

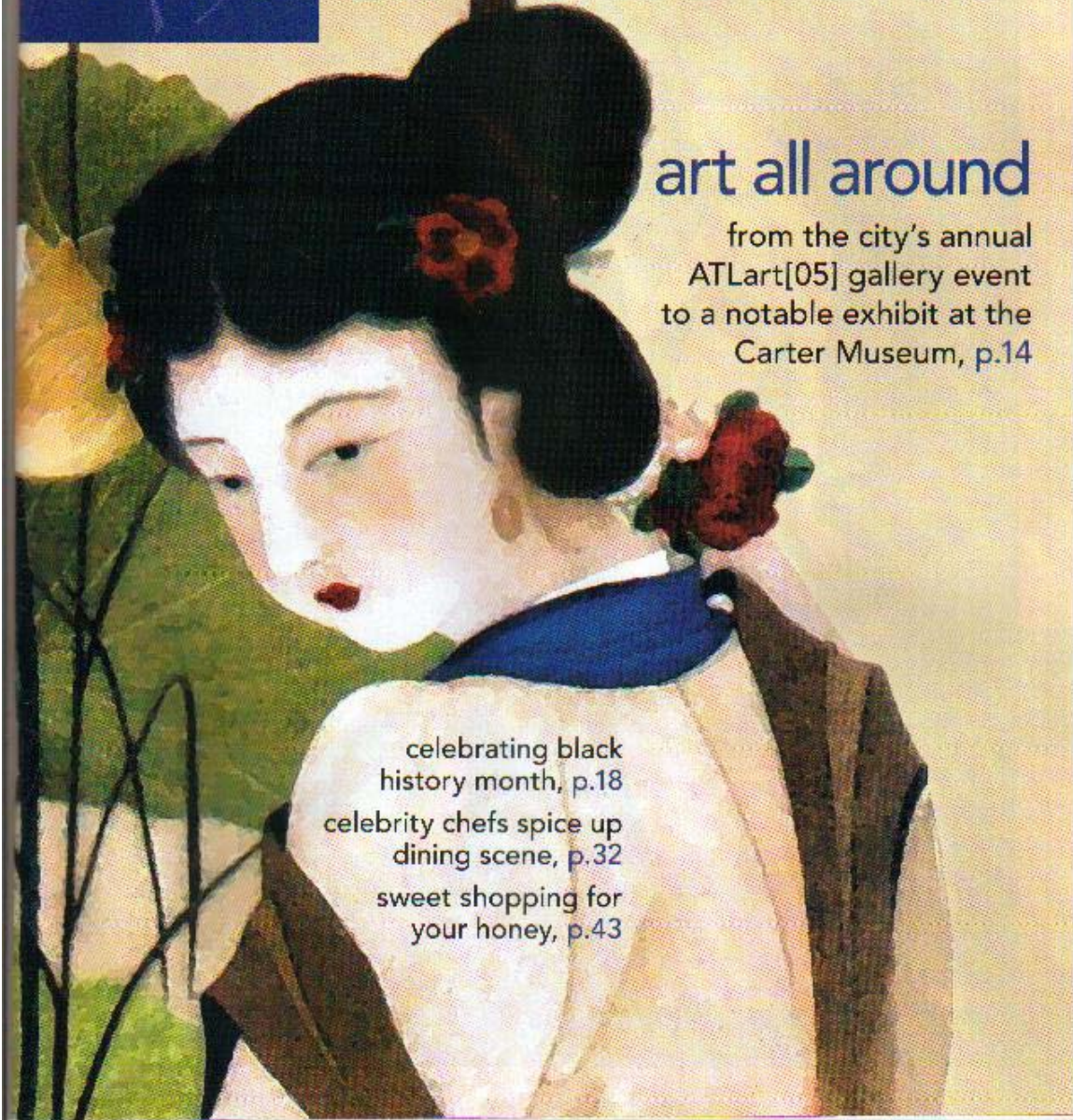
January/February 2005 The Official Visitors Guide of the Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau

Atlanta NOW

art all around

from the city's annual
ATLart[05] gallery event
to a notable exhibit at the
Carter Museum, p.14

celebrating black
history month, p.18
celebrity chefs spice up
dining scene, p.32
sweet shopping for
your honey, p.43



