

# TORO'S HYPE AIN'T NO BULL

BOSTON-BRED TAPAS SPOT TAKES ROOT. PAGE 24

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## Toro takes New York

**Expansion.** Jamie Bissonnette's hot tapas joint now has a Big Apple home.

It's the dawning of a new era in culinary greatness: New York now shares custody of Boston's cult-favorite tapas joint, Toro. The insanely popular eatery has recently expanded its sex-on-a-small-plate reach, opening up a second location in Chelsea just last month. We asked Boston-based chef and co-owner (and now frequent traveler on the Boston-NYC Amtrak line) Jamie Bissonnette for a side-by-side comparison of Toro Boston and Toro NYC.



Mushrooms a la plancha are on the menu. / NOAH FECKS

### The chow

Toro Boston will always be the place where fledgling Boston foodies learned how much grilled corn they could consume and got familiar with roasted

bone marrow and uni bocadillos. Toro New York continues to offer the same comprehensive tribute to Barcelona-style tapas with a few newcomers, like the Paella de Langostino (\$90/\$45), a badass lobster and black truffle paella with sunchokes and herbs, and Pulpo "Del Mercado" (\$9), marinated octopus heads with olives and bay leaf. But square footage is the main game changer here: The larger kitchen and dining room in NYC allows for a menu to match — an impressive 20-odd additional plates to choose from, bringing the count from 44 to 60 — but how divergent are the two cities' taste buds? "So far we are seeing many of the same favorites, but a



The new space invokes the original Toro's aesthetic. / NOAH FECKS

bigger variety," Bissonnette says. "It's wicked cool to see the corn, tripe and abalone selling so well together."

### The booze

In NYC, they've brought some of their favorite vinos from Boston — along with a lengthier list of wines by the bottle — and give gin and tonics their own hallowed section, inspired by their pre-opening exploratory trip to Barcelona and San Sebastián. Sherry holds its own on both menus, as does the age-old tradition of splurging on a porron.

### The look

Toro Boston's design is marked by a cozy, exposed brick and rafters

### If you go

#### Toro Boston

1704 Washington St.  
617-536-4300

#### Toro New York

85 10th Ave.  
212-691-2360  
[www.toro-restaurant.com](http://www.toro-restaurant.com)

feel, and the New York outpost adheres to the same aesthetic, with a few stylish additions. It boasts an ivy-covered wall, hunks of aged jamón hanging in the dining room and big, arched windows that flood the space with light. "As we did the [demolition], we kept seeing things [and] would say, 'Wait, don't cover

that up' and 'That looks great; let's not change it,'" Bissonnette notes. "The ambiance is like a huge dinner party every night, with music we'd want to listen to."

### The crazy

Bostonians are familiar with the two- to three-hour wait at the flagship Toro — they don't take reservations. In NYC, half the room is saved for walk-ins and half for reservations. The wait clocks in at about an hour on weekends. "It's crazy in a different way," Bissonnette says. "We're booked two to three weeks out. That's the crazy part to me."

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