

TONY REZKO'S  
ODD CAREER

HOW THE CIA TAPPED THE  
CHICAGO MOB TO KILL CASTRO

WAIT WAIT... IT'S  
PETER SAGAL!

NOVEMBER 2007

# Chicago

Great  
Dining  
2007

## 124 best DISHES

OUR REVIEWERS PICK  
THEIR FAVORITES

WARNING!  
Do not read  
on an empty  
stomach!



*Chestnut-filled  
beignets with green  
tea semifreddo —  
aka coffee and  
doughnuts at  
Japonais*



CHICAGOMAG.COM

FASHION \* ALIENS \* OBAMARAMA  
\* 10 GREATEST CHICAGO NOVELS

# 124 best DISHES

GREAT  
DINING  
2007

Chicago

There's a certain look a dining critic gets when a compelling menu item turns out to be as good as it sounded. It's a goofy grin that says, "Hey, I didn't think I could be surprised anymore." In the past year, our reviewers tasted roughly 5,000 dishes and still found themselves flabbergasted. Sometimes perfection popped up in unexpected places, such as in Flamingo's fish tacos; other times the spark came from exotica like Riccardo Trattoria's hearty tripe Florentine. The true pleasure of the quest, though, lies in the discovery of stunning creations—beer jam–glazed quail with aged Gruyère at Vie comes to mind. Here are 124 such revelations. In the words of a not-so-great poet, eat 'em and smile.

by  
DENNIS RAY WHEATON  
with KIM CONTE,  
MIRIAM GOTTFRIED,  
PENNY POLLACK, JILL ROHDE,  
JEFF RUBY, and  
NATHANIEL ZIMMER

