



THE

Ordinary, The CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

Every ten years, without fail, Mike Lata opens a new restaurant. The man is patient, never rushing off to New York or Vegas—not even Hilton Head—to stamp out some imitation of himself. And so, a decade after opening Fig—still one of the best restaurants on the Eastern Seaboard—he has unleashed the Ordinary, whose name belies the canny intelligence that went into making it a bellwether American seafood house built within the stately lineaments of a historic bank building, with sixteen-foot Palladian-arch windows and a backlit skylight. It's a big, echoing room with a fine long bar, a six-seat marble raw bar, and a lofty mezzanine overlooking the dining room.

Lata is a master of the trick of making the simple into small marvels of invention. You could, of course, just share tiers of iced shellfish lavished with peel-and-eat shrimp, clams, mussels, and lobster. And you would be happy. But you don't want to miss the fine-grained smoked-trout pâté with brown bread or the meaty skate wing with potato terrine and rémoulade sauce. One of the best main courses I had, which depend on what's best in the market that morning, was a southern triggerfish done ingeniously as a crisp schnitzel, with a simple brown-butter vinaigrette.

And for dessert, what else but a creamy, cool Carolina-

gold-rice pudding? Wear seersucker or jeans—you'll find both here—and listen in on the lilting Daisy Buchanan-like drawl of women for whom local gossip is one of the high arts. 544 King Street; 843-414-7060; eattheordinary.com

There is just too much. There are just too many exciting phenomena happening in the world of American dining right now. Fabulous Peruvian food, a German wurst palace, lots of shrimp and grits, the continued onslaught of Italian. Cronuts. To try to ascribe a singular meaning to it all would be like trying to drink a pork chop. So we've done something far more useful: distilled what's important and innovative and fun right now into a simple list, A to Z. Twenty astonishing new restaurants highlight this abridged encyclopedia. The rest is just really good gravy.



The Tiny Recipe THE ORDINARY

MIGNONETTE: Zest one Meyer lemon (in season now!) into a bowl. Add the juice of three Meyer lemons, one small minced shallot, 1 Tbsp rice-wine vinegar, a few sprigs of tarragon, and several turns of a black-pepper mill. Chill.