

# BLACK INK

THE ART OF EXTRAORDINARY LIVING • FALL/WINTER 2014



The Centurion  
Guide to the

# BEST RESTAURANTS IN THE WORLD



*Chef Ángel León of Barcelona's Aponiente with today's catch*

# The World on a Plate

For those of us who truly relish every bite of a well-crafted dish, tucking into a dinner that is less than perfect can induce an existential sigh of regret. As a **BLACK INK** reader, you've likely eaten at Dinner by Heston Blumenthal in London. You are probably on a first-name basis with the head waiter at Eleven Madison Park in Manhattan. Your palate is as discriminating as your taste in hotels and clothing. Booking your tables before boarding a flight is integral to your travel regimen.

Here we've collected a highly opinionated, supremely curated and utterly subjective list of our favorite restaurants from Abu Dhabi to Zurich. Some require long drives to get to; others only have one table. Many are passion projects by decorated chefs; a few are magical experiences helmed by mavericks who just want to cook great food—occasionally in their own home. Some may be imperfect in their decor but sublime in their cuisine, or worth a detour simply to dive into an authentic scene. All will have you recommending them to friends should they find themselves in Houston, Lima or Shanghai.

To whittle down the world's most incredible restaurants to a mere 287 entries, we consulted not gourmards but our favorite food insiders—people who eat only what they love and who truly love to eat. As a result, what you'll find on the following pages might not be quite the place for a beef Wellington (indeed, no menu may be presented at all), but they will be dining experiences that promise to leave you satiated...and with stories to share.

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ALVARO FERNANDEZ PRIETO



## Chef Paul Pairet

The maestro behind theatrical-dining phenomenon Ultraviolet in Shanghai reveals his favorite restaurants, based on his recent travels.

### TIPLING CLUB

**Singapore**  
Ryan Clift is one of the brightest young chefs on the avant-garde food scene in Asia.

### L'ARPEGE

**Paris**  
Alain Passard continues to inspire and create.

### LE BARATIN

**Paris**  
Chef Raquel Carena has certainly influenced the whole French bistronomy, from wine to food.

### L'AUBERGE DU VIEUX PUIES

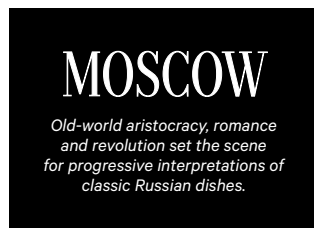
**Fontjoncouse, France**  
Gilles Goujon is about bold and very good taste, complemented by a delicate technique.

this buzzy space fluttering with paper lanterns are a highlight, especially the *chawan mushi* with exotic fruits—but it's the parade of beautiful people that really sweetens the whole experience. 270 Biscayne Blvd. Way; 305-577-0277; [zumarestaurant.com](http://zumarestaurant.com).

## MONTE CARLO, MONACO

### Elsa

Elsa is the restaurant at the Monte-Carlo Beach Hotel, and it also happens to be the first 100-percent organic restaurant to receive a Michelin star. A creative and eclectic seasonal menu created by chef Paolo Sari is available during the warmer months (March through October), and of its 20 dishes, every last one sings with the zing of fresh-plucked goodness. One of our favorites is the vegetarian risotto, a rich and savory dish that marries Italian and French influences with the distinctive flavors of *poivrade* (Provençal artichoke), Parmesan and fresh borage flowers. Other standout dishes include a pan-seared sea bass with tomato essence served with eggplant, sweet peppers, courgettes and snow peas. If he could pack any more local flavors in, he would, but the balance on this one is just right. Ave. Princesse Grace; 37-7/98-06-50-05; [montecarlosbm.com](http://montecarlosbm.com).



### Pushkin Café

To step through the doors of this 15-year-old place is like stepping back into pre-revolutionary Russia, right into the pages of a Tolstoy novel. In the ground-floor café, aristocratic cuisine is served 24-7 in a space reminiscent of a 19th-century chemist. (Many agree it's the best breakfast in town.) Look for the secret door in the corner that leads into the Rimsky-Korsakov mansion's fireplace room, where a CEO might be holding a birthday

party for his daughter. Downstairs is the old laboratory, the ultimate space for a romantic rendezvous. Upstairs, it's all haute cuisine. Waitstaff are outfitted in vintage servants' frock coats, and, in a quest for authenticity, the menus are written in Old Church Slavonic (you may request an English version). So, yes, Pushkin can feel a little gimmicky, but few dining establishments can claim to transport diners so fully, so sensually. (And the Stroganoff isn't bad, either.) *Tverskoy Bulvar 26A*; 7-495/739-0033; [cafe-pushkin.ru](http://cafe-pushkin.ru).

