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With the Old 97's

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BEST NEW

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RESTAURANTS

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HOLIDAY RECIPES
FROM 8 NOTABLE
DALLASITES!

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I USE RESTAURANTS like tools, different places for different reasons, and when you dine out as often as I do, the categories start to get very specific. There's the Take Your Visiting Friends to Show Them Dallas Is Actually Cool restaurant. There's the We Have to Go to IKEA So We Might as Well Get Lunch in Frisco restaurant. And, of course, there's the time-honored Oh, Shoot, I Forgot to Buy Groceries restaurant.

Knox Bistro is Dallas' new reigning champion for Nice, Quiet Lunch With Someone You Care About. It is an exceedingly good place to get lunch, with attentive service and exacting French bistro fare. And yet it is also not overwhelmed with crowds. Guests are seated a few tables apart through the dining room, a pandemic-era precaution that helps keep noise levels down. A covered patio shelters against weather.

And, although some of partner-chef Bruno Davailon's most beloved high-end dishes are available as dinnertime specials, the lunch fare here is an attraction of its own. Why not meet a friend for a grilled veggie sandwich on fluffy, herbaceous focaccia, or tuck into a salad with a gently tangy mustard seed dressing, or keep a sampler board of smoked and cured fish species all to yourself?

Knox Bistro was formerly known as Up on Knox, but Davailon redesigned the menu so significantly that the team felt it warranted a whole new name. Now under the watchful eye of former French Room leader Michael Ehlert, the bistro is a tribute to the relaxed lunch spots in Paris. Not every detail is authentically French—the menu doesn't fit on a chalkboard, and the waiters don't abandon you for an hour after you've finished eating—but few restaurants in Dallas are so gosh-darned nice.

PRO TIP

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If you're missing the glamorous seafood quenelles Bruno Davailon served at Bullion, come here on Friday nights. They're made of halibut and topped with lobster sauce.



Knox Bistro

UPTOWN
3230 KNOX ST.,
STE. 140
469-250-4007
\$\$-\$\$\$

appetizer) to Lanzhou-style beef noodle soup. The noodles, made from scratch and pulled by hand, live up to the hype. Sides include a pickled cabbage salad with spicy chile oil dressing. 9188 Prestmont Pl., Frisco. 469-980-9887. \$ *Frisco*

Jeng Chi. Dumpling makers create delicate vegetarian dumplings filled with tofu, wood ear mushrooms, and rice vermicelli. The home-style menu offers shareable hot pots, seafood plates, and over-rice dishes. Pork soup dumplings (xiao long bao) are a must. 400 N. Greenville Ave., Ste. 11, Richardson. 972-669-9094. \$ *Richardson*

TOP 50 Kirin Court. Yes, we love Kirin Court for its dim sum. The Chinatown stalwart does justice to radish cakes, custard tarts, and juicy shrimp dumplings, although they're all of much higher quality on weekends than weeknights. We also head north for beautifully executed clay hot pots—duck and taro root with coconut milk, for one—and Cantonese delicacies like sliced abalone. 221 W. Polk St., Ste. 200, Richardson. 214-575-8888. \$ *Richardson*

ETHIOPIAN

MarRosso Cafe. Come to this quiet cafe in North Dallas for breakfast and order the combo, which is like chilaquiles with an African twist. Because this is an Eritrean restaurant, you'll also find panini, pasta, and breaded cutlets on the menu. The boxegna, a cream puff with a delicate coat of chocolate, is an airy ending. 7989 Belt Line Rd., Ste. 110. 972-685-9099. \$ *Far North Dallas*

Queen of Sheba. Long live this elegant shrine to Ethiopian food, with its large array of combination platters—from vegan to "Houston-style," with silky beef tartare kitfo and spicy grilled tenderloin tibs. Shower the meal with honey wine. 14875 Inwood Rd., Addison. 972-239-3290. \$ *Addison*

FRENCH

TOP 50 Boulevardier. This bistro in the Bishop Arts District is a wonderful place to perch with oysters, French onion soup, or mussels swimming in a shellfish fumet. Check the board for daily specials, and expect thoughtful French classics. Wines are well selected. 408 N. Bishop Ave., Ste. 108. 214-942-1828. \$\$ *North Oak Cliff*

Knox Bistro. Bruno Davailon, formerly of Bullion and The Mansion, debuted his new menu for this bistro at the start of May. It's such a big change, they even changed the restaurant's name from Up on Knox. Many of our favorite Bullion dishes, including leeks vinaigrette, spring lamb stew, and trout rillettes, are finally back in Dallas after a two-year hiatus. 3230 Knox St., Ste. 140. 469-250-4007. \$\$ *Knox*

FUSION

LaVui. Chef Thanh Nguyen made a name for himself at Oishii. His latest venture ties his Japanese sushi skills with his Vietnamese background. Sushi-like spring rolls, topped with raw tuna, harbor delicate shrimp and tempura flakes. The smoked duck breast bánh mì with cognac pâté is heavenly.

