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» DINING

Chefs We Love

Their names may not sit on the tip of your tongue. These chefs aren't celebrities. Not yet. But we think it's only a matter of time until they're household names. Taste any of their creations, from Southern comfort foods to twists on Spanish classics, and we bet you'll commit their names to memory.

Steven Satterfield

"I approach the menu thinking about what I would want to eat if I went out to dinner," says Steven Satterfield, co-owner and executive chef of Miller Union. "It's as simple as it gets." Though it changes frequently, seasonal, sustainable and high-quality food is always on the menu. "I'm a creative person and want to express locally raised foods including produce, meats and cheeses," he says. "That parameter forces you to be creative on a daily basis depending on what you can get your hands on. It's kind of an old-fashioned idea before the industrialization of food, and it's near and dear to my heart."

Popular items include slow-braised rabbit with wild mushrooms and grits, egg baked in celery cream with rustic bread, and griddled chicken with roasted carrots and braised cabbage. 999 Brady Ave. NW, 678-733-8550, www.millerunion.com.

MILLER + UN



Jay Swift

"My approach is to update comfort food favorites with contemporary techniques, seasonal ingredients and transform classics to new standards," says Jay Swift. At 4th & Swift, where he's chef and owner, "the menu changes daily and seasonally to focus on the bounty on the season." Fresh, all-natural ingredients come from local sources and inspire dishes such as arugula and beet salad, veal cannelloni, panko-crusted skate wing and "Three Little Pigs," a triple-temptation of pork loin, pork belly and house-made pork sausage with macaroni and cheese. Swift strives "to create an environment that I would enjoy dining in if I were a guest at the restaurant," he says. "A true neighborhood restaurant without pretense where my guests could eat real food." Mission accomplished. 621 North Ave. NE, 678-904-0160, www.4thandswift.com.

Chad Crete

"We believe in slow roasting to let layered flavors develop," says Chad Crete, executive chef and managing partner at The Iberian Pig, which opened last October in downtown Decatur. Case in point: The pork cheeks for the popular tacos are roasted for eight hours. The goal at the Spanish restaurant is to create standout, unique dishes. "Everybody has calamari," says Crete, "but typically it's fried. We stuff smaller tubes with vegetables and bake them in the oven with a tomato-based sauce." The New Hampshire native says he "caught the bug" for restaurant work as a dishwasher at age 14. After graduating from the Hospitality School at Cornell University and working stints in Chicago and Las Vegas, he came to Atlanta to partner with his college friend and fifth-generation restaurateur Fred Castellucci III. Crete's motto: "Never be complacent, always better yourself and offer things we're proud to serve." 121 Sycamore St., 404-371-8800, www.iberianpigatl.com.





Justin Keith

"I was interested in cooking food that I grew up with," says Georgia-native Justin Keith. So he returned to his home state after graduating from an affiliate of Le Cordon Bleu in Scottsdale, Ariz., and working at several acclaimed restaurants in the Southwest. As executive chef at Food 101, Keith finds inspiration in seasonal ingredients. He comes by this naturally, since his grandparents owned a family farm and a sugar mill. But he also injects dishes with his own flair: "I'm constantly looking for ways to do different new things to keep the customers' interest, maintain my level of creativity, plus also keep with trends in the culinary world," he says. Popular menu items include buttermilk-fried chicken served with mashed potatoes and green beans, cornmeal-crusted fried catfish with dirty rice and red beans, grilled filet of ribeye with gruyère au gratin potatoes and wilted spinach, and a slow-braised Kobe beef burrito with jalapeño lime slaw. 4969 Roswell Rd., 404-497-9700, www.food101atlanta.com.



Ron Eyester

Fresh ingredients are Ron Eyester's passion. Thus, "we're constantly challenging ourselves to source as much as we can from Georgia," he says. At his Morningside restaurant, Rosebud, seasonal ingredients are showcased in dishes such as wild Georgia shrimp and local grits, buttermilk fried chicken, and The Big Nasty, a popular brunch sandwich that tops fried chicken with scrambled egg, smoked bacon and cheddar. While growing up in New York, Eyester planned on one day taking over his father's plumbing and heating business. Encouraged by his mom to work outside the family, Eyester got a job as a bus boy, fell in love with the kitchen, and continued working in restaurants. These days, when not in the kitchen, the head chef and owner enjoys mingling with guests in Rosebud's dining room. "It's like a dinner party at my house every night," he says. "We really try to foster an easy, comfortable environment." 1397 N. Highland Ave., 404-347-9747, www.rosebudatlanta.com.

MORE CHEFS WE LOVE

• **SCOTT SERPAS** The South Louisiana native got his start working as a busboy in New Orleans, but after following Kevin Rathbun to Atlanta and working at such esteemed local restaurants as Nava, Sia's, Mitra and TWO urban licks, struck gold with his own venture, Serpas True Food, in January 2009. And he hasn't looked back since, earning rave reviews from diners and critics alike. Menu highlights include crispy duck rolls, pasta jambalaya and the double beef patti that graces our cover. 659 Auburn Ave., 404-688-0040, www.serpasrestaurant.com.

• **NICK MELVIN** When New Orleans native Melvin took over the kitchen at Parish last year, he upped the ante big time. Previously, he was the executive chef at the Farmhouse at Serenbe, which, he says, really raised his game in terms of using fresh, local ingredients in his dishes. And what dishes they are—Creole steak served with Pernod creamed spinach and "Big Easy Fried Chicken," which, Melvin claims, is the best in the city, to name a few. 240 N. Highland Ave., 404-681-4434, www.parishatl.com.