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Grazing

## 10 to feed a yen Fave eats in '05



ANDALUSIA IN ATLANTA: Kevin Rathbun's warm, woodsy Krog Bar James Camp

By [Cliff Bostock](#)

Looking back over the last year of dining, I'm struck by how few good restaurants opened in 2005. Nevertheless, here's a report of my 10 favorite new restaurants last year:

### Com

Com opened just in time to compensate me for the loss of Bien Thuy, the best Vietnamese restaurant in town. You won't get a better meal for the money at any restaurant of any type in town. The mix of raw and cooked ingredients, intense sauces and unique ingredients (like lamb, la lot leaves, and rabbit now and then) make Com a place I often take friends who are shy about ethnic restaurants. I've yet to bring anyone who didn't become a regular. 4005 Buford Highway. 404-320-0405.

### Mix

I have complained a lot about the tapas takeover of the city's dining scene, but three restaurants specializing in small plates are on my list. Mix, opened by the people who operate next-door Haven, is the sexiest of the lot with a lounge area worthy of Austin

Powers at his horniest. I especially like the gnocchi with sweetbreads and crimini mushrooms, the baby octopus and the braised pork. 1441 Dresden Drive. 404-969-3250. [www.mixrestaurant.com](http://www.mixrestaurant.com).

### Krog Bar

This is the closest thing in our city to an Andalusian-style tapas bar. With barely 25 seats, the bar is in a freestanding building outside the phenomenally popular Rathbun's, whose chef/owner Kevin Rathbun presides here, too. The cypress interior - with oversized windows lined with wine bottles - is warmly lit, and the food, like plates of cured meats and little crustless sandwiches, is simple and delicious. 112 Krog St. 404-524-1618. [www.krogbar.com](http://www.krogbar.com).

### Piebar

OK, every critic in town has panned Piebar and I have to admit the restaurant's escargot and pesto pizza is my own idea of a culinary nightmare. But the marvelous re-do of this Jetson-esque former Sun Trust Bank building creates so much high energy that walking through the front door is better than a hit of speed. Just go to nosh on the "micro-plates" designed by Richard Blais and dine for real elsewhere. 2160 Monroe Drive. 404-815-1605. [www.piebar.com](http://www.piebar.com).

### Quinones at Bacchanalia

When the original Bacchanalia opened on Piedmont, locals were shocked by the \$45 prix-fixe price tag. Now you can spend a lot more (\$165 with wine pairings, \$65 without) on an eight- to 10-course meal in this new dining room downstairs from Bacchanalia. The food - like foie gras with scuppernong jelly and peanut brittle - approaches the delicious weirdness of Seeger's but maintains a hold on reality. Still, I personally prefer the only mildly impoverishing dining room upstairs, but to each his own. 1198 Howell Mill Road. 404-365-0410. [www.starprovisions.com](http://www.starprovisions.com).

### **The Globe**

This has become my favorite spot for lunch when I am in the mood to hunt for a parking space. Chef Joshua Perkins, formerly of Brasserie Le Coze, has created a menu of American dishes that perfectly fit the minimalist, almost institutional dining rooms here. Lunchtime faves: seared lamb salad, the shrimp and manchego melt sandwich, and seared diver scallops with arugula and oven-roasted berries. 75 Fifth St. 404-541-1487. [www.globeatlanta.com](http://www.globeatlanta.com).

### **Muss and Turner's**

It takes a lot to drag me beyond the Perimeter to eat, but this - simultaneously Atlanta's most authentic and creative deli - is worth the trip. Besides offering fantastic sandwiches like the lamb burger and a classic Reuben made with corned beef imported from New York's finest supplier, the deli prepares amazingly good vacuum-sealed meals you reheat in boiling water. No tapas. 1675 Cumberland Parkway. 770-434-1114. [www.mussandturners.com](http://www.mussandturners.com).

### **Table 1280**

Yep, tapas in the bar. Sing along: "Walk on by/you don't have to eat them/just walk on by." The two dining rooms in the magnificent Renzo Piano expansion of the Woodruff Arts Center feature Shaun Doty's excellent New American cuisine. A favorite starter has been the weird poached egg with escargot over mashed Yukon Gold potatoes. The foie gras with a fig crepe is good, too. For entrees, the fish dishes are best. Kiddin' about the tapas. They are good. 1280 Peachtree St. 404-897-1280. [www.table1280.com](http://www.table1280.com).

### **Eclipse di Sol**

Finally, someone's hit a home run at this location that has been quick to kill the last two occupants. The winner is James Erlich, who also owns Eclipse di Luna. The menu here includes - sigh - small plates, but there are some great entrees, too, including maybe the city's best hanger steak with frites. Roasted chicken and wild salmon are other good choices. 640 N. Highland Ave. 404-724-0711. [www.eclipsedisol.com](http://www.eclipsedisol.com).

### **Sampan**

At long last! A heavily mirrored restaurant where you don't have to actually see yourself shoving food in your face. Steven Chan, an architect as well as a restaurateur, has created one of the city's most glamorous dining rooms, where walls are illusions and light is a plaything. Were Alice Chinese, this would be her Wonderland. Better yet, the restaurant's menu of fancy Chinese fusion raises the standard in Atlanta. Nothing on the menu has really disappointed, but two must-tries are the star anise duck and the steamed sea bass on tofu with black bean sauce. 1198 Howell Mill Road. 404-367-8333. [www.sampanrestaurant.com](http://www.sampanrestaurant.com).

### **Notable old-timers**

Via Elisa (1750-C Howell Mill Road, 404-605-0668, [www.viaelisa.com](http://www.viaelisa.com)), which I reviewed in December 2004, still produces the city's best pasta, available at Whole Foods. ... My favorite burger remains the double-cheeseburger at Ann's Snack Shop (1615 Memorial Drive, 404-687-9207). Miss Ann has announced that she will be retiring at the end of this year, so I intend to eat my fill. ... Sotto Sotto (313 N. Highland Ave., 404-523-6678. [www.sottosottorestaurant.com](http://www.sottosottorestaurant.com)) remains my favorite Italian destination, and the rhyming Soto (3330 Piedmont Road, 404-233-2005) remains my fave for sushi. ... Little Bangkok (2225 Cheshire Bridge Road, 404-315-1530) is my choice for inexpensive Thai food. ... Richard Blais at One Midtown Kitchen (559 Dutch Valley Road, 404-892-4111, [www.onemidtownkitchen.com](http://www.onemidtownkitchen.com)) continues to prepare the city's giddiest meal on Monday and Tuesday evenings. The multicourse meal of his "techno-organic" cooking is an amazing deconstruction of flavors and ingredients - at its best an education in the way taste is formed.