

This Week: Philadelphia, Austin, Montreal, Portland, Detroit, Dubai



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Brasserie Les Enfants Terribles,

Montreal.

With its cavernous corner spot on Outremont's trendy av. Bernard, sophisticated yet playful décor, and artfully prepared comfort food, Les Enfant Terribles packs 'em in at all hours. The menu at this brasserie-with-a-twist, owned and run by native-born Montrealer Francine Brûlé, is a mix of high-class cuisine and comfort food favorites: beef tartare with



truffle oil; fish & chips; roasted salmon with tomato, mango, and basil salsa; and mac & cheese. While the food is the main attraction, take notice of the interior decor: A lane from an old bowling alley was transformed into the bar, the metal chairs are from an area school, and a demolished barn's faded wood lines the walls. As for the photos on the menu and clear thumbprints infused on the glasses? Those are from Brule's very own *enfant terribles*. 1257 Bernard Ouest, H2V2V6 Outremont, Montreal. 514/759-9981. AE, MC, V. Median entrée price: \$18 CAD.

Distrito, Philadelphia

Star chef Jose Garces' latest joint is colorful, energetic, and enormous just like Mexico City, the place that inspired it. Distrito's "modern Mexican" menu, made up entirely of small plates, includes cuisine from all over Mexico as well as the capital city's hierarchy of street food to fine food— but always with a Garces twist. The Los Hongos huarache is topped with earthy mushrooms spiked with black truffle and tempered by corn shoots. Slices of buttery yellowtail in hamachi ceviche are plated with a dollop of sangrita sorbet and a dash of mint. Urban (and, on the weekend, suburban) fans of Garces' downtown restaurants, Amada and Tinto, rub elbows with packs of Penn and Drexel students who flock here for the delicious food as well as the karaoke room, 60 tequilas, nightly DJ, and a movie screen flashing scenes from the hit film *Nacho Libre*. Ask for one of the huge rattan booths on the second floor for a truly moving experience—the spinning structures are juryrigged with wheels. 3945 Chestnut Street, University City. 215/222-1657. grg-mgmt.com/distritorestaurant.com/. No lunch. AE, D, DC, MC, V. Median entrée price: \$22.

Olivia, Austin.

The latest arrival to Austin's burgeoning food scene has attracted every who's who in town. With contemporary steel framing and rich wood accents, the restaurant's design rolls the sleek sophistication of big city bistros into a compact Austin granola-crunchy shell. The Italian-inspired menu is equally as appealing. Menu starters such as the plump and savory lamb's tongue fricassee are delicious, but not for the faint of heart. In fact, the entire menu is a culinary gauntlet challenging diners to expand their flavor palates with dishes such as delicate potato gnocchi served in white truffle-ricotta cream and braised lamb shoulder that melts into a hearty tomato-sage sugo. To end, warm lemon-ginger cake is sweet perfection. *2043 S. Lamar, South Austin. 512/804-2700. www.olivia-austin.com. AE, D, MC, V. Median entrée price: \$24.*

D.O.C., Portland.

The pleasingly inventive menu at this new 24-seat nook follows traditional Italian-style dining — *antipasti* (appetizer) followed by *primi* (first course), followed by *secondi* (second course) and then served with cheese and desserts. Choose a la carte from any or all of those courses, but don't miss the meaty yet subtle sardines with refreshing green onion, and delectably light homemade papardelle with artichokes and cream. Diners, including hipster neighborhood locals and curious couples from across Portland, enter through the compact kitchen run by culinary notables Greg Perrault (of the critically acclaimed Tasting Room in New York City) and sous chef Melissa Pelletier (formerly of Fife in Portland). Let the wine maestro, Austin Bridges, surprise you with a spot-on selection from his passionately compiled all-Italian wine list. *5519 NE 30th St. 503/946-8592. www.docpdx.com. Closed Sun. & Mon. No lunch. AE, MC, V. Median entrée price: \$20.*

Motor City Hotel, Detroit.

Rising quite literally from the ashes of burned-out and boarded-up buildings on the edge of downtown, this sleek, luxurious hotel is renewing not only its pampered guests but Detroit's inner city as well. The hotel's "future retro" décor subtly pays tribute to both the auto industry and the music of Motown. The spacious rooms have comfy beds with duvets and a choice of 15 different pillows. The stylish bathrooms feature large walk-in showers, oversized towels, bathrobes, and slippers. And while the property includes a sprawling casino, hotel guests need never see a slot machine (or smell the smoke) unless they choose. **Pros:** room service's exceptional food at reasonable prices; free overnight shoeshine. **Cons:** While the hotel is within walking distance of the Fox Theatre and the Tigers' and Lions' stadiums, guests may wish to take a taxi, a must after dark. *2901 Grand River Ave., Detroit, 48201. 800/782-9622. www.motorcitycasino.com. 400 rooms. In room: safe, Ethernet, Wi-Fi. In hotel: 4 restaurants, room service, 3 bars, gym, spa, laundry service, concierge, executive floors, public Wi-Fi, parking (free), pets (some, with fee), no-smoking rooms. AE, D, MC, V. Rooms start at \$299.*

InterContinental Dubai Festival City, Dubai.

Fashioned along the lines of a sailing yacht, the hotel cuts a striking silhouette rising from the south bank of Dubai Creek. The sweeping marble foyer is a triumph of less-is-more modernism. The Intercontinental, opened in the beginning of 2008, has been designed for discerning travelers, featuring MP3 docks and large flat-screen TVs. The pale contemporary rooms also have dressing areas and marble island baths for relaxing. The hotel caters to businesspeople with well-planned convention and meeting spaces, and also to vacationers with its expansive free-form pool and sun decks, top-notch spa, and proximity to Festival City's shopping and dining. **Pros:** contemporary style; excellent leisure facilities in hotel and at Festival City; city views from creek-

facing rooms. **Cons:** transportation required to reach downtown and beach areas; atmosphere is cool and crisp but not cozy. *Dubai Festival City, Festival Blvd. 4/701-1111. www.ichotelsgroup.com. 376 rooms, 121 suites. In-room: safe, DVD. In-hotel: 2 restaurants, room service, bars, pools, gym, spa, concierge, executive floor, laundry service, parking (no fee), no-smoking rooms. AE, DC, MC, V. Rooms start at AED 2,500.*

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Photo Credit: Image courtesy of Brasserie Les Enfants Terribles