds like Yvonne's against gurgling newborns like Waypoint. How to be fair but, more important, how to be *useful*?

To that end, we took a page out of the pro-sports playbook, approaching the rookies the way a scout might size up draft prospects—in our case, numerical scores assigned to food, drink, service, and ambiance. But we also factored in a host of intangibles, from staffing pedigree to how well the player might fill gaps in our city's diningscape for the upcoming season.

Is there a chance we got it wrong? You bet. Even the sharpest scout can leave a Brady languishing in the sixth round. But if we had to guess which new eateries have the X-factor to take it all the way to the playoffs (i.e., Best of Boston 2017), these are the 25 we'd put our money on.

THE YEAR OF THE...

## Copper-Pineapple Cocktail Service



Fruited-cocktail mavens once endured blasé drinking vessels, from gourds to plastic cups to fine-quality glassware that failed to accentuate the libation's specialness. Happily, 2016 saw restaurants going legit on the pineapple-mixology front, making copper goblets in the shape of tropical fruit *de rigueur*. The conductive metal keeps drinks colder, and the eye-popping exterior assures the world you're piña-proud.

### I. Uni

370 Commonwealth Ave.,  
Boston, 617-536-7200,  
[uni-boston.com](http://uni-boston.com).

It's the oldest story in the book: city falls for chef, chef courts other city, other city gets the magic while we get stuck with phoned-in BS. Hooray, exceptions. That Ken Oringer can open a spiffy Toro in New York—plus another in Bangkok—and still find time to keep Toro 1 and Coppa purring, launch a Central Square

gunner (see number 5), and transform Uni from a 23-seat sashimi counter into a quadruple-size *izakaya* flagship is a testament to his energy, chops, and commitment to nurturing deputizable talent (see Uni executive chef Tony Messina). Also, to dreamy dishes like king crab yakitori slathered with black-lime butter, and fatty-tuna nigiri with *uni* powder and truffles.

**SCOUTING NOTES:** Overlong menu means inevitable strikes, including a Momofuku crib or two (crispy broccoli with puffed rice).

## ADDICTED TO LOBE

*We're calling it: This season's "it" ingredient is...sea urchin. Not that it was even close.*

Although the edible gonad of the spiny shellfish has long been adored by sushi fans for its velvety texture and concentrated "ocean" flavor, lately it's turning up in all sorts of contexts: most notably, Italian pasta dishes. At right, three of our current favorites, all of which die-hard fans should try immediately. For the urchin-nervous, we've indexed each option according to immersion level—from full blob to just a taste.



Bar Mezzana



Porto



Waypoint

DISH

Spaghetti with crabmeat, sea urchin, and hot chilies.

Lobster ravioli with curry leaf, fresh peas, and urchin-thickened butter sauce.

Bucatini with smoked egg yolk, pecorino, bottarga, and hulking lobes of uncut urchin.

IMMERSION LEVEL

MODERATE BLOB

JUST A TASTE

FULL BLOB



## 2. SRV

569 Columbus Ave., Boston,  
617-536-9500, [srvboston.com](http://srvboston.com).

The name's short for Serene Republic of Venice, but there's nothing tranquil about the vivid flavors of Michael Lombardi and Kevin O'Donnell's Venetian fare, which hits the palate with all the precision and layering of a Gabrieli sonata. Deep-fried Castelvetro olives burst with perfumey fennel sausage and molten *montasio* cheese. Preserved lemon rings out like a trumpet obbligato over the dark, rumbling cello notes of unctuous squid-ink risotto. Even the quieter moments—Wagyu *crudo* deepened with cocoa nibs and nutty sunchoke purée—have the intensity of a brass choir mustering its most convincing pianissimo.

**SCOUTING NOTES:** Desserts could use a special-teams coach.

## 3.

### Waypoint

1030 Massachusetts Ave.,  
Cambridge, 617-864-2300,  
[waypointharvard.com](http://waypointharvard.com).

The theme-y coastal concept

of Michael Scelfo's latest venture—barely a week old when we dropped anchor—might seem self-satirizing if the food weren't already so freaking good. There are nautical nods: crusty bread dyed with squid ink, and tallow-fried peanuts strewn with crispy anchovies. And then there are deep plunges: smoked head-on shrimp, candy-sweet king crab perched atop satiny brown-butter aioli, and garlicky clam pizza that pays homage to Frank Pepe's signature pie. Those who prefer turf over surf might go for large-format delights like roasted Maine lamb shoulder with pickled lemon. But, yeah, there's fish (anchovy) in that one, too.