### Selfie

This little sister to White Rabbit (see below) is run by chef Anatoly Kazakov, and his hard-to-go-wrong menu adheres to the latest gastronomy trends. Settle into the sounds of lounge music and watch the showmanship in the open kitchen. There, a team of cooks turns out tangy sea scallops with cauliflower, raisins and morel sauce; lamb rib roast with quinoa, raisins and Port sauce; and a famous Pozharski cutlet with cucumber ketchup and crispy potato. Dessert is a highlight; try the sorrel *panna cotta* with *smetana* ice cream and tonic jelly. *Novinsky Bulvar 31*; 7-495/99-58-503; [selfiemoscow.com](http://selfiemoscow.com).

### White Rabbit

A separate elevator whisks diners to this Moscow hot spot located in a rooftop conservatory high atop Smolensky Passazh. And such a rarified entrance is fitting; once the doors open, a buzzing room of oligarchs and opera stars is revealed, kitted out with antique wooden tables, 19th-century settees and hardwood floors. Within that old-money atmosphere, star chef Vladimir Muhin turns out the most progressive reinventions of Russian classics. Best to put yourself in his deft hands and go with the seven-course tasting menu, which brims with figs, young goat cheese, stone crab and, quite frequently, foie gras. It's a Russian Wonderland, in the form of a decadent restaurant—with easily the best city views around. *Smolenskaya Sq. 3, 16th fl.*; 7-495/66-33-999; [whiterabbitmoscow.com](http://whiterabbitmoscow.com).

## MUSTIQUE, ST. VINCENT'S AND THE GRENADINES

### Beach Café at The Cotton House

Tristan Welch, who recently joined The Cotton House as head chef, is a well-known culinary figure in the United Kingdom as former head of Gordon Ramsay's Pétrus at The Berkeley. In the Caribbean, Welch has the added advantage of a killer location on Endeavour Bay, where he can pluck spiny lobster, conch, snapper, jacks and any other sea creatures and plant foods straight from the sea and transform them into dishes such as spiny lobster risotto, fish cake with wilted callaloo in a ginger, lime and butter sauce or a simple Caribbean carpaccio. His aim is to complement the culture and location of the island by intermingling local staples with the exotic flavors of this tiny resort island, then preparing them in traditional yet highly creative styles. *Cheltenham, St. Vincent & Grenadines*; 855-261-1316; [cottonhouse.net](http://cottonhouse.net).

## NAPA, CALIFORNIA

### Ad Hoc

Why go to the French Laundry when you can eat the same food that the chefs there do? Ad Hoc was opened in 2006 by chef Thomas Keller as a temporary restaurant until his team of wizards conjured the Next Big Idea in dining. But it clicked with Napa regulars, and the concept stuck. Now the temporary spot is fully established, turning out daily-changing four-course dinners for \$52 in a much more casual setting than its sister. Fried chicken and pot roasts are served family-style, so you get to chatting with local vintners or Silicon Valley entrepreneurs or ladies out on girls' wine-tasting weekends. Better yet, Ad Hoc is all very casual; getting a reservation is almost easy. 6476 Washington St., Yountville; 707-944-2487; [adhocrestaurant.com](http://adhocrestaurant.com).

## NAPLES, ITALY

### Da Dora

You could pass Da Dora, a beloved Neapolitan fish restaurant, without even noticing it was there. The two

**Mercato**

Jean-Georges Vongerichten's stylish Italian restaurant has been a hit ever since it opened, with the housemade ricotta with strawberry jam on sourdough becoming an instant icon. A wood-fired brick oven at the heart of the kitchen sends out pizzas with thin, well-charred crusts with toppings such as garlic, chile and tomato; classic prosciutto and four cheeses; and the impressive broccolini and spicy salami. The sea bass in an almost weightless batter with summer peas is another fabulous choice. The interior, by celebrated local design team Neri & Hu, features a forest of exposed wood and low incandescent lighting. *6th fl., Three on the Bund, 3 Zhongshan Dong Yi Rd., Huangpu district; 86-21/6321-9922; threeonthebund.com.*

**Mr. & Mrs. Bund**

Buzzing the door of what looks like a chic Shanghai apartment is the way into this fantastic French bistro on the Bund. It's not chef Paul Pairet's most elaborate offering—for a high-tech cinematic experience visit Ultraviolet—but it still reveals plenty of surprises, including a spectacular tuna foam served in a tin, a dish that symbolizes Pairet's philosophy of fantastic food minus the pretension. (The waitstaff here wear Converse sneakers, of course.) The meunière truffle bread may be Pairet's greatest invention to date, and the long-short rib is as delicious as it is huge. One of the best desserts is the lemon-and-lemon tart, a lemon sorbet served in candied lemon peel. Those in the know turn up for late-night two- and three-course menus served until 2 A.M., Thursday to Saturday, or make a night of it at the ironically hip bingo nights. *6th fl., 18 Zhongshan Dong Yi Rd., Huangpu district; 86-21/6323-9898; mmbund.com.*

