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Insider recommendations from the professionals:
chefs, bartenders, sommeliers & food purveyors.

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The F.E.D. Fifty | Restaurants

WHERE TO EAT IN 2014

January 6, 2014



With so many great recommendations from chefs, bartenders and sommeliers, it isn't easy to narrow down our annual list of 50 restaurants we want to eat at in 2014. Our wish list road trip ranges from a chef-driven po-boy shop hidden within a dive bar in New Orleans to a Cleveland restaurant known for their preparation of a whole pig's head to a Spanish tapas bar in western North Carolina. Some places have opened within the past year, others are classic, but all the picks have been selected for their unique vision and passion behind what they're serving.

Note: the numbering scheme does not represent a rank and is purely there for a reference.

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NORTHEAST

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NORTHEAST | VERGENNES, VT



Vergennes Laundry
Photograph courtesy of Vergennes Laundry | Photo Credit: Corey Hendrickson

1.

Vergennes Laundry

Located in a former laundromat, this is a wood-fired bakery and cafe owned by baker Julianne Jones and her husband, Didier Murat. They serve croissants and coffee starting at 7am, pastries late morning, sandwiches, salads, soups and tartines at lunch, espresso late afternoon and wine, cheese, oysters and Champagne when you're ready to change it up. Andrew Volk of Portland Hunt & Alpine Club always stops here on his way to Vermont. "We especially love their morning buns, croissants and loaves of bread. But you can't go wrong with anything here."

247 Main Street, Vergennes, VT 05491

T: 802.870.7157 | www.vergenneslaundry.com

NORTHEAST | PORTLAND, ME

2.

Piccolo

Aptly named (piccolo translates to small) with a handful of seats, chef Damian Sansonetti is cooking rustic Italian cuisine from Central and Southern Italy and using all local ingredients. Sansonetti worked as the chef de cuisine at Bar Boulud in New York and his wife, Ilma Lopez, is the pastry chef and worked at Corton, Tailor, El Bulli, Cafe Boulud and Le Bernardin. "It's delicious Italian food and desserts in an intimate setting we love. This is one of our favorite date nights in town," says Andrew Volk of Portland Hunt & Alpine Club.

111 Middle Street, Portland, ME 04101

T: 207.747.5307 ([book a table](#)) | piccolomaine.com



Dinner at Island Creek Oyster Bar
 Photograph courtesy of Island Creek Oyster Bar | Photo Credit: Michael Piazza

NORTHEAST | BOSTON, MA

3.

Giulia

“A neighborhood restaurant with pasta any Italian chef would be honored to eat,” says sommelier Lauren Friel of Oleana. “Handmade every morning and perfectly toothsome every night. Their home-made gelato makes your taste buds dance.” Named for the street in Rome, owner and chef E. Michael Pagliarini, formerly of Via Matta in Boston, worked in some of the world's top kitchens with chefs Grant Achatz (Alinea) and Heston Blumenthal (The Fat Duck) before opening this Cambridge restaurant.

1682 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138

T: 617.441.2800 ([book a table](#)) | www.giuliarestaurant.com



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NORTHEAST | THE BERKSHIRES

5.

The Prairie Whale

The restaurant formerly known as Bell & Anchor is serving farm-to-table and nose-to-tail cuisine. Mark Firth was a co-owner of Diner, Roman and Marlow & Sons in Brooklyn before moving to the Berkshires full time. He brought along chef Stephen Browning who sources locally for his daily changing menu. Chef Daire Rooney of Allium Restaurant & Bar says their brunch is one of her favorites, “I love the relaxing atmosphere and chef Browning's great fresh vegetable-and-egg pairings, polenta, house-made sausage, poached eggs and killer scones.”

178 Main Street, Great Barrington, MA 01230
T: 413.528.5050 | www.facebook.com/PrairieWhale



Blueberry Tart at Local 111
Photograph courtesy of Local 111

NORTHEAST | HUDSON VALLEY

6.

Local 111

Chef Josephine Proul presides over this 39-seat restaurant in a former garage with a hyper-local focus and a loyal following, including chef Brian Alberg of the Red Lion Inn in Stockbridge, MA. “It’s a unique space with a very compassionate chef who cares as much for her guests as she does for her ingredients. She’s doing the local thing like nobody’s business.” Chef David Wurth of CrossRoads Food Shop compliments her willingness to “go out of her way to find the best locally grown or raised products for highly seasonal menus.”

111 Main Street, Philmont, NY 12565
T: 518.672.7801 | www.local111.com



Aska
Photograph courtesy of Aska | Photo Credit: Evan Sung

NORTHEAST | NEW YORK CITY

7.

Aska

There is a seriousness about the food at this one Michelin-starred restaurant located in a warehouse-style art gallery in Williamsburg. Chef Fredrick Berselius is cooking based on flavor memories from growing up in his native Sweden and using ingredients from the Northeast region, some of which he forages himself. In the front of the house you'll see laptop surfers, but in the back there are a handful of seats which you can book in advance for a seven or ten course tasting menu.