5321 Maple Ave. 469-776-8212. \$ *Oak Lawn*

Loro. Asian ingredients meet Texas barbecue at this beautifully designed spot from Austin celebs Tyson Cole and Aaron Franklin. It's worth planning your schedule around the smoked baby back ribs (Sunday and Monday nights only) or the cheeseburger topped with brisket (not available at night). Veggie snacks impress, too. 1812 N. Haskell Ave. 214-833-4983. \$\$ *East Dallas*

TOP 50 Mot Hai Ba. This tiny East Dallas restaurant veers between French food, Vietnamese traditions, and new-age modernizations of both. Banana flower salads, sweet onion tarts, and noodle dishes are well-known stars. Though chef-owner Peja Krstic is an avid student of Vietnamese food, he has occasionally antagonized the local Asian American community. 6047 Lewis St. 972-638-7468. \$\$ *East Dallas*

INDIAN AND SOUTH ASIAN

Chennai Cafe. Southern Indian food rules. There is a long list of dosas, unique rice dishes (lemon- or tamarind-scented), and a stellar Thalappakatti-style mutton biryani. On weekends they offer Thali meals. 3301 Preston Rd., Ste. 8, Frisco. 972-378-1300. \$ *Frisco*

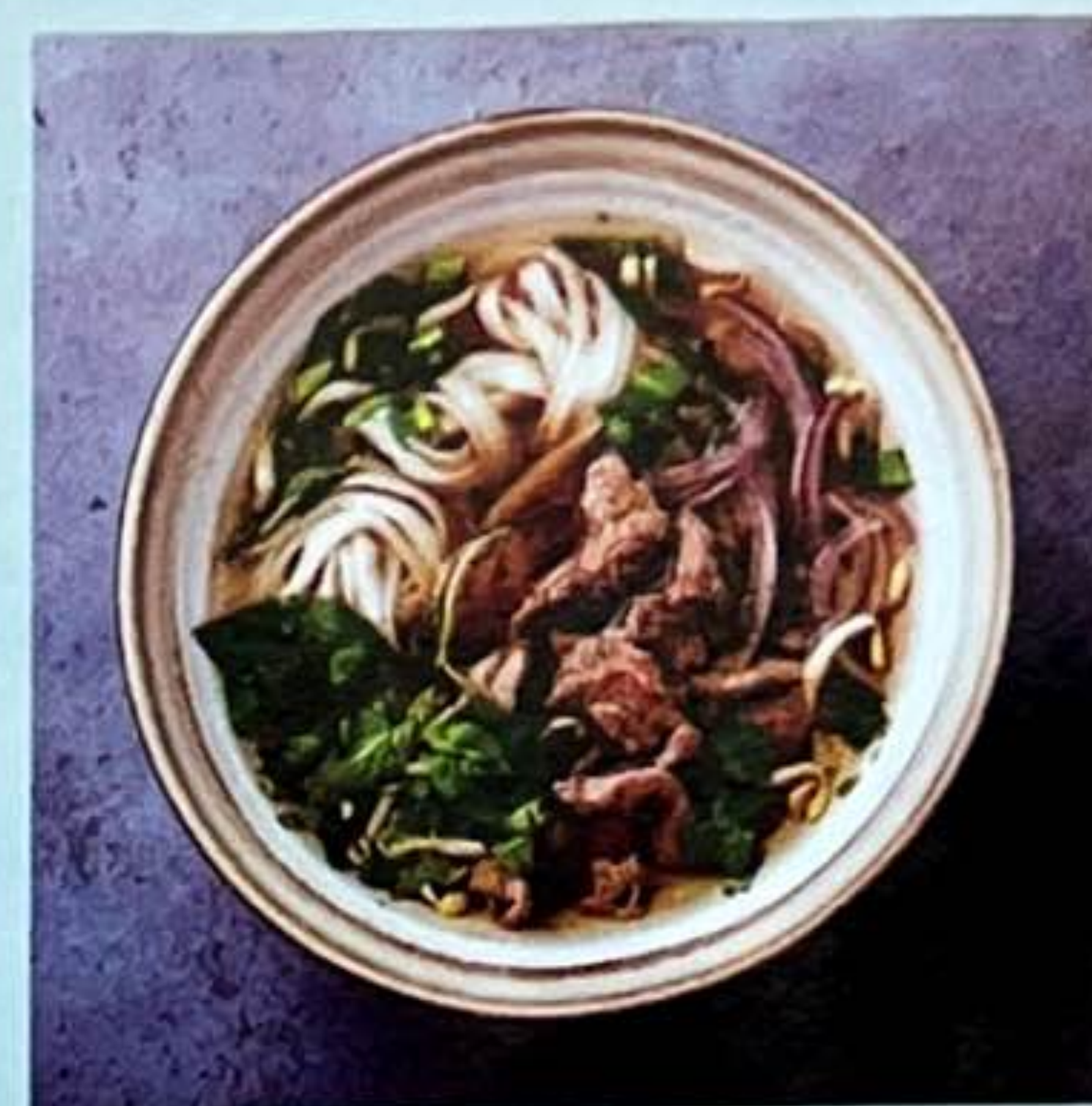
India Palace. For decades, owner Pardeep Sharma has maintained high standards—no greasy food, no lame service, no amateur stabs at interior design. He still serves favorites such as chicken tikka masala and great baskets of naan delivered fresh from the tandoor oven. 12817 Preston Rd., Ste. 105. 972-392-0190. \$\$ *North Dallas*

