

ARE SOME JUDGES JUST
POLITICIANS IN ROBES?

BY MICHAEL HALL

A NEW \$974 DRUG COULD
SAVE US BILLIONS

BY AARON NELSEN

SAN ANTONIO'S VIBRANT
MURALS AND MOSAICS

BY JOHN PHILLIP SANTOS

Texas Monthly

SEX, SCANDAL & SISTERHOOD

★
Fifty years of the
**DALLAS COWBOYS
CHEERLEADERS.**

BY SARAH HEPOLA



E07 00009
P0054
0053#
DROESE PUBLIC RELATIO
MRG
#TXFP9020044129/2#
#BXGJMF *****CR-LOT 0112D**C-034
1345 CHEMICAL ST
DALLAS TX 75207-5901



Where to Eat Now

Here's our take on the state's **new restaurants**, along with a few updates to longtime favorites.

Co-founder
Tania Peregrino
at Amar.

AMAR, EL PASO ★★★

NEW Latin American | Amar means “to love,” and the family behind this restaurant lovingly merge the flavors of Peru and Mexico. Begin with the Ceviche Amar: mussels, octopus, and shrimp in a leche de tigre marinade decorated with crispy calamari. Continue with the lomo saltado, chunks of beef tenderloin nestled among french fries and sautéed tomatoes and peppers. Or check out the empanadas, which come loaded with shrimp or fresh spinach. Desserts are spectacular; consider the guava cheesecake or an alfajor, a sandwich-style cookie with a filling of dulce de leche. The patio, with its tasseled shade cloth, will make you feel as if you're on vacation. *3100 N. Mesa; 915-613-5051; restaurantamar.com* \$\$\$

Austin

PASTA BAR ★★★

NEW Modern American | The \$195 (per person) twelve-course tasting menu was, oddly, short on pasta during an early visit, but amid highs and lows there was plenty of potential. The twelve-seat counter venue is an offshoot of the Michelin-starred original, in Los Angeles. On the evening we stopped by, the charming husband-and-wife chef-owners—Phillip Frankland Lee and Margarita Kallas-Lee—served impressively original dishes, such as a lovely piece of Akaushi beef anointed with a savory-sweet sauce boosted with raspberry vinegar and sarsaparilla (successfully hinting of Dr Pepper). There was also crisp-skinned chicken in a sumptuous brandy-tinged crawfish stock blended with Louisiana rice. But sometimes the novelty was off-key; burgundy truffles couldn't compensate for excess oil in the strange black pasta made with activated charcoal. Best of show: ethereal sourdough bread and an amazing dessert of sweet-tart kalamansi semifreddo topped with caviar. Reservations required. *1017 E. 6th; 512-360-8207* \$\$\$\$

Dallas

KNOX BISTRO ★★★

UPDATE French | With a new menu by chef-partner Bruno Davailon and new chef Josh Sutcliff helming the kitchen, the cafe formerly known as Up on Knox has been reborn as a French bistro equally suited for date nights and weeknight dinners. Seafood dishes are excellent: kampachi (yellowtail) crudo, with orange supremes and avocado; skate wing (a sweet and delicate fish) in a zingy lemon-caper butter sauce; plump mussels in garlic-shallot-wine broth; and scallops with béarnaise, wild mushrooms, and crisp potato wedges. Don't miss the asparagus—tender spears topped with spunky sauce gribiche. Take note, fans of Davailon's still-closed Bullion: the silky braised leeks with hazelnuts are reincarnated here, along with a perfect filet au poivre. Daily specials and compelling cocktails are a delightful bonus. *3230 Knox; 469-250-4007; knoxbistro.com* \$\$\$

KORYO KOREAN BBQ ★★★

UPDATE Korean | After closing during the pandemic, this Korean barbecue restaurant is back with new ownership, an updated dining

DINING GUIDE

room, and top-quality meats (a few dry-aged in-house). The latter are the stars of the menu, of course, grilled table-side to charred and juicy perfection. Excellent choices include the succulent pork belly (from the prized Kurobuta heirloom breed) and Prime-grade marinated beef short ribs. Accompanying them are a dozen small sides and condiments, including an umami-rich doenjang-jjigae (a soybean paste stew). At lunch, the sizzling Stone Bowl Bibimbap—a beef, rice, and vegetable combo—is a bargain at \$14. 2650 Royal Ln; 214-272-7486; eatkoryo.com \$\$\$