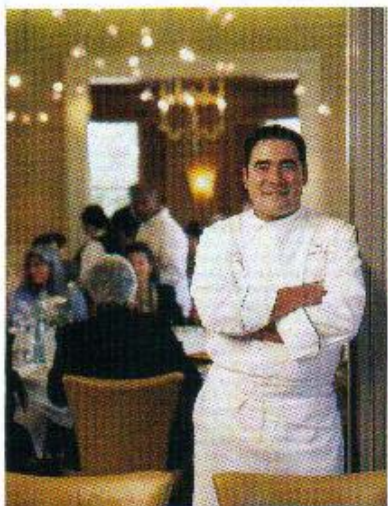


Wolfgang Puck (second from right) shows off at his Wolfgang Puck Express restaurant in Buckhead.

atlanta's celebrity chefs

A wealth of outstanding chefs create culinary masterpieces in the city's kitchens daily

BY H.M. CALLEY



Emeril Lagasse

Atlanta's reputation as a city that loves to eat out has caught the attention of the country's top chefs, some of whom have opened their own restaurants here. Wolfgang Puck, the California culinary master known for wooing guests at Spago in Beverly Hills and other eateries in Las Vegas, Malibu, Calif., and San Francisco, has a local **Wolfgang Puck Express** (1745 Peachtree St., (404) 815-1500) where diners can sample his signature thin-crust pizzas, stuffed sandwiches, soups and rotisserie chicken.

Emeril Lagasse, perhaps best known for his television appearances on the Food Network and his various restaurants in New Orleans, Las Vegas and Orlando, Fla., opened the doors to a stunningly designed **Emeril's Atlanta** (3500 Lenox Road, (404) 564-5600) in Buckhead in

2003. The menu combines Lagasse's Creole influences with regional favorites such as pesto-baked Georgia chicken breast, duck with andouille sausage and seared sea scallops with creamy grits.

But Atlanta also is graced with its own celebrity chefs whose continued dedication to excellence make them notable additions to the city's food scene. Their establishments are known not only for setting the highest standards of cuisine, but for service and style as well. They've put their names on the places that shouldn't be missed by visitors — or locals as well.

One of the most celebrated local chefs is Gunter Seeger, who lends his last name to **Seeger's** (111 West Paces Ferry Road, (404) 846-9779), the intimate dining room at the corner of West Paces Ferry Road and Andrews Drive. After a success-

ful stretch at The Ritz-Carlton, Buckhead, Seeger turned a tiny cottage into one of the city's leading food destinations, noted for its impeccable service and outstanding culinary tradition. Since 1997, he has served a menu of classics using the freshest seasonal ingredients from organic and local farms. As the selection changes daily, so does the menu.

Seeger's fame has spread well beyond the city limits. His work has been hailed by reviewers from around the country and by experts at The James Beard Foundation, who have named him "Best Chef in the Southeast."

Another graduate of The Ritz-Carlton, Buckhead, who branched out on his own is Joel Antunes. The chef's extensive experience in Paris, Asia, London and the South of France come through in his Atlanta kitchen, where French, Asian and Mediterranean influences are prominent. Guests at Joël (3290 Northside Parkway, (404) 233-3500) dine on duck breast with polenta, pear and cinnamon sauce and seared scallops with confit with truffle sauce.

Recently nominated for The James Beard Foundation's "Best Chef in the Southeast" award, Antunes also has been cited as one of the best restaurants in America by "Gourmet Magazine." In 2002, the eatery's wine list landed on one of the country's Top 10 as listed by "Food & Wine."

The award-winning cuisine of **Aria** (490 East Paces Ferry Road, (404) 233-7673) is the brainchild of chef Gerry Klaskala, a fixture on Atlanta's restaurant scene since the early 1990s. Not only is he known for his dedication in the kitchen, Klaskala frequently is associated with local philanthropic causes. He recently was part of the American Heart Association's Heart's Delight fundraiser

GET COOKING

Putting together a fabulous meal at home doesn't require the skills of a magician, but it does take some training to learn your way around a recipe. Atlanta is home to several institutions and companies that cater to those curious about all things culinary, from basic starter classes to creating a fine pastry.