90 Wythe Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11249
T: 718.388.2969 ([book a table](#)) | [askanyc.com](#)

8.

The Musket Room

"Extremely precise, high-end and refined food inspired by New Zealand," is how [sommelier Pascaline Lepeltier](#) of Rouge Tomate describes this Nolita newcomer. "I would go, without a doubt, for the tasting menu! Chef Matt Lambert is using herbs they are growing in their beautiful courtyard (in the middle of Manhattan). The service is perfect, great list and an awesome wine director Erin Scala, who is also super talented with tea."

265 Elizabeth Street, New York, NY 10012
T: 212.219.0764 ([book a table](#)) | [www.musketroom.com](#)



Uni Bocadillo and Sardinia at Toro NYC
Photograph courtesy of Toro

9.

Toro NYC

"Everything here is really good," chef Matt Lambert of The Musket Room says about the newly opened Toro tapas bar. [Chefs Jamie Bissonnette](#) and [Ken Oringer](#) have transported their popular Boston restaurant to the far west side of Chelsea. Lambert passes along a few dishes he's tried: "the Erizos Con Caviar, which is a spoon with caviar, Maine uni, Iberico jamon and a quail egg all together. I also like the Tripa De Bacalao Guisado which is cod tripe with octopus head and spaetzle and it is just delicious. They serve cava out of the porrón, which is a teapot shaped alcohol dispenser that they rock in Spain and they pour the wine from this right into your mouth."

85 10th Avenue, New York, NY 10011
T: 212.691.2360 ([book a table](#)) | [toro-nyc.com](#)

10.

Bunker

"This is my new favorite restaurant in New York to take friends, dine alone or order takeout. And if it couldn't get any better, it's BYO!" recommends Krystof Zizka of Maison Premiere. "My favorite dishes include Bahn Xeo (crepe with shrimp, bacon, egg, bean sprouts), Cha Ca La Vong (crispy ginger turmeric flounder), Tom Thit Ram (caramelized wild shrimp, bacon, basil, rice), and Long Bean Salad with coconut flakes." Their name 'bún-ker' is a play on words, referring to the Vietnamese vermicelli noodles bún. Owner and chef Jimmy Tu worked at Eleven Madison Park before opening this Ridgewood Asian street food eatery.

46-63 Metropolitan Avenue, Queens, NY 11385
T: 718.386.4282 | [bunkervietnamese.com](#)



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Serpico
Photograph courtesy of Serpico

MID-ATLANTIC | PHILADELPHIA, PA

11.

Fond

“Fond is my favorite restaurant in the city,” says chef Joe Cicala of Le Virtu. “He uses a little bit of French technique, but it’s definitely edgy and American. It’s refined, but very relaxed. They recently opened up in a new space where they have a full bar and a well-thought out wine list. During the winter, they have foie gras soup and it’s awesome.

It’s a little rich, but just incredible. They change the menu weekly, so it’s hard to pick just one dish, but definitely the fish crudo and the lobster risotto are really spot on. They do a great combination of savory and sweet, because his wife, Jessie Prawlucky, does all the pastries.”

1537 S 11th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19147

T: 215.551.5000 ([book a table](#)) | [fondphilly.com](#)

12.

Serpico

Chef Peter Serpico moved from New York after winning the coveted James Beard Best New Restaurant Award for Momofuku Ko, in which he was a partner with chef David Chang. His new namesake Philadelphia restaurant is bustling with a large bar surrounding the open kitchen and an Asian fusion menu with delicate dishes like oxtail soup with daikon and sprouts to the heartier pig tail served over polenta.

604 South Street, Philadelphia, PA 19147

T: 215.925.3001 ([book a table](#)) | [www.serpicoonsouth.com](#)



Seafood at Eat The Rich
Photograph courtesy of Eat The Rich

MID-ATLANTIC | WASHINGTON, DC

13.

Eat the Rich

Named after a Motörhead song, this seafood house is the collaboration of [barman Derek Brown](#) (The Passenger, The Columbia and Mockingbird Hill) and Rappanhannock Oyster Bar's Travis Croxton. Order a pitcher of cocktails, including the Beer n' Clam with house-made Clamato juice, and watch the oyster shuckers at work.

1839 7th Street NW, Washington, DC 20001

T: 202.316.9396 | www.etrbar.com

14.

Toki Underground

This Taiwanese ramen shop is neither subterranean or off of people's radars. It's a tiny space with graffiti art on the walls and an affordable menu with ramen, dumplings, and twenty different kinds of sake. [Derek Brown](#) (Eat The Rich, The Passenger, The Columbia and Mockingbird Hill) calls it "very hip" and points out, "Expect long waits but also expect to be perfectly satisfied that the wait was well worth it."