**SCOUTING NOTES:** Killer house-made hot sauce, bread basket worth paying for, save room for croissant doughnuts. Impressive absinthe-roster depth. Frenetic early-season service.

## 4.

### Mamaleh's

One Kendall Sq., Cambridge,  
617-958-3354, [mamalehs.com](http://mamalehs.com).

The wandering is over. Thanks to the squad behind State Park, Boston finally has legit deli, complete with a take-

## THE YEAR OF THE...

### Modified Noun and/or Hosted Restaurant Name

Law-firm-style ampersanding (i.e., Alden & Harlow) has nearly run its course. This year, we've been flocking to places with simple-noun monikers, preceded by a straightforward adjectival descriptor. We want our donkeys little, our hens fat, our girls saltie, and our diners little-big. Even better: a restaurant *within* a restaurant—or a hotel, or a pool hall—using an @ sign for subtweet-y cred. Bonus for a host whose name doesn't exactly roll off the tongue when affixed to yours. That's right. Welcome to Chubbie Rat @ Chez Other Venue. Your *crudo* steward will seat you now.



## A SENSE OF PLATES

*As bespoke pottery replaces basic white as the placemat topper of choice, dishes offer a new window into a restaurant's soul. Obviously, we took a peek.*

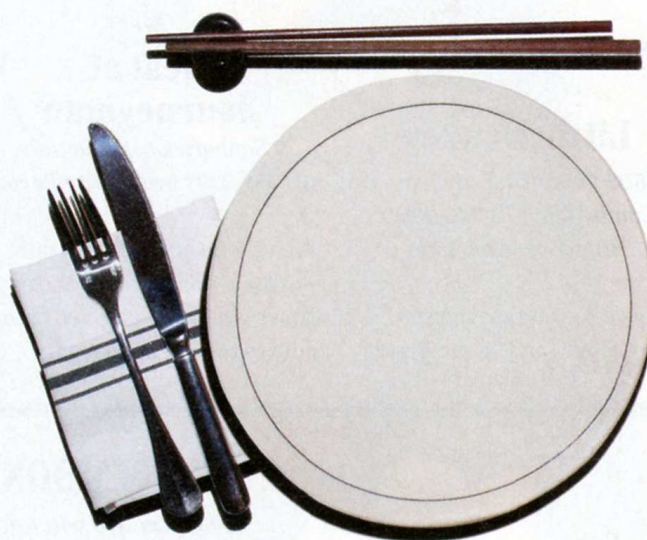
### Homer Laughlin, for Bar Mezzana

**As seen beneath:**  
Grilled octopus salad.

**Deeper dish:**  
To complement the "coastal Italian brasserie" theme, graphic designer Kim Miller gave these customized Homer Laughlin plates a Paris-meets-Amalfi Coast spin, with a deep blue rim and an artistically rendered octopus in the center—in case you need a reminder of what you're eating.



### Keith Kreeger Studios, for Uni



**As seen beneath:**  
Omakase tasting menu; seasonal sashimi.

**Deeper dish:**  
The restaurant's minimalist dishware occasionally likes to let its hair down—say, with a slightly

irregular rim, or a completely out-of-left-field shade of white. The interior circle, in fine-point black, shows an additional spark of personality, and also helps newer line cooks anchor the restaurant's preferred circumferential plating style.

### Ogusky Ceramics, for Yvonne's



**As seen beneath:**  
Chicken-quinoa meatballs.

**Deeper dish:** Shaped like a *cazuela* (a traditional South American cooking vessel) with its side handles lopped off, this stylish number says, "Totally down with the peasant food but this is a nice place, so keep it clean." Raised sides ensure errant *chermoula* doesn't leach out onto the fine table linens.