TOP 50 Mughlai Fine Indian Cuisine. This paragon of North Indian food has gilded decor to match the lavishness of the region's cuisine: sizzling tandoor platters, lush paneer simmered in rich sauces or tucked into potatoes with caches of fruit and cashews—and, of course, sweet Kashmiri naan. It's some of the best Indian food in town. 3311 E. State Hwy. 114, Southlake. 817-251-0663; 5301 Alpha Rd., Ste. 14. 972-392-7786. Multiple locations. \$\$ *Southlake, North Dallas, Frisco*

ITALIAN

TOP 50 The Charles. With its decadent, over-the-top decor, The Charles is like the love child of Fellini and Chihuly—with utterly fabulous food. Chef J. Chastain delivers wood-fired oysters topped with crisp pepperoni and bronzed, taleggio cheese-filled focaccia to nibble on, but also excellent house-made pastas and mains. 1632 Market Center Blvd. 469-917-9000. \$\$ *Design District*

TOP 50 Lucia. David and Jennifer Uygur have re-created their intimate Lucia a few blocks away in the former Macellaio space. It's all the delights you remember, plus a more spacious patio. Order pastas shaped with care and house salumi—from mortadella to 'nduja—served with griddled focaccia. With bread baked on-site, fabulous seasonal veggies, and carefully selected wines, the relocated Lucia is as good as it ever was. 287 N. Bishop Ave. 214-948-4998. \$\$\$ *North Oak Cliff*



TOP

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WINTER SOUPS

SPICY PHO, COSMO'S

Nothing warms you up like a bowl of pho, and the flavorful, highly spiced broth at this funky East Dallas bar is one of the most intense, intoxicating soups in town. Add the house Old Fashioned by the fireplace for good measure.

1212 Skillman St.
East Dallas

CALDO DE RES, CUQUITA'S

The beef ribs are so tender that the meat slides right off the bone. The bowl also includes a mix of vegetable chunks that includes cabbage, carrots, corn, potatoes, and zucchini all stewing in a light, beefy broth. Dip their handmade tortillas in the bowl, and we promise you'll feel the warmth from your toes to your heart.

1957 Northwest Hwy.
Garland

RAMEN, ICHIGOH RAMEN LOUNGE

Almost a dozen varieties are available at this calming restaurant, and they are all great, with beautifully balanced seasoning. The veggie option, with apple and pickled fennel, tastes like winter.

Only warm.
2724 Commerce St.
Deep Ellum

GUMBO, ROOTS SOUTHERN TABLE

Chef Tiffany Derry gently tweaks a family recipe to produce this hearty gumbo, which evokes her Beaumont roots.