- **Aigre Doux**, 230 W. Kinzie St.: 312-329-9400 → green garlic soup with wild morels
- **Al Primo Canto**, 5414 W. Devon Ave.: 773-631-0100 → polenta frita
- **Alinea**, 1723 N. Halsted St.: 312-867-0110 → pineapple with bacon powder
- **Always Thai**, 1825 W. Irving Park Rd.: 773-929-0100 → crab Rangoon
- **Amarind's**, 6822 W. North Ave.: 773-899-9999 → golden cups
- **Anteprima**, 5316 N. Clark St.: 773-506-9990 → panna cotta
- **Aria**, Fairmont Chicago, 200 N. Columbus Dr.: 312-444-9494 → grilled baby octopus and fingerling potato salad
- **Arun's**, 4156 N. Kedzie Ave.: 773-539-1909 → Thai bite-size salad
- **Avenues**, The Peninsula Chicago, 108 E. Superior St.: 312-573-6754 → roasted squab
- **Azucar**, 2647 N. Kedzie Ave.: 773-486-6464 → roasted red peppers
- **Ballo**, 445 N. Dearborn St.: 312-832-7700 → eggplant Parmesan
- **Bin Wine Cafe**, 1559 N. Milwaukee Ave.: 773-486-2233 → tempura green beans
- **Bistro Campagne**, 4518 N. Lincoln Ave.: 773-271-6100 → roasted chicken
- **Bistro Monet**, 462 N. Park Blvd., Glen Ellyn: 630-469-4002 → short rib ravioli
- **Blackbird**, 679 W. Randolph St.: 312-715-0708 → veal sweetbreads
- **Blu Coral**, 6320 S. Rte. 53, Suite 100, Woodridge: 630-779-8808 → California sunset maki
- **Boka**, 1729 N. Halsted St.: 312-337-6070 → veal cheeks
- **Bourgeois Pig Café**, 738 W. Fullerton Ave.: 773-883-5282 → the sun also rises
- **Cafe Matsui**, 7846 N. Milwaukee Ave.: 773-384-8911 → moules marinières
- **Cafe Spiaggia**, 980 N. Michigan Ave.: 312-280-2750 → wood-roasted artichokes
- **Chalkboard**, 4343 N. Lincoln Ave.: 773-477-7144 → fried chicken
- **Charlie Trotter's**, 816 N. Armistage Ave.: 773-248-6228 → grilled red plums
- **Chef's Station**, 915 Davis St., Evanston: 847-570-9827 → pan-seared walleye
- **Chiyo**, 3800 W. Lawrence Ave.: 773-267-1555 → Cognac-flavored monkfish liver
- **Coco Pazzo**, 300 W. Hubbard St.: 312-836-0900 → porcini risotto
- **Crofton on Wells**, 535 N. Wells St.: 312-755-7790 → quinoa-corn johnnycakes
- **Curry Hut**, 410 Sheridan Rd., Highwood: 847-432-2889 → mo mo dumplings
- **Custom House**, 500 S. Dearborn St.: 312-523-0200 → rabbit braised in root vegetables
- **D & J Bistro**, 466 S. Rand Rd., Lake Zurich: 847-438-8007 → tropical fruit spring roll
- **David Burke's Primehouse**, The James, 616 N. Rush St.: 312-660-6000 → bone-in filet mignon
- **DeLaCosta**, 465 E. Winnetka St.: 312-464-1700 → white shrimp service
- **E.J.'s Place**, 10027 Skokie Blvd., Skokie: 847-933-9800 → sautéed calf's liver
- **El Sueño**, 9850 Milwaukee Ave., Des Plaines: 847-298-9090 → pumpkin tamale
- **Entourage**, 1301 American Ln., Schaumburg: 847-995-9400 → ginger stout cake
- **Everest**, 440 S. LaSalle St., 40th floor: 312-663-8920 → Colorado rack of lamb
- **Evergreen**, 2411 S. Westworn Ave.: 312-225-8898 → scrambled eggs and shrimp
- **The Fishguy Market**, 4423 N. Elston Ave.: 773-283-7400 → cod cheek 'n' boy
- **Flamingo's**, 1590 S. Busse Rd., Mt. Prospect: 847-364-9988 → fish tacos
- **Follia**, 953 W. Fulton St.: 312-243-2888 → caprese salad
- **Francesca's on Taylor**, 1400 W. Taylor St.: 312-829-2828 → torta lava
- **Frontera Grill**, 445 N. Clark St.: 312-661-1434 → flan de miel y flores
- **Fulton's on the River**, 315 N. LaSalle St.: 312-822-0100 → deviled eggs
- **Gabriel's**, 310 Green Bay Rd., Highwood: 847-433-0031 → osso buco
- **The Gage**, 24 S. Michigan Ave.: 312-372-4243 → mussels in vindaloo sauce
- **Habana Libre**, 1440 N. Chicago Ave.: 312-243-3303 → papas rellenas
- **Hopleaf**, 5148 N. Clark St.: 773-334-9851 → apple fritters
- **Hot Doug's**, 3324 N. California Ave.: 773-279-9550 → pheasant hot dog
- **HotChocolate**, 1747 N. Damen Ave.: 773-489-1747 → half & half
- **Hugo's Frog Bar**, 55 S. Main St., Naperville: 630-548-3784 → mini filet sandwiches
- **Il Covo**, 2752 N. Damen Ave.: 773-862-5555 → grilled vegetables
- **Il Fiasco**, 5701 N. Clark St.: 773-769-9700 → chilled tomato soup
- **India House**, 59 W. Grand Ave.: 312-645-9500 → chicken reshmi kebab
- **Jack's on Halsted**, 3201 N. Halsted St.: 773-244-9191 → pork trio
- **Jacky's Bistrot**, 2545 Prairie Ave., Evanston: 847-733-0899 → banana brioche pudding
- **Jane's**, 1655 W. Cortland St.: 773-862-5263 → yellowfin tuna sashimi salad
- **Japonais**, 600 W. Chicago Ave.: 312-822-9600 → coffee and doughnuts
- **Jim Ju**, 5203 N. Clark St.: 773-334-6377 → kim bap to gim
- **Joe's Seafood**, 60 E. Grand Ave.: 312-379-5637 → Florida stone crabs
- **Kaze**, 2032 W. Roscoe St.: 773-327-4860 → carrot soup
- **Kevin**, 9 W. Hubbard St.: 312-595-0055 → fig tart
- **La Humita**, 3466 N. Pulaski Rd.: 773-794-9672 → tamale
- **La Piazza**, 410 Circle Ave., Forest Park: 708-266-4010 → braised wild boar
