

50 Best Restaurants **Boston** Hungry?

(Turn to page 106.)

Plus:

HOLIDAY FASHION

THE ROBOT WORKFORCE

HOW NEW ENGLAND
ARE YOU?



The dish we
refuse to share:
Spaghetti *alle
vongole* from
#12 on our list.

THE 50 Best Restaurants

Our thoroughly researched, call-it-like-we-see-it ranking of the restaurants that make Boston a true dining destination.

By LEAH MENNIES

With additional reporting by Caroline Hatano, Courtney Hollands, Christopher Hughes, Brittany Jasnoff, Corby Kummer, and Janelle Nanos

IT'S BEEN HALF A DECADE since we last ranked Boston's best restaurants. And in those five years, our dining landscape has dramatically transformed. To wit, 11 out of the 50 restaurants highlighted in 2009—stalwarts like Rendezvous, Pigalle, Radius, and, most recently, Hamersley's Bistro—have closed. After 137 years, Locke-Ober was shuttered. UpStairs on the Square and Chez Henri departed as well.

But for all that we've lost, we've gained much more. A staggering 29 of the restaurants on our list opened in the past five years; about half of those arrived in the past two. Brought to you by the city's next generation of innovative chefs and restaurateurs, these new venues feel younger and more energetic. Carefully draped tablecloths and fancy stemware are no longer requisites for a fine meal: Nowadays, inventive food and top-notch service can be found at a Sichuan restaurant

in Woburn, or a pizza place in the Back Bay. Great dining, in other words, has become our evening's entertainment—Friday, Saturday, and every night of the week.

The sheer number of candidates, however, made compiling a list such as this truly challenging. How to choose, let alone rank, our local restaurants? We began with a carefully researched lineup of more than 100 eateries that had opened before March of this year (six months before publication). Then we ate our way through the city, scoring each establishment's food, service, ambiance, value, beverage programs, and overall "now" factor, with food being the primary focus. Finally, we convened to analyze our experiences—comparing notes, arguing, disagreeing, and at last finding common ground. At the end of the day, it all came down to one thing: going with, quite literally, our gut.

So here it is—our 2014 ranking of Boston's 50 best restaurants, the places that make this city more dynamic, surprising, and delicious than ever before.

Roasted with hay, braised in goat butter, and finished with candied hazelnuts, spiced yogurt, carrot-top pesto, and pickled spruce, Clio's carrots are the most luxurious root vegetables in town.



— 21 —

Clio

370A Commonwealth Ave.,
Boston, 617-536-7200,
cliorestaurant.com.

HOW TO STAY RELEVANT FOR seven years, let alone 17? The trick is to reinvent—something that chef Ken Oringer does exceptionally well at Clio. In 2011, Oringer overhauled the entire restaurant, expanding the bar and banishing the white tablecloths. Lately, he's logged many kitchen hours tweaking the tasting menus, focusing on complex, intricate vegetable dishes and a varied menu structure. At a recent meal, chewy, dense sourdough bread, rich goat-butter-braised carrots, and elaborate desserts from pastry chef Monica Glass suggested we have much to look forward to.

Can't-miss dish: *Butter-basted lobster with chanterelle mushrooms.*