

FOOD & WINE

The cover features five chefs in white uniforms. Three are standing in the back row: a woman on the left, a man with glasses in the center, and a woman on the right. Two are in the front row: a man sitting on a stool in the center and a woman standing behind him on the right. The background is a dark, solid color.

July 2000

america's ten
best new chefs
2000

plus
restaurant poll
winners

from north america's top cities

2000 Restaurant Poll

Experts vote on the most noteworthy restaurants in 16 North American cities. BY PETE WELLS

The simple act of deciding where to go for dinner has become anything but simple. There ~~are more choices~~ are more choices than ever before, and sifting through all of them has become a full-time job. That's why, when we conduct our comprehensive North American restaurant poll, we go to people who think about restaurants for a living. With the help of the crack polling firm Yankelovich Partners, we interview hundreds of food and wine insiders—including critics, reporters, chefs and restaurateurs—in 16 major cities. (Needless to say, the last two groups aren't allowed to nominate their own places.) Each expert answers two dozen questions aimed at determining which restaurants really stand out—for good behavior and for bad. If the insiders notice a dramatic improvement somewhere, they tell us. If they turn against last year's Best New Restaurant and decide it's this year's Most Overrated, we find out about that, too. It's like taking a snapshot of the food scene—and, at the same time, getting some great advice on where to eat.



Seattle

BEST RESTAURANT

Brasa 2107 Third Ave.; 206-728-4220.

After only a year, Brasa has vaulted to the top—as has Bryan Hill, voted Best Sommelier—because Tamara Murphy (1994 F&W Best New Chef) keeps thinking of wonderful new things to do with her wood-burning oven.

MOST UNDERRATED

Le Gourmand 425 N.W. Market St.; 206-784-3463.

It's open only four nights a week; no wonder Le Gourmand is easy to overlook. But those in the know worship chef and owner Bruce Naftaly, who harvests his own poppy seeds and bay leaves and picks corn in the backyard seconds before he cooks it.

BEST VALUE

Cafe Lago 2305 24th Ave. E.; 206-329-8005.

Almost everybody gets the lasagna. It's as light as a truffle shaving, made from sheets of fresh pasta rolled parchment thin. For a handmade dish like this, \$14.95 is almost criminally cheap.

MOST IMPROVED

Canlis 2576 Aurora Ave. N.; 206-283-3313.

This old-guard bastion undertook big changes in 1997—a \$1.5 million remodeling and the hiring of a smart new chef, Greg Atkinson. Now there's a growing sense that it isn't just a place to celebrate your 50th anniversary.