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Expectations are high at Atlas, the St. Regis Atlanta's new chef-driven, fine dining restaurant.

5 QUESTIONS FOR: *Christopher Grossman and Gerry Klaskala*

HOW IS ATLAS REDEFINING THE CONCEPT OF FINE DINING IN ATLANTA? THE RESTAURANT'S CHEF DE CUISINE AND CONSULTING CHEF SPEAK OUT ON SETTING THE STANDARD HIGH—FROM ELEVATED CUISINE TO MUSEUM-WORTHY WORKS OF ART. WRITTEN BY *Claire Ruhlin*

GERRY, YOU'VE BEEN INVOLVED WITH ATLAS THROUGHOUT THE PLANNING PROCESS. WHAT WAS THE VISION FOR THE RESTAURANT?

Gerry Klaskala: We wanted to create a comfortable, clubby-like feel. We made the space aesthetically pleasing with beautiful finishes and great art, and we made sure all of the furnishings were very comfortable. Every angle of the restaurant was studied.

ON THE WALLS ARE WORKS BY MASTERS SUCH AS PICASSO AND VAN GOGH. HOW DOES ART PLAY INTO ATLAS' OVERALL ATMOSPHERE?

GK: Bringing gorgeous works of art into

the space was an embellishment that gave a great finishing touch to the restaurant. It sets the standard very high.

ATLAS' CUISINE IS DESCRIBED AS AMERICAN WITH EUROPEAN INFLUENCES.

Christopher Grossman: We take comfortable dishes and elevate them. I think a lot of modern cuisine is founded in European fundamentals. We've adapted those to what we have here in America through what's fresh and delicious in the local area.

HOW DO YOU EXPECT THE MENU TO EVOLVE? *CG:* The nice thing about using seasonal, locally sourced produce is that it allows you to be more dynamic

on a day-to-day basis. We have the best ingredients at our disposal. If a farmer says, "I've got these beautiful turnips that are ready today," I'll take them. I may not have been planning to have them on the menu, but if he has these fresh turnips, we're going to showcase that.

ATLAS IS FILLING A VOID IN THE FINE DINING CATEGORY. WHY IS ATLAS A GOOD FIT FOR ATLANTA RIGHT NOW?

GK: It offers Atlantans a compelling choice for dining out ... and the opportunity to enjoy a special evening. But there's also the option to just pop in, with the à la carte nature of the menu and separate bar menu. atlasrestaurant.com