On most Saturday mornings, you'll find folks figuring out the mysteries of preparing pasta, sushi, dessert and entire meals at classes held at the **Art Institute of Atlanta** (6600 Peachtree Dunwoody Road, (770) 689-4764; www.aia.org/atlanta.edu). The four-hour, hands-on sessions, priced at \$85, are taught by chef-instructors from the school's degree program in culinary arts.

One of the area's longest-running series of cooking classes is offered under the umbrella of **Simple Abundance** ((404) 892-FRED (3333);

www.oah.org), a program of the **Atlanta Community Food Bank**. Priced from \$40 to \$75, the sessions average 35 students who meet at locations from the **Kroger School of Cooking in Alpharetta** to the **Cook's Warehouse** in Midtown. All of the talent and materials are donated, and all proceeds

benefit the Food Bank, which raises about \$55,000 a year from the classes. Among the instructors who volunteer their time are some of Atlanta's top chefs.

Area chefs also show up on the roster of classes held at **The Cook's Warehouse** (549-1 Amsterdam Ave., (404) 815-4993, Midtown, and 4062 Peachtree Road, (404) 949-9943,

Brookhaven; www.cookswarehouse.com). From sessions on the basics of beef to a comparison of wines from France, The Cook's classes accommodate a range of skills and tastes. There even are classes for kids. Most of the evening sessions range from \$25 to \$65.

All of the tools you need to turn out a great meal are in the practice kitchens at the **Viking Culinary Arts Center** (1743 Peachtree St., (404) 743-9064; www.vikingcna.com) on the edge of Buckhead. Experts offer their advice on getting started in the kitchen to recipes that the kids can make themselves.

Several locations of the **Whole Foods Market** chain host cooking classes as well. The newest addition to the lineup is at the Whole Foods-owned **Harry's Market** in Roswell, where the **Salud! Cooking and Lifestyle School** (11600 Upper Hemlock Road, Roswell, (770) 442-3354; www.harrysfarmersonline.com) recently opened. Classes are taught by area chefs who unlock the secrets of seafood, Thai, Texas and other cuisine.

If you're a fan of the dishes served at the **Buckhead Diner**, **NAVA**, **Bluepointe** or **Atlanta Fish Market**, sign up for a "Classy Cooking Class" ((404) 237-2060; www.buckheadrestaurants.com) hosted by chefs from the **Buckhead Life Restaurant Group**. Classes fill up quickly with fans who want to learn more about wines or re-create their favorite entrees and desserts at home.

The Fifth Group Restaurants ((404) 813-4700; www.fifthgroup.com), owners of **La Tavola**, **The Food Studio** and **South City Kitchen**, also recruit their experts to share insights on food and wine. The hands-on classes usually are followed by the best part of any cooking session: sampling the creation!

— H. M. Cadey



DINING

in Washington, D.C., and often is found at local charity functions for the High Museum of Art, March of Dimes and various hunger causes. Klaskala took part in the 2003 Great Chefs of the South dinner in Beaufort, S.C.; in 2001, he snagged the "Culinary Award of Excellence" from the Robert Mondavi Winery.

The new Rathbun's, 1112 King St., (404) 524-8280 in Inman Park is the creation of chef Kevin Rathbun, a protégé of Lagasse. After working in New Orleans and Dallas, Rathbun arrived in Atlanta in



Chef Kevin Rathbun

the mid-1990s where he wowed the city's taste buds at NAVA. He went on to open Asian fusion eatery Bluepointe before launching his own space last fall. The influences of Asia and the Southwest can be found in his lobster and roasted chick-

tacos, brisket with tomato and poblano quesadillas, and tuna with Japanese eggplant. Among Rathbun's extensive awards are the "2004 Best New Restaurant" by "Esquire" and "Travel & Leisure" magazines.

Local favorite Shaun Doty captured accolades from the city and the national scene when he opened MidCity Cuisine, 11345 Peachtree St., (404) 888-6700 in 2003. Honored as one of the best eateries around by Gourmet Magazine and Bon Appetit, MidCity specializes in seasonally influenced, modern American cuisine.