1234 H Street NE, Washington, DC 20002

T: 202.388.3086 | tokiunderground.com



Tapas at Mateo
Photograph courtesy of Mateo

15

316 W Main Street
T: 502.584.1111

and
1 plates
for Steak

SOUTH | RALEIGH / DURHAM / CHAPEL HILL

16

Mateo Tapas

Recommended by [chef Ashley Christensen](#) of Poole's Diner, this Spanish tapas bar is located in the old Book Exchange building in the heart of downtown Durham. Chef Matt Kelly serves authentic pintxos and jamón that ranges from Iberico from Spain to Johnston from Smithfield, NC. The extensive wine, beer and sherry list features interesting picks from Spain and a few brews from North Carolina. The cocktails also have a Spanish twist to them.

109 W Chapel Hill Street, Durham, NC 27701
T: 919.530.8700 ([book a table](#)) | [mateotapas.com](#)

17

Nanataco

"This is always a great choice. Early morning, afternoon, or late night," recommend chefs Kim Floresca and Daniel Ryan of [ONE] Restaurant. "It's got personality and authenticity as well. The plantain milkshake, lamb cheeks torta, and watermelon aqua fresca is delicious on any summer day." This Mexican-American cantina's menu, written on a chalkboard, features meats like duck confit, pork belly, hog jowl and lamb cheeks. There is a salsa bar and classics

dishes like burritos, nachos, tortas, salads, quesadillas and tacos. They also have \$5 Margaritas every day.

2512 University Drive, Durham, NC 27707

T: 919.489.8226 | nanataco.com



[One] Restaurant
Photograph courtesy of [One] Restaurant

18.

[One] Restaurant

Chefs Daniel Ryan and Kim Floresca met while working at the Broadmoor Hotel in Colorado Springs. Their combined resumes include Alinea, Per Se, the French Laundry, Mugaritz, El Bulli, and Napa Valley's three-Michelin-starred Meadowood. They describe their restaurant as "highlighting the culture and ingredients of North Carolina."

They source as much as they can locally from places like Chapel Hill Creamery, Heritage Farms Pork and Goat Lady Dairy. Order a la carte or opt for the chef's tasting menu.

101 Meadowmount Village Circle, Chapel Hill, NC 27517

T: 919.537.8207 ([book a table](http://bookatable.com)) | one-restaurant.com



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Tapas at Cúrate
Photographs courtesy of Cúrate



Food and drink at Rolf & Daughters
Photograph courtesy of Rolf & Daughters

SOUTH | NASHVILLE, TN

20.

Mas Tacos Por Favor

Teresa Mason started selling Mexican street food from a 1970s Winnebago in 2008. Popularity led to opening this storefront restaurant loved by Nashville chefs Margot McCormack (Margot Cafe & Bar) and Philip Krajeck (Rolf & Daughters). Krajeck recommends the fried avocado taco, “It’s delicious. Their tortilla soup and pozole are also really good. They make great horchata and agua frescas.”

732 Mcferrin Avenue, Nashville, TN 37206
T: 615.543.6271 | eatmastacos.com

Rolf And Daughters

Chef Philip Krajeck combines Mediterranean influences and Southern ingredients. Housed in a historic 100-year-old Werthan

21.

Factory, fans include chefs [Sean Brock](#) (Husk Nashville, Husk, McCrady's), who recommends the pastas and roast chicken, and [Josh Habiger and Erik Anderson](#) (The Catbird Seat) who love the squid ink pasta, as well as the cocktails.

700 Taylor Street, Nashville, TN 37208

T: 615.866.9897 | rolfanddaughters.com



Whole fish at Xiao Bao Biscuit
Photograph courtesy of Xiao Bao Biscuit

SOUTH | CHARLESTON, SC

22.

The Ordinary

This is an Upper King District seafood house from James Beard Award-winning chef [Mike Lata](#). He takes advantage of Charleston's coastal waters with a raw bar featuring local oysters, regional fish and shellfish. "It's a beautiful space with impeccable service," says chef Josh Keeler of Two Boroughs Larder. "The skate wing terrine is not only incredibly tasty, but innovative. Chef Lata has this ability to take a very recognizable ingredient and present it to you in a way that you've never thought of before."

544 King Street, Charleston, SC 29403

T: 843.414.7060 ([book a table](#)) | eattheordinary.com

23.

Xiao Bao Biscuit

"It's a new hip Asian place and it's really different than anything else in Charleston", says chef [Robert Stehling](#) of Hominy Grill, "After slinging bacon all day, I just want something that doesn't look like Southern food. I like to get the cabbage pancake. They char it nicely in the bottom of the pan and send it out to you really hot." Chef Josh Keeler of Two Boroughs Larder calls it, "Asian comfort food, things that you wouldn't typically see in a Japanese or Chinese restaurant, but things that you eat at a Chinese grandmother's house. Their mapo tofu is really good. They do a Japanese pancake called Okonomiyaki, and it's taking the the town by storm."

224 Rutledge Avenue, Charleston, SC 29403

T: 843.414.7060 | xiaobaobiscuit.com