- **La Sardine**, 111 N. Carpenter St.: 312-421-2800 → veal kidneys
- **Lao Sze Chuan**, 2172 S. Archer Ave.: 312-326-5040 → Szechwan smoked-tea duck
- **Las Tablas**, 2942 N. Lincoln Ave.: 773-871-2414 → licuado
- **Le Lan**, 749 N. Clark St.: 312-280-9100 → zucchini-wrapped tilapia
- **Los Nopales**, 4544 N. Western Ave.: 773-334-3149 → sopas
- **Lovells of Lake Forest**, 915 S. Waukegan Rd., Lake Forest: 847-234-8013 → carpaccio
- **Lula Cafe**, 2537 N. Kedzie Blvd.: 773-489-9554 → chocolate gâteau
- **M. Henry**, 5707 N. Clark St.: 773-561-1600 → Fannie's killer fried-egg sandwich
- **Marigold**, 4832 N. Broadway: 773-293-4652 → duck leg dum
- **May Street Market**, 102 W. Grand Ave.: 312-427-5547 → escargots
- **Maia**, 2748 N. Lincoln Ave.: 773-929-9600 → stuffed lamb
- **Meli Cafe**, 307 S. Halsted St.: 312-454-0748 → Emerald Isle skillet
- **Michael**, 64 Green Bay Rd., Winnetka: 847-441-3100 → chilled soup duo
- **Milk & Honey Café**, 1920 W. Division St.: 773-395-9434 → huevos rancheros
- **Mirai Sushi**, 2020 W. Division St.: 773-862-8500 → honnaguro otoro sashimi
- **Mizu**, 315 W. North Ave.: 773-951-8883 → sumashi mushroom soup
- **MK**, 868 N. Franklin St.: 312-482-9179 → yellowfin tuna tartare
- **Morton's**, One Westbrook Corporate Ctr., Westchester: 708-562-7000 → raspberry soufflé
- **Mysore Woodlands**, 2548 W. Devon Ave.: 773-338-8160 → royal family dosa
- **Nacional 27**, 325 W. Huron St.: 312-664-2727 → el corazón
- **Niche**, 14 S. Third St., Geneva: 630-262-1000 → frog legs
- **NoMI**, Park Hyatt Chicago, 800 N. Michigan Ave.: 312-239-4030 → pan-seared Hawaiian kajiki
- **One Sixtyblue**, 1400 W. Randolph St.: 312-850-0303 → lamb Wellington
- **Orange**, 3231 N. Clark St.: 773-549-4400 → chai tea French toast
- **Phoenix**, 2137 S. Archer Ave.: 312-328-0848 → fried oysters
- **Prairie Grass Cafe**, 601 Skokie Blvd., Northbrook: 847-205-4433 → eggs Benedict
- **Red Light**, 820 W. Randolph St.: 312-733-8880 → Shanghai-style whole calfsh
- **Riccardo Trattoria**, 2119 N. Clark St.: 773-549-0038 → tripe Florentine
- **Sage Grille**, 260 Green Bay Rd., Highwood: 847-433-7005 → gingerbread pear cake
- **Saibute**, 20 E. First St., Hinsdale: 630-920-8077 → jicama pancakes
- **Sam & Harry's**, 1551 N. Thoreau Dr., Schaumburg: 847-303-4050 → crab cakes
- **Sapori Trattoria**, 2701 N. Halsted St.: 773-832-9999 → cappellacci
- **Sarah's Pastries & Candies**, 70 E. Oak St.: 312-664-6223 → toffee sugar cookies
- **Semiramis**, 4629 N. Kedzie Blvd.: 773-279-8900 → robisserie chicken
- **Sequel**, 44 Yorktown Convenience Ctr., Lombard: 630-629-6560 → goat cheese mousse
- **Silver Seafood**, 4829 N. Broadway: 773-784-0668 → clams in black bean sauce
- **Smoque BBQ**, 3800 N. Pulaski Rd.: 773-545-7427 → brisket sandwich
- **Soia**, 3868 N. Lincoln Ave.: 773-327-3868 → short ribs
- **Southport Grocery**, 3552 N. Southport Ave.: 773-665-0100 → tuna melt
- **Spacca Napoli**, 1769 N. Sunnyside Ave.: 773-878-2420 → antipasto de melanzane
- **Spiaggia**, 980 N. Michigan Ave.: 312-280-2750 → spaghetti alla chitarra with lobster
- **Spring**, 2039 W. North Ave.: 773-395-7100 → barramundi with gnocchi
- **Sushi Wabi**, 842 W. Randolph St.: 312-563-1224 → smoked trout salad
- **Sweets & Savories**, 1534 W. Fullerton Ave.: 773-281-6778 → duck leg confit salad
- **Table Fifty-two**, 52 W. Elm St.: 312-573-4000 → goat cheese biscuits
- **Taqueria Moran**, 2226 N. California Ave.: 773-235-2663 → tortilla soup
- **Taste of Peru**, 6545 N. Clark St.: 773-381-4540 → seafood paella
- **Tay Do**, 1232 Bloomingdale Rd., Glendale Heights: 630-462-8888 → Vietnamese pan-fried noodles
- **Tepalcualco**, 2558 N. Halsted St.: 773-472-7419 → salmon en mole verde
- **Terragosto**, 1851 W. Addison St.: 773-248-2777 → antipasti misti
- **Tin Fish**, 1820 S. Harlem Ave., Tinley Park: 708-532-0200 → smoked salmon and potato pizza
- **Tramonto's Steak & Seafood**, 601 N. Milwaukee Ave., Wheeling: 847-777-6575 → tomahawk chop
- **Trattoria 225**, 225 Harrison St., Oak Park: 708-358-8555 → pancetta and arugula pizza
- **Tru**, 676 N. St. Clair St.: 312-202-0001 → pineapple rum soup
- **Turquoise**, 2147 W. Roscoe St.: 773-549-3523 → flatbread
- **Venus**, 820 W. Jackson Blvd.: 312-714-1001 → pastitsio
- **Vermilion**, 10 W. Hubbard St.: 312-527-4060 → pistachio-crustured veal chop
- **Vie**, 4471 Lawn Ave., Western Springs: 708-246-2082 → beer jam-glazed quail
- **West Town Tavern**, 1329 W. Chicago Ave.: 312-666-6175 → pappardelle with turkey meatballs
- **Winston's Market**, 3440 N. Southport Ave.: 773-327-6400 → couscous salad
- **Yeshi's Café**, 3257 N. Halsted St.: 773-248-6160 → wagyu beef
- **Zealous**, 479 W. Superior St.: 312-475-9712 → blaenose grouper