Diners enjoy a range of options, from grilled Georgia trout, veal chops and roasted range chicken on the main menu to a family-style, three-course menu during the week and an all-you-can-eat salad and gourmet pizza on Sunday evenings.

Along with these five favorites, Atlanta is fortunate to have a wealth of outstanding chefs creating culinary masterpieces in kitchens around the city daily.

restaurants

Whether you're craving world-class cuisine or fun family fare, these Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau members have you covered.

AMERICAN/NEW AMERICAN

Allie's American Grille (Atlanta Marriott Perimeter Center), 245 Perimeter Center Parkway, 7-285 & Ashford Dunwoody Rd., Atlanta, GA 30346 770-286-5800 A re-creation of the Freshwest ingredients and regional specialties, all creatively prepared from our new menu. Also offering "Wellness and You" items - prepared dishes with reduced levels of salt, fat, and cholesterol.

Allie's American Grille (Atlanta Marriott Marquis), 265 Peachtree Center Avenue, (between Ellis and Baker Streets), Atlanta, GA 30303 404 521 0000 We've redefined what restaurant should be. Featuring breakfast and luncheon buffets and our popular Friday night seafood buffet. Sumptuous salads, imaginative entrees, regional specialties, lavish desserts. Reservations optional.

Allie's American Grille (Atlanta Airport Marriott), 4711 Best Road, College Park, GA 30337 404 766 7900 (A)S)We've redefined what restaurant should be. Featuring breakfast and luncheon buffets. Sumptuous salads, imaginative entrees, regional specialties, lavish desserts. Reservations optional.

Atlanta Bread Company, 211 Peachtree Street, N.E. Suite B-71, Atlanta, GA 30301 404-688-6305 grainworks@breadcompany.com www.atlantabread.com A bakery cafe concept offering good food made from fresh, high-quality ingredients. Inviting atmosphere & convenient neighborhood locations offer a selection of sandwiches, soups & salads including a selection of breakfast items & fresh-baked products. Full catering menu is available.

Atrium Cafe (Renaissance Waverly Hotel), 2450 Galleria Parkway, Atlanta, GA 30339 770-553-4500 Refreshing sun-filled cafe. Featuring hearty to light and lean entrees. Fresh seafood, salads and mouth watering desserts. Open for breakfast, lunch and dinner, 55, Pk. WC, MD.

Blue Ridge Grill, 1251 West Peach Ferry Road, Atlanta, GA 30327 404-233-5900 American cuisine at this top restaurant includes bakery-grilled meats & sea-

food, home-style vegetables & more!

Bluepointe, 3455 Peachtree Road, Atlanta, GA 30326 404-237-9070 writer@bluecheese.com www.bluecheeserestaurants.com A contemporary restaurant of dramatic proportions offers a blend of modern American cuisine with a splash of Asian flavor, featuring inventive items like Peanut Crusted Groupers & Wild Charred Rare Loin Steak. Whet your appetite with a glass of wine or a creative cocktail such as our signature Green Apple Martini. Enjoy our smooth libations, striking decor & impeccable service.

Buckhead Diner, 3023 Piedmont Road, Atlanta, GA 30305 404-262-5336 An American dining experience unlike any other. Inventive menu items, steaky service & casual, retro style give this Atlanta icon a fun feel all its own. Signature items include Homemade Potato Cakes w/Mustard Blue Cheese, Sweet & Sour Calamari, Vaq. Macadam w/Wild Mushrooms & White Chocolate Benneise Crème Pie. The fun menu & energy-packed atmosphere give guests a taste of nostalgia that's always in style.

Cafe, The (Sheraton Buckhead Hotel), 3615 Lenox Road, NE, Atlanta, GA 30326 404-548-7528 Bright with color and fresh as a garden, for casual dining or snacks. Unusual sandwich and salad specialties. Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Cafe Marmalade (The Westin Atlanta North), 7 Concourse Parkway, Atlanta, GA 30126 770 395 5900 Casual lounge dining with a delicious selection of sandwiches, salads and entrees. S, L, D.

