

The Best Restaurants

Fresh faces, new places: how the Bay Area is redefining dining.
Our new top 10, your 51 favorites, plus 155 mini-reviews in *Eats*

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HEART TRUMPS HAUTE
at this year's most talked-about
new restaurants. A sweet example:
Bar Tartine's muscat-poached nectarines
and blackberries on an almond biscuit
topped with basil ice cream.

My new top 10

The restaurants on my list this year are the ones willing to put their passion on the plate.

BY JOSH SENS PHOTOGRAPHS BY CEDRIC GLASIER

At Bar Tartine, a few blocks from Tartine Bakery, rich bone marrow spreads like butter on grilled bread.

Redd's nine-course tasting menu: hamachi sashimi, scallop, pork belly, foie gras, sole, halibut, duck, New York prime and short rib, strawberry napoleon.



Redd

In his young but already well-traveled career (Spago in Beverly Hills, Daniel in New York, Auberge du Soleil in Napa Valley, plus stints overseas), Richard Reddington acquired a reputation among his peers: he was an immense talent who had failed to find the perfect fit. Then, late last year, Reddington discovered the ideal restaurant. It just happens to be his own.

Reddington's place stands on Washington Street in Yountville, a stone's throw from the French Laundry. Redd has an easygoing air, where a bearded guy in blue jeans with the look of a bouncer can bump up to the bar and order a bottle of rare bordeaux.

At Auberge du Soleil, among other gigs, Reddington oversaw a mammoth operation—one that wasn't his. At Redd, you can tell he's put his hands on the menu. There's a spring to his cooking, a subtlety and sophistication in even the most simple-sounding dishes, such as roast chicken with white beans and Meyer lemon.

You can order à la carte, but the chef's inspiration is most apparent in his tasting menu, a five- or nine-course volley that showcases his versatility. Hamachi sashimi over sticky rice leads to butternut squash ravioli, and potato gnocchi with chanterelles turns up in advance of monkfish saltimbocca, the fish wrapped in prosciutto and laid out on salsify ragout.

Running his own place, Reddington comes across as a chef of redoubled enthusiasm, a richly skilled cook grateful for the chance to do things right. His five-course tasting menu is well worth \$70 (\$100 with the wonderful wine pairings by Critic's Choice Best Wine Director Chris Blanchard—see page 118). Not to try it once would be an act of shortsighted self-deprivation, like telling Michelangelo your ceiling doesn't need touching up. 6480

WASHINGTON ST., YOUNTVILLE, 707-944-2222.

Chef Richard Reddington hits his stride at his own restaurant; Redd's airy dining room may be done up in white linens, but it feels easygoing.

