

FEATURE

## *8 Under-the-Radar Atlanta Restaurants to Try Right Now*

BY CHRISTOPHER HASSIOTIS | OCTOBER 3, 2016



Having [so many great restaurants](#) is a good thing, right? A lot of the time: yes! But while an ever-expanding selection of top-notch choices benefits diners, but it also means that some worthy places end up getting overlooked, whether thanks to location, timing or the mysterious machinations of the foodie hype machine. These new restaurants deserve some love, too — plus, if you dine there now, you can be the one to turn your friends onto something cool.



★ **Secreto**

Its name may mean "secret" in Spanish — as in, secret family recipes — but this Alpharetta restaurant doesn't actually serve Spanish fare. What you'll find instead are smart, updated Southern classics that are neither flashy nor groundbreaking. They're super tasty, though, and they're ultra-valuable in a part of the metro area that's slowly coming around to the benefits of locally owned businesses and restaurants.

**Must-order:** A crispy seared lamb belly (\$12) appetizer is served with goat cheese grits, spiced tomato jam and star anise demi glaze.

[6195 Windward Pkwy, Alpharetta; 770-752-0922](#)



### **Atwoods Pizza Cafe**

Located in Midtown's Biltmore building, the counter-service Atwoods aims to scratch a few itches rather than focusing on just one, and maybe that's why it's flying under the radar. But any neighborhood spot that ably transitions from daily breakfast and coffee to Neapolitan pizza is worth seeking out.

**Must-order:** If breakfast isn't your thing, go for the Festival pizza (\$12) boasts sweet fennel sausage, peppadew peppers, fior di latte mozzarella and Romano cheeses, garlic confit and sweet caramelized onions.

*[817 West Peachtree St NW](#); 404-748-9577*





### **Porch Light Latin Kitchen**

Chef Andre Gomez draws heavily on his Puerto Rican heritage for the dishes at Porch Light, but he's also willing to play around with other cuisines, including Cuban, Mexican and American Southern. The location in suburban Smyrna may be a high hurdle for many ITP diners, but, as with anything in ATL, it's just a 20-minute drive — and absolutely worth a trip.

**Must-order:** The Triple Torta (\$12) marries savory and salty flavors thanks to its trio of meats — short rib, bacon and pork shoulder — avocado aioli, and fried egg.

*[300 Village Green Cir SE, Smyrna](#); 678-309-9858*





### **The Public House**

This new Vinings restaurant has two things going against it: its extraordinarily generic name, and its location inside the Vinings Hotel Indigo. That's a shame, because the New American food from executive chef Clint Shade is great, and the restaurant as a whole is a worthy addition to a neighborhood whose dining scene has always been a mish-mash of suburban comfort and urban aspirations.

**Must-order:** The Reuben sandwich (\$12), loaded with Gruyere cheese and remoulade sauce in place of the traditional Russian dressing, uses local corned beef from Heywood's Provisions Co. in Marietta.

[2857 Paces Ferry Rd SE](#); 770-779-1765





### Pea Ridge

Located just barely ITP on Lawrenceville Highway, this Southern restaurant is unassuming but instantly comfortable. Familiar salads and sandwiches with modern updates comprise the bulk of the menu, which changes depending on available seasonal produce.

**Must-order:** Check out the Southern lunch (\$11), consisting of ever-changing seasonal chalkboard specials.

[2607 Lawrenceville Hwy, Decatur](#); 470-268-4051





### **Morningside Kitchen**

Local restaurateur Tom Murphy ([Murphy's](#), [Paces & Vine](#)) is behind this Morningside spot, which replaced Ron Eyester's Rosebud. Its comforting, seasonal New American dishes — many of them prepared on a wood-fired grill or a charcoal rotisserie — add to a welcoming atmosphere of exposed-brick walls and hardwood floors, but so far it's more of a neighborhood favorite rather than a dining destination.

**Must-order:** Murphy's is one of Atlanta's more popular brunch spots, and Morningside follows suit with terrific weekend dishes. The short rib benedict (\$18) sports avocado and a smoked-tomato hollandaise atop housemade English muffins.

[1397 North Highland Ave NE](#); 404-347-9747





### **Fumi Hibachi Sushi & Bar**

While the menu at this Duluth spot sticks to the classics, the trendy atmosphere is urbane and modern, and the sizable space decked out in white leather and dark stone. After all hibachi is just the thing you'd want to experience with some atmosphere.

**Must-order:** While the hibachi dishes are tried-and-true Japanese-American classics, the sushi bar gets a little more creative, with an assortment of contemporary rolls. The Yuzukoshio roll (\$12) combines hamachi with shallots, avocado, cilantro and golden tobiko roe, and is topped with yuzu kosho sauce, a tangy, tart concoction made from citrus and chilis.

*[3550 Mall Blvd NW, Duluth](#); 770-495-8898*







### **Bellwoods Social House**

This gastropub casts a wide net with flawless craft cocktails and inexpensive tallboys alike. A catch-all approach is great for neighbors looking to stop in for a quick drink, but the lack of focus may be the reason why Bellwoods hasn't taken off yet. We maintain that it's still worth checking out for its smart drinks and handsome, pleasant interior with four-to-ceiling windows.

**Must-order:** The opening menu may have overdid it — there were pizzas, sandwiches, burgers, salads, entrees, and tacos, oh my! — but it's been smartly, thankfully pared down. The steak sandwich (\$12) is a real winner.

[1000 Marietta St #202](#); 678-974-8748

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