

NOVEMBER 2011
THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO GO®

Chicago

Where

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GUIDE
INSIDE

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Ahi tuna tartare at Prasino

New & Noshable

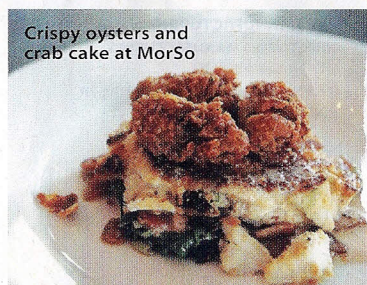
Want a taste of the Chicago dining scene? Snag a table (if you can) at one of these 8 newcomers. By Ari Bendersky

Whether you're looking for rustic fare in a sleek setting or gourmet waffles in a whimsical room, there's no shortage of new culinary options in the Windy City. Here are the eight on everybody's list.

While the name remains the same, there's little guests will recognize of the iconic **Pump Room**, housed for decades inside the Ambassador East Hotel. Now under the direction of famed hotelier Ian Schrager, who has transformed the hotel into the gleaming Public, the new Pump Room restaurant and bar is sleek and mod (think clean, angular lines, hanging orb light fixtures, and the classic black and white photos from the old space

framed and arranged in multiple rows and columns). International restaurant mogul Jean-Georges Vongerichten modeled his menu—featuring dishes like the Pump Room croque monsieur; the Public burger with grated farm cheddar and pickled jalapeños; and Lake Superior whitefish with chiles and herbs—after his award-winning New York spot ABC Kitchen. With rustic American fare, top-shelf cocktails and a see-and-been vibe, the new Pump Room may quickly gain the same acclaim as its predecessor. 1301 N. State Pkwy, 312-787-3700, www.pumproom.com

Just steps from the El, **Farmhouse** brings farm-to-tavern dining to River



Crispy oysters and crab cake at MorSo

North, its interior suitably rustic with exposed brick walls and a mish-mash of found materials, fixtures and chairs. Farmhouse uses seasonal ingredients reflective of our Midwestern locale to craft plates like mussels in lager broth with red bell peppers and blistered sweet corn, and grilled river trout with heirloom potatoes. The creative cocktail list is boosted by more than two dozen draft beers and the bar even features wine from Michigan, also on tap. Swing by for a burger and a pint—you may even hear a blue-



Cantina Laredo's mahi mahi tacos with marinated veggies



Banana bread French toast at Prasino

grass combo. 228 W. Chicago Ave., 312-280-4960, www.farmhousechicago.com

Big Mexican comes to town at **Cantina Laredo**, an upscale chain with 30 locations around the country. The sprawling bi-level space features tableside preparations of such varied fare as fresh guacamole and even Mexican apple pie with brandy butter. The second level offers a Chicago-only "plattillos" section, serving small plates like crispy ahi tacos, empanadas, flatbreads and ceviche. 508 N. State St., 312-955-0144, www.cantalinalaredo.com

Los Angeles-based **Native Foods Cafe** is changing the way carnivores view vegan cooking. The meatless menu is full of bold flavors in dishes like the delicious tempeh Scorpion Burger, sweet potato taquitos, sweet bean chili and a Chicago Dip au jus made with peppered seitan. The Wicker Park restaurant features murals by local artists and promotes community events. Bonus: The beer list includes selections from local breweries Two Brothers and Metropolitan. 1484 N. Milwaukee Ave., 773-489-8480; 1023 W. Belmont Ave., 773-549-4904; (opening Nov. 1) 218 S. Clark St., 312-332-6332, www.nativefoods.com

If 2010 was the year of barbecue in Chicago, 2011 has been a boon for

burgers. Another California import, **25 Degrees**, introduced its piled-high gourmet burgers in August and immediately started mouths watering. With a number of burgers to pick off the signature menu (try the Number Two with roasted tomato, burrata cheese, pesto and crispy prosciutto), 25 Degrees also offers make-your-own creations with dozens of topping options, including tarragon remoulade and jalapeño bacon. 736 N. Clark St., 312-943-9700, www.25degreesrestaurant.com

Food truck pioneer Matt Maroni of Gaztro-Wagon is showing that he's got more than naan-wiches up his sleeve; the chef recently opened **MorSo**, an intimate two-floor dining space steps from Lincoln Park awash in black and whites with large mirrors, floor-to-ceiling windows and plush pillows against cozy banquettes. Maroni is luring in locals and foodies alike with inventive plates featuring non-traditional ingredients like antelope and wild boar. 340 W. Armitage Ave., 773-880-9280, www.morsochicago.com

Japonais vet Alex Hernandez expanded the South Loop's breakfast offerings when he opened the adorably colorful **Waffles**, serving up—what else?—waffles. Pop in for sweet (red velvet with cherry compote; green tea with lemon ginger

chantilly cream) and savory (*albondigas*: asiago mint waffle topped with pork and lamb meatballs). Who said breakfast is just for breakfast? 1400 S. Michigan Ave., 312-854-8572, www.waffleschicago.com

There are green restaurants, and then there's **Prasino**. Bucking the sports-bar trend on Division Street in Wicker Park, Prasino (which means "green" in Greek), utilized reclaimed materials like former corrugated boxes for lampshades. The bar is stocked with small-batch spirits, sustainably produced wine and many local beer options. The eco-friendly theme is continued throughout the menu: Dishes like smoked pork chop with roasted corn and poblano grits, and soy-glazed black cod with carrot ginger sauce are prepared with locally sourced and organic ingredients. 1846 W. Division St., 312-878-1212, www.prasino.com



Waffles' signature dish



Cantina Laredo's mahi mahi
tacos with marinated veggies

grass combo. 228 W. Chicago Ave., 312-280-4960, www.farmhousechicago.com

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Los Angeles-based **Native Foods**

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