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2013 Restaurant of the Year: The Ordinary

This Charleston newcomer beat out all the others in our poll

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Helm by chef Mike Lata, The Ordinary has lived up to the expectations, and more.

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December 17, 2013

By **Dan Myers**
Editor

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**Today on The Daily
Meal**

2013 was undeniably a great year for restaurants. From low-key to high-class and from casual to upscale, new restaurants sprouted up for every mood and kept us enthralled, excited, and eager to see what lurked around the corner all year long. We assembled a list of 14 of the year's biggest openings and asked a panel of noted [food](#) writers to vote for their favorite, and we're pleased to name [The Ordinary](#), in Charleston, S.C., the 2013 Restaurant of the Year.

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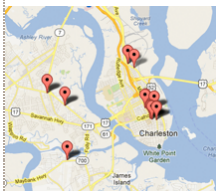
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In order to assemble our initial list, we looked for restaurants that matched a set of criteria: they had to have opened in 2013, and they had to have made a major splash, making waves in their respective cities not just among those in the know and those in the industry, but among the general public. These buzz-worthy restaurants also couldn't ride on hype alone; they also had to prove themselves by receiving heaps of positive press and highly starred reviews from everyday folks who've dined there.

That's not to say that the other restaurants we considered aren't praise-worthy. In Seattle, [Mamnoon](#)'s owners Wassef and Racha Haroun are capturing the flavors of the Middle East in a new, bright, and harmonious way. In Nashville, Tenn., [Rolf and Daughters](#)' Philip Krajeck is making some of the finest pasta dishes in the country. In New York, [Betony](#)'s roast chicken will spoil all others for you, [Aska](#) is elevating Nordic cuisine to new heights, and at [Estela](#) chef Ignacio Mattos is proving that the small-plates trend is alive, well, and has plenty more to offer. In Los Angeles, a seat at [Trois Mec](#) is officially the hottest ticket in town and constantly keeps diners on their toes; Ari Taymor's [Alma](#) came from nowhere to excite even the most jaded diners with modernist techniques and an ambitious, market-driven menu; and the kaiseki-inspired [Hinoki & The Bird](#) is turning out our [Sandwich of the Year](#), possibly the most unusual lobster roll ever created. In Atlanta, Ford Fry's [King + Duke](#) is serving stunningly delicious seasonal creations from their open hearth. In Chicago, Mark Steuer's [Carriage House](#) is capturing all the magic of Low Country Southern cooking. In New Orleans, [Mariza](#)'s brand of rustic Italian-meets comfort food has locals flocking to the Bywater neighborhood. In Boston, [Bronwyn](#) is making the rustic cuisine of central Europe new and exciting. And in Washington, D.C., [Del Campo](#)'s Victor Albusu's wood-burning grill is working miracles.

But one restaurant received twice as many votes as its nearest competitor from our group of two dozen panelists: Charleston's The Ordinary, helmed by [Mike Lata](#). Also winning praise from GQ, Esquire, Condé Nast Traveler, and Southern Living, the Best New Restaurant James Beard

Award nominee is everything it's cracked up to be. Lata, who opens a new restaurant every 10 years without fail (his last restaurant was Charleston's perennial favorite [FIG](#)), has created what's nothing short of a temple to seafood inside a historic [bank](#) building. Seafood towers gleam with the bounty of East Coast waters; oysters come raw, smoked, on a slider, fried and topped with beef tartare, or baked with bottarga butter; other dishes include smoked trout pâté; swordfish belly with arugula, lemon, and buttermilk; braised Sicilian-style grouper cheeks with polenta; a lobster roll; New England-style fish chowder; and amberjack schnitzel.

So congratulations on another stunning achievement in The Ordinary, chef Lata; it's nothing short of extraordinary, and we can't wait to see what the next 10 years have in store for you.

2013 Restaurant of the Year: Related Articles

- [Mike Lata: Charleston's Most Influential Chef?](#)
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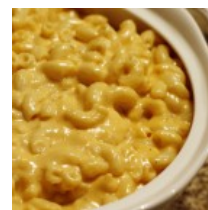
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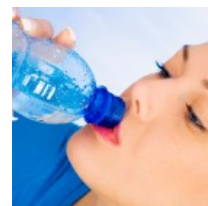
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