13050 Bee St., Ste. 160
Farmers Branch

shine, and pumpkin is the golden child. 205 N. Bishop Ave. 214-828-0095. \$\$ *North Oak Cliff*

NEW AMERICAN

TOP 50 Beverley's. At Greg Katz's update on the classic bistro, you can get oysters, but also caviar and latkes served like hors d'oeuvres. The chicken schnitzel is a masterpiece, and there's a good steak frites (opt for the rotating bistro cut). The gin and tonic is one of the best in town. 3215 N. Fitzhugh Ave. 214-915-8840. \$\$\$ *Uptown*

Cry Wolf. In Ross Demers' eclectic enclave, you may find skate wing in butter with fennel pollen, ambrosial prawns, or a perfectly executed duck breast. A bread course may include grissini tinted with squid ink. The idiosyncratic ideas and warm service will keep you coming back. 4422 Gaston Ave. 214-272-3066. \$\$-\$\$\$ *East Dallas*

TOP 50 Elm & Good. After former chef Graham Dodds moved to New Mexico, a new menu is arriving this fall under the direction of Ben Smallman. We're expecting rotisserie chicken and lots of fresh pastas and veggies. 2551 Elm St. 469-498-2525. \$\$-\$\$\$ *Deep Ellum*

TOP 50 Encina. In this Oak Cliff neighborhood restaurant, dishes take cues from the Texas Hill Country (chef Matt Balke is from Uvalde). Here in the former Bolsa space you'll find flavor-packed pastrami over pimento cheese; a richly lasagna-like, all-veggie casserole; goat guisado; and terrific cocktails. Old-timers lament Bolsa's closure, but the new place is even better. 614 W. Davis St. 469-620-3644. \$\$-\$\$\$ *North Oak Cliff*

TOP 50 Gemma. Fine dining is balanced with cozy warmth, just as Gemma's menu mixes French, Mediterranean, and Californian classics like frisée salad, rabbit pappardelle, and seafood crudo. Dessert may be apple tarte Tatin or Meyer lemon tart with lavender crema. Plates pair elegantly with co-owner Allison Yoder's thoughtful wine acumen. Also try the blood-orange margarita and roster of negronis. 2323 N. Henderson Ave., Ste. 109. 214-370-9426. \$\$\$ *Henderson*

TOP 50 Homewood. Matt McCallister's sophomore restaurant (after FT33) emphasizes fresh produce, often used multiple ways in the same dish. Pastas are some of the city's best, and meats and veggies get grilled, smoked, or both over an open hearth. The Wednesday-only ricotta gnocchi rightly have a cult following. Maggie Huff is Dallas' reigning best pastry chef. 4002 Oak Lawn Ave. 214-434-1244. \$\$\$ *Oak Lawn*

TOP 50 Petra and the Beast. Misti Norris is the mastermind fashioning koji-cured charcuterie in a converted vintage gas station. What kind of food is it? Hard to say; it's hard to imagine any other chef conceiving many of these dishes. But there will always be pastas in unusual shapes, cured meats, pickled veggies, and playful, nostalgic desserts. Saturday night's tasting menu, which changes each week, might be the single most interesting meal in Dallas. 601 N. Haskell Ave. 318-935-0906. \$\$ *East Dallas*

Rye. The walls are decked in mismatched framed mirrors and the long wood bar boasts an impres-

sive array of brown spirits. Enjoy a piña colada that clarifies coconut milk by centrifugal force, and assemble a meal from the small plates: red fish tied up en papillote with a tiny pitcher of grapefruit beurre blanc or a cabrito tamal alongside a cool scoop of sweet-corn ice cream. Do not miss the Icelandic hot dog. 1920 Greenville Ave. 972-803-3391. \$\$ *Lower Greenville*

SEAFOOD

Fish & Fizz. In a little slice of Cornwall complete with beach huts, chef Nick Barclay serves proper fish and chips with curry mayo, mushy peas, and beers made by his fellow United Kingdom ex-pats over at Four Bullets Brewery. The fish quality is good, the frying is spot-on, and the adjoining shop sells Lion Bars and chocolate-coated digestive biscuits. 400 N. Coit Rd., Ste. 1908, Richardson. 469-687-0022. \$-\$\$ *Richardson*

Krlo. No one has ever felt cute digging into a seafood boil, and yet at Krlo, blush rosés and pitch-perfect Old Fashioneds made with local whiskey suspend the reality that you're elbow-deep in clams and crab legs swimming in garlicky, Cajun-spiced coconut sauce. The sandwiches are generous, too. 233 W. Seventh St., Ste. 100. 214-253-9311. \$\$ *North Oak Cliff*

The Oceanaire Seafood Room. The vibe is faintly midcentury cruise liner: waiters wearing long white aprons carry silver trays packed with ice and filled with whole lobsters, colossal shrimp, crab legs, and fresh oysters. Wine stewards pop Champagne corks. Skip the signature baked Alaska for the house-made cheesecake. It's as rich as the clientele. 13340 Dallas Pkwy. 972-759-2277. \$\$ *North Dallas*