SASSETTA ★★

UPDATE Italian | Take casually elegant interior design by Jean Liu, mix in discreet people-watching through the big windows facing Main Street, and add dishes with creatively layered flavors by executive chef Jason Zygmunt. The result: the second incarnation of Sassetta. Once located in the Dallas Decorative Center, it now looks right at home in the sleek, artsy Joule hotel, downtown. Start with a glass of prosecco and progress to a plate of grilled asparagus topped with goat cheese, salsa verde, and crispy farro. House-made pastas are a specialty here, and the tagliatelle bolognese made with pork and veal will satisfy a hearty appetite. The menu is small—six pastas, six pizzas, four mains—but there's something for everyone, including vegetarians. 1530 Main; 214-290-7555; thejouledallas.com/sassetta \$\$\$

TEAK TEAROOM ★★

NEW Tearoom | Well-heeled ladies who lunch flock to this tiny cafe within the Conservatory on Two, a posh boutique above the Chanel store in Highland Park Village. Boasting views of treetops and golf greens, the airy, plant-filled spot serves salads, soups, sandwiches, and quiches. We liked the roasted chicken tartine, starring herb-rubbed meat with garlicky aioli and arugula on sourdough toast; it came with a generous salad of impeccably fresh greens. Other good choices were the Thai-inspired salad with chicken, soba noodles, and sesame-ginger vinaigrette; the tomato-basil soup; and the quiche lorraine. A bit of lemon-



HILDEE'S TEXAS DINE-INN, WIMBERLEY ★★

NEW Modern American | Chef Ryan Hildebrand once ran elegant Trinita in Houston. Now he's done a 180 and opened a fun venue with country knickknacks on the walls and concrete floors outside the weekend destination town of Wimberley. The hummus-like purple-hulled-pea spread came off bland, but the confit-tomato pie made with farmer's cheese was essentially a fine, down-home quiche. Our main courses ran the gamut from good-but-chewy chicken-fried venison in sawmill gravy to a fine redfish on the half shell with almonds and an interesting sorghum glaze. Best overall: a magnificent burger with smoked cheddar and bacon jam. Major rethinking is needed on the tough-crust, molasses-tinged malted walnut pie. Might be best to finish instead with the classic Texas sheet cake (above). Pro tip: you can avoid winding farm roads by routing your GPS through Dripping Springs. 14111 Winters Mill Pkwy; 512-222-9904; hildeeswimberley.com \$\$\$

pistachio tart and a browse through the Conservatory capped our meal nicely. 100 Highland Park Village; 972-863-8590; theconservatorynyc.com/pages/teak-tearoom \$\$

Driftwood

LO SALVAJE ★★

NEW Mexican | It's an admittedly odd collaboration between a celebrated chef and a well-executed food truck—Jesse Griffiths of Austin's Dai Due and Driftwood's Desert Door distillery—but the results speak for themselves. Warm beets in a crispy coating are served with a simple squeeze of lime, crumbles of cotija, and smoky morita chile mayonnaise. A wild boar Frito pie with tangy pickled onions initially attracted our attention, but we went instead for the double smash burger, the meat a terrific combination of bacon and ground nilgai with American cheese and escabeche. The peppery fried quail sandwich on a soft potato bun was also a highlight. For dessert,

don't miss the cinnamon-sugar Cronut drizzled with sotol-infused honey. Ordering is simple: use the QR code available at each table and sip a tasty cocktail from the distillery while you wait. 211 Darden Hill Rd; losalvajetruck.com \$

Fort Worth

FRED'S TEXAS CAFE ★★★★★

UPDATE Burgers | After an excruciating wait, Cowtown's favorite burger joint (which closed its flagship Currie Street location in 2020) is back in much larger digs, in West Fort Worth. The front dining room is an homage to the original shop, with lots of gold vinyl booths and hunting trophies. A large bar, opening onto an indoor-outdoor patio, adds to the appeal. Delectable as ever is the Serrano, a burger layered with grilled onions and the namesake chiles, Oaxaca cheese, and lime-laced mayo. So is the massive chicken-fried steak with flaky crust, near-perfect cream gravy, and stellar fries. 7101 Camp Bowie West; 817-332-0083; fredstexascafe.com \$\$

LILI'S BISTRO ★★★

UPDATE American | Reopening after a pause that began in February for tweaks to the menu and decor, a longtime favorite along the

RATING SYSTEM

STARS

★★★★★

Superlative

★★★★

Excellent

★★★

Very good

★★

Good

★

Hit or miss

PRICE SCALE

Prices represent a typical meal for one, not including alcohol, tax, and tip.

\$ Less than \$15

\$\$ \$15-\$30

\$\$\$ \$31-\$60

\$\$\$\$ More than \$60

Visit texasmnthly.com/dining-guide for our wide-ranging collection of frequently updated restaurant reviews, which feature the new spots, the classics, and everything in between. Our reviews are written by anonymous critics who live in the areas they cover, and the magazine pays all expenses.