**Scarpetta Trattoria**

Californian John Liu didn't have any experience in restaurants before he opened Scarpetta, but he did have a background as an investment banker that made him an obsessive analyst. He researched 1,400 recipes before creating the menu here, laying it out only after reading a Ph.D. thesis on menu design. The results of his investigations are impressive. Dough goes through a four-stage leavening process before it enters the imported pizza oven, emerging with wide bubbling crusts cooked to a smoky char. Other nice details include fried whitebait in the Caesar salad, and a squid ink aioli and cod roe served with calamari *fritti*. Best of all is the *orecchiette alla Bolognese*, ear-shaped pasta

topped with Bolognese, surrounding a fat upright bone filled with creamy roast marrow. *33 Mengzi Rd., Huangpu district; 86-21/3376-8223; scarpetta.cn.*

**Ultraviolet**

Cooking doesn't get more meticulous than this. There are just ten seats in Ultraviolet, where a 20-course multi-sensory meal is produced by Paul Pairet. Curating diners' "psycho taste" for each dish, Pairet makes precisely timed changes to the room's audio, visuals and even the scent, thanks to four dry-smell projectors concealed in the ceiling. You smell the ocean before the oysters arrive. You see chickens being spit-roasted on the walls and hear the fat crackling before the chicken with foie gras and grapevine smoke is served. The dishes surprise as well as dazzle, and we don't want to give too much away, other than this: Book months in advance for a chance to travel to an undisclosed location and succumb to Pairet's whims. *Meet at Mr. & Mrs. Bund, 6th fl., 18 Zhongshan Dong Yi Lu, near Nanjing Dong Lu, Huangpu district; uvbypp.cc.*

**Yong Foo Elite**

This staggeringly beautiful, Spanish-style villa began as a grand home and later served as the consulates for the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union and Vietnam. Colorful silks draped from the building set off its lush, dark wood. In keeping with the historic architecture, Yong Foo Elite is crammed full of furniture and curios from the Qing Dynasty and the early 20th century, before war and communism put the breaks on Shanghai's roaring hedonism. In the tranquil garden, magnolia trees tower over carp ponds and dinner dishes such as smoked codfish in Qimen black tea and braised duck with mushrooms are delivered with requisite pomp. While the food is well above par, the real star is the building itself, worth a visit even if it's just for a coffee or a cocktail. *200 Yongfu Rd., Xuhui district; 86-21/5466-2727; yongfooelite.com.*

**SIEM REAP, CAMBODIA**

**Cuisine Wat Damnak**

First there's its location: a trio of contemporary-designed dining rooms set in a traditional Khmer home and gardens about five minutes from the city center and the iconic ruins at Angkor Wat. Then there's Joannès Rivière, who comes from a family of Loire chefs and farmers and made his name as top

toque at Siem Reap's historic Hotel de la Paix before opening Wat Damnak in 2011. Since then, Rivière's refined take on classic Khmer dishes—a brothy *nom ban chok* with steamed lobster; a seared beef tenderloin with house-made oyster sauce and wild mango kernels; braised pork with star anise and caramelized palm sugar and fresh coconut tree heart—have lured travelers from their former hotel comfort zones. At barely \$35 for a meal, it's hard to imagine Wat Damnak can turn a profit; nonetheless, there's enough left over to fund Rivière's second passion, the Sala Bai Hotel and Restaurant School, which trains young locals in the hospitality and culinary arts. *Wat Damnak Market St., Sala Kamreuk Commune; 85-5/77-347-762; cuisinewatdamnak.com.*



**Gunther's**

Gunther Hubrechsens doesn't get as much glory as the showier chefs in Singapore, which is a travesty because his contemporary European food is superb and his eponymous restaurant makes a refreshing change from all the shopping mall and hotel setups in the Lion City. Instead, Gunther's is based in a converted shop house on a historic side street. A tiny but cute Belle Époque-styled bar leads to a surprisingly modern dining area. This being Asia, there are three private rooms, crucial for a power meeting; the local tycoons' favorite is room number 2—the most intimate, and complete with chandelier. Cold angel hair pasta in truffle jus topped with osetra caviar and a wafer-thin apple tart are signatures, but wait until you're shown the ingredients of the day in raw form—which may include Wagyu beef, lobster, king crab legs and Spanish ham—before deciding. Alternatively, Hubrechsens will create a custom tasting menu for you around an agreed-upon budget; for that, each course promises to be a surprise. *36 Purvis St.; 65-6/338-8955; gunthers.com.sg.*

**Jaan**

Restaurants with a knockout view usually don't bode well on the food front, but that's not the case with Jaan. All the tables at this compact 70th-floor restaurant are cleverly set up to take advantage of the twinkling