SOUL FOOD AND SOUTHERN

Kendall Karsen's Upscale Soul Food. Baked ribs, fried catfish, and super-indulgent macaroni and cheese are among the stars at Kevin Winston's small spot. (Kendall and Karsen are his sons.) The word "upscale" reflects his commitment to quality ingredients and healthy cooking techniques. Opening hours, service quality, and wait times can be inconsistent, so have a backup plan. 3939 S. Polk St., Ste. 305. 214-376-2171. \$\$ *Oak Cliff*

Ms. Mary's Southern Kitchen. Baked chicken, meatloaf, pork chops (fried, smothered, or grilled), and Mississippi farm-raised catfish keep customers coming back. So do sides like cucumber and tomato salad and okra. But the real draw here is owner Mary Davis' desserts. Save room for bread pudding with rum sauce, homemade cakes and pies (whole or by the slice), fried pies, cobblers, or banana pudding. 605 N. Denton Tap Rd., Coppell. 972-939-1200. \$ *Coppell*

Roots Southern Table. The finer dining follow-up to Roots Chicken Shak is Tiffany Derry's love letter to the South. Dishes strike a nostalgic chord through honed culinary technique, from whole duck fat-fried chicken to black-eyed pea hummus of which her grandmother would approve. Grilled meats can be heavy on salt, and cocktails get very sweet indeed. 13050 Bee St., Ste. 160, Farmers Branch. 214-346-4441. \$\$-\$\$\$ *Farmers Branch*

STEAKHOUSES

Al Biernat's. Owner Al Biernat knows everyone by name, and if he doesn't know you when you come in, he will by the time you head for the valet. Be prepared to see anybody who's anybody here, no doubt enjoying the best filet (and best coconut cream pie) they'll ever taste. 5251 Spring Valley Rd. 972-239-3400; 4217 Oak Lawn Ave. 214-219-2201. \$\$ *North Dallas, Park Cities*

TOP 50 Geogle by Curtis Stone. Stephan Courseau teamed up with Australian celebrity chef Curtis Stone to expand his small empire with an opulent, reinvented steakhouse and butcher shop specializing in pedigreed steaks, like Blackmore Australian wagyu. But the brasserie-inspired fare, like Gruyère-crusted turbot, and lush interior make it special. 4514 Travis St., Ste. 132. 469-466-8263. \$\$\$ *Knox*

TOP 50 Knife. Chef John Tesar's shrine to beef offers an upscale steak experience with different price points. The menu includes burgers, "new school" steaks for \$25, and exotic beef dry-aged on-site for 240 days that runs \$80 an inch. Salads and sides are inspired. 5300 E. Mockingbird Ln. 214-443-9339; 6121 W. Park Blvd., Plano. 214-299-5935. \$\$ *Upper Greenville, Plano*

TOP 50 Pappas Bros. Steakhouse. Pappas Bros. feels like a steakhouse should. The dining room is dim enough to warrant a penlight, there's enough leather to stop a cattle drive, and the sommelier truly listens and responds. The steak is aged in-house for 40 days and is buttery, salty, tender, and blood-red with a crunchy char on top. The service is as impeccable as the macaroni and cheese laced with jumbo lump crabmeat. 10477 Lombardy Ln. 214-366-2000. \$\$\$ *Northwest Dallas*

TOP 50 Town Hearth. Town Hearth is the expression of Nick Badovinus' unedited imagination and unchecked ambition; the place itself is the definition of a mic drop. Here you'll find classic steakhouse cuts—strip, tenderloin filet, rib-eye—alongside meaty behemoths with names such as Bistecca (a 48-ounce porterhouse anointed with olive oil) or Battle Axe, \$125 of long-bone rib-eye, dry-aged 90 days. 1617 Market Center Blvd. 214-761-1617. \$\$\$ *Design District*

TACOS

TOP 50 Del Sur Tacos. We crave the cochinita pibil taco, with fuchsia-pink pickled onions, and the chile relleno-stuffed taco, swathed in guajillo-morita salsa. Del Sur's burritos might be the best in town. Ismael and Olmy Sanchez started with a Del Sur Grill in a gas station in McKinney before bringing this spot to Oak Cliff. 720 E. Jefferson Blvd. 972-982-0004. \$ *North Oak Cliff*

Milagro Tacos Cantina. The best Tijuana-style seafood tacos can be found here, including shrimp gobernador, octopus, and a fish taco that for once isn't buried in an ocean of cabbage. We can't say enough good things about the taco that wraps smoked salmon in gooey cheese. Don't believe us? Just try it. 440 Singleton Blvd., Ste. 100. 469-872-0168. \$ *West Dallas*