Cafe Ravinia (Crown Plaza Ravinia), 4325 Ashford Dunwoody Road, Atlanta, GA 30345 770 551 6375 Casual family atmosphere overlooking lush gardens, highlighting tempting appetizers, salads, steaks, seafood and poultry. S, L, D, P, M, C.

Cafe Tu Tu Tango, 320 Peach Road, Atlanta, GA 30309 404-841-6222 atlantases@cafetuutango.com www.cafetuutango.com Eclectic restaurant with an artist's loft theme done, featuring appetizer portions of multi-ethnic finds like specialty pizzas, soups, tiramisu, & just and found items that just don't fit any-where else! Indoor & outdoor dining available.

Canoe, 4191 Paces Ferry Road, Atlanta, GA 30329 770-432-7663 laurie@canoe-at.com www.canoe-at.com (P, W) Exciting Neo American cuisine served in a beautiful historic setting on the Chattahoochee River. Featuring innovative Executive Chef, Gary L. Winnie, L, W, D, S, P, PE. Located in Vinings.

Cherry Restaurant & Bar, 1051 West Peachtree Street, Atlanta, GA 30309 404-872-1629 info@aboutcherry.com www.aboutcherry.com Cherry is a sophisticated yet inviting restaurant & bar featuring globally influenced comfort food by renowned Chef Khai Phan.

City Grill, 50 Fort Plaza, Suite 200, Atlanta, GA 30303 404-524-2489 info@citygrillatlanta.com www.citygrillatlanta.com Modern American cuisine & award-winning staff. Located in one of Atlanta's most architecturally beautiful buildings. Lunch M-F, 11:30am-2pm. Dinner 7 nights, 5-10pm. Live Jazz Tu-Fri, 6:30-10pm. Private rooms.

Clubhouse, The, 3193 Peachtree Road, Unit 1056, Atlanta, GA 30326 404-442-8873 clubhouse@clubhouseatl.com www.theclubhouse.com Offering an American cuisine with four private dining rooms available for special events, seating from 15-125 people. Soons are great for breakfasts, lunches, dinners, weddings, presentations, and all-day meetings.

Collage, The (Sheraton Atlanta Hotel), 125 Courtland & Truitt Streets, S.W., Atlanta, GA 30303 404 629-5800 Casual dining at its best. Breakfast, lunch & dinner 7 days. Daily spectacular breakfast & P, PE 8:30-10:30 a.m. on weekends. Weekday Buffet with a trendy Southern twist 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Copenhill Cafe (Carter Presidential Center), 1 Copenhill Avenue, Atlanta, GA 30507 404 420 5132 Casual, self-service dining. Outdoor patio with view of downtown Atlanta. Open 11 a.m.-4 p.m. (Operated by Proof of the Pudding MGR, Inc.)

Dalry's Restaurant & Bar, 17 International Blvd., Atlanta, GA 30303 404-581-3303 info@dalrys-restaurant.com www.dalrysrestaurant.com Charming converted warehouse featuring contemporary menu. Separate martini/jazz bar with dancing. Lunch Mon-Fri. Dinner 7 nights.

Dantanna's, 3432 Avedon Lenox Drive, Suite 304, Atlanta, GA 30326 404-760-8878 info@dantannas.com www.dantannas.com Apple steaks & P, W seafood in a comfortable and energized, upscale environment. Located in the heart of Buckhead, we provide state of the art video and presentation capabilities.

Dave & Buster's, 2215 D & S Drive, Marietta, GA 30067 770-951-9514 www.daveandbusters.com Atlanta's largest full-service restaurant & entertainment experience. Fresh pasta, gourmet steaks along with over 200 state of the art video games & world-class cocktails. Party & banquet facilities available.

Dish Restaurant, 472 N. Highland Ave., Atlanta, GA 30306 404-897-3465 andish@yahoo.com Housed in a renovated "old gas station" in the Virginia Highlands with a delightful price, serving innovative seasonal food nightly with friendly service.

Emeril's Atlanta, 3500 Lenox Road, Atlanta, GA 30326 404-364-3600 www.emerils.com Chef Emeril Lagasse brings his award-winning concept to Buckhead in Atlanta, offering lunch and dinner menus and specialties including a six-course tasting menu, with optional