

Two Great New Atlanta Restaurants: The Southern Gentleman And Atlas

By: Katie Kelly Bell

Atlanta is once again a busy place with new restaurant openings happening almost weekly and two of the more exciting openings are [The Southern Gentleman](#) and [Atlas](#).

The Southern Gentleman enjoys a nice top story view of Atlanta's swanky new shopping district: Buckhead Atlanta. The plush marshmallow-soft bar stools make this an inviting stop for nibble and a drink, but the smart service and tasty menu offerings will likely lure you in for a longer meal.

The restaurant has walls of glass windows that open out into to shopping scene but it's wee details like the seersucker drapes, tufted camel leather booths and oversize custom portrait of Mark Twain that lend this destination a uniquely warm and welcoming southern vibe. The menu reflects the atmosphere with updated takes on southern flavors. The crispy-on-the-outside, soft-on-the-inside Hoppin' John boudin balls with warm pepper jelly fold classic southern ingredients into an addictive bite-sized taste.



Bar at The Southern Gentleman, photo: Andrew Thomas Lee

The main menu does a great job of highlighting local luminaries in the southern food world. Carolina Gold rice gets special love as a vegetarian risotto with sorghum glazed carrots and a carrot pecan pesto. Local Riverview Farm's beef and pork appear in the Louisiana Parish meat

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pies. And, of course someone's "Nana" gets top billing in a Chicken and Waffles dish complete with chicken liver mousse, brown butter herb waffles and Nana's homemade chow chow.

The cochon, composed of roasted pork shoulder, belly and skin, served over balsamic braised greens and drizzled with au jus, takes "southern" to a new level of decadence. But, the kitchen doesn't merely lean on big flavored ingredients to thrill you—consider the elegant, delightful combination of clementine and rye berries with a perfectly prepared red snapper.

The recently opened Atlas restaurant in the St. Regis Hotel thankfully fills the gap in Atlanta's meager fine dining category. The interior has been completely reimagined (the old look was like a tired French country club) into a classy but still very sexy space. The kitchen is open to the dining room, but set back a good bit so it's more of a "view" than an interruption. Walls are covered in fine art from the Lewis Collection (think Chagall, Picasso and Bacon), but I most love the subtle "lounge" mood lighting, emerald toned fabrics on dark wood and vaulted ceilings.

Service is top notch, and the wine list is smart—but the menu is where you'll have the most fun. Offerings can be wildly rich or fresh and elegant—such as truffle potato pierogi dumpling with wagyu beef and celery root puree or the Island Creek oysters with cucumber tea and grapefruit. We also loved the vivid, fresh pea soup with leeks.

Dinner entrees are crowd-pleasing home runs made with the usual suspects: local and

seasonal ingredients. Some of the options: a 35 day dry-aged New York strip steak, braised rabbit or hot smoked sturgeon with olives, citrus, and artichokes. In fact, I'd venture to say this menu is almost too big—and given the newness of the place it may be a matter of narrowing down offerings to what people want most. Regardless, Chef Christopher Grossman, who comes from the fabled French Laundry in Napa, is doing delicious things in this kitchen. Atlas is worth a visit—even if you only sit at the bar (or snag the two leather armchairs in front of the cozy fireplace) and order a dish or two.



Atlas Dining Room, photo courtesy of Brian Gassel

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atlasrestaurant.com