

Top 12 fine dining restaurants that should be on your bucket list this year

From Attica to Mirazur, dine at the finest restaurants as you eat your way through the current food rulers of the world.



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Picture courtesy: Scott Wright of Limelight Studio

In the hallowed world of restaurants, the search for the finest plates is an exacting task as each year the food order is shaken by the arrival of a new star. Here's our list of the current reigning favourites from the world of fine dining. Bon Appetit.

Pavilion Ledoyen, Paris

Yannick Alleno, the handsome, rock star chef, is the only person to run two three star Michelin restaurants in France. More than 200 years old, Ledoyen is in a magical location off the Champs d'Elysee, with innovative food enhanced by his continual experiments with sauces. Alleno is also a champion of local produce, having helped revive great small producers surrounding Paris. Stand out dish? Sea Urchin soup served in a grapefruit shell with duck skin and foie gras.

<http://www.yannick-alleno.com>; Meal for two 600 Euros without alcohol

Osteria Francescana, Modena, Italy

The voluble Massimo Bottura creates inspirational "story telling" food from hare-brained concepts

about medieval battles in his native Emilia-Romagna or Picasso's definition of Cubism. The restaurant is tucked away in a side street in Modena and is adorned with serious contemporary art. What matters though is how delicious the food is. This could be his pasta dish of "the crunchy part of Lasagne", "the five ages of Parmesan" or "Oops. I dropped the Lemon Tart".
www.osteriafrancescana.it; Meal for two 550 Euros without alcohol

Ultraviolet by Paul Pairet, Shanghai

French-born Paul Pairet succeeds in creating the most brilliant dishes for 10 people at a sitting surrounded by the greatest son et lumiere display imaginable. Diners are taken to a mystery destination in Shanghai and then plunged into three hours of fantasy, using every visual and olfactory trick in the book. The end result is not some kitsch rendition but an extraordinary creative journey. www.uvbypp.cc; Meal for two 900 Euros without alcohol



Attica, Melbourne

Ben Shewry has done more than any other Australian chef to create the most exciting food in the country by using local produce. This is not some nationalistic celebration of Australianness but a brilliant interpretation of native produce no one knew existed. Foraging is a daily occurrence though the level of cooking here is at the same heights as any great haute cuisine establishment. Highlights include Salted red kangaroo with bunya bunya (a variant of a pine tree).
www.attica.com.au; Meal for two 350 Euros without alcohol

Mirazur, Menton, France

Argentinian Mauro Colagreco makes inspirational dishes from his own vast vegetable garden plus hand caught seafood from the Mediterranean. Perched on the Italian border, he grows more than 250 varieties of vegetables on the hill behind his restaurant. The local fishermen call him if they catch any interesting seafood and he picks it up immediately. His restaurant also has one of the most spectacular views of the Riviera coastline. www.mirazur.fr; Meal for two 350 Euros without alcohol

Central, Lima

Virgilio Martinez is perhaps the main reason Peruvian cuisine has taken the culinary world by storm in the past decade. His 17 course tasting menu explores an entire range of products from the Andes, Amazon and Ocean. He reinterprets classic dishes such as ceviche and uses fruits, herbs and vegetables, which are even unknown in his native Peru. Regularly voted the top chef in Latin America, he has just made it into the top ten restaurants of the 50 Best Restaurants of the World. www.centralrestaurante.com; Meal for two 230 Euros without alcohol

Louis Quinze, Monaco

The flagship of the Alain Ducasse culinary empire, Le Louis Quinze is located in one of the most sumptuous locations imaginable with food to match. Ducasse was the first chef to win three Michelin stars for a hotel restaurant, something that he has managed to replicate in several others. One of the most luxurious dining rooms in the world in the Hotel de Paris; it has just been given a makeover with new sculpted zones to serve the food. www.alain-ducasse.com; Meal for two 660 Euros without alcohol

Faviken, Sweden



The interiors at Faviken in Sweden. Picture courtesy: Erik Olsson

Probably the most remote great restaurant in the world, Faviken is surrounded by a 22,000 private estate south of the Arctic Circle. The cuisine is bold and inventive. Magnus Nilsson is a keen hunter, so the game is first-rate and it is only an hour from Trondheim in Norway, which has some of the greatest seafood in the world. He serves beef that has been hung for more than three months and saws open the bone marrow at the table. There are only 16 covers, so it is necessary to stay overnight, which means an all day experience in the summer. www.faviken.com Meal for two 600 Euros without alcohol

Amber, Madarin Oriental, Hong Kong

Dutch born chef Richard Ekkebus serves luxurious French-inspired dishes using the best local and foreign ingredients that can be flown into Hong Kong at a moment's notice. The most famous dish was sea urchin from Hokkaido with lobster jelly and caviar but it has been overtaken by Korean abalone with black pepper and tomato compote. www.amberhongkong.com; Meal for two 450 Euros without alcohol

Arzak, San Sebastian, Spain



A creative dish at Arzak restaurant. Picture courtesy: Jose Lopez

One of the very first avant-garde restaurants in Spain, Elena Arzak is the fourth generation to run this "New Basque Cuisine" temple, which has been at the same location since 1897. Inspired by French nouvelle cuisine, the food is essentially Basque with playful touches (ice-cold raspberry soup is served in a milk bottle with a melon cork). The wine list has a superb number of very old Riojas at reasonable prices. www.arzak.se; Meal for two 420 Euros without alcohol



Chef Elena Arzak and her father Chef Juan Mari Arzak. Picture courtesy: Coconut

Eleven Madison Park, New York



Chef Daniel Humm and William Guidara from Eleven Madison Park. Picture courtesy: Francesco Tonelli

Recently crowned Number One in the Worlds 50 Best Restaurant awards, Eleven Madison Park adheres to its business name, which is "Make It Nice". The cuisine is innovative classical with terse descriptions such as celery root in pigs bladder but it will be braised in truffles and chicken reduction. Chef Daniel Humm and restaurant manager Will Guidara make it an experience to cherish. www.elevenmadisonpark.com; Meal for two 300 Euros without alcohol

Sushi Saito, Tokyo

This must be the only three star Michelin restaurant located in a car park but chef Takashi Saito serves the best sushi from this eight-seat restaurant. Dishes include baby sardine rolled in snapper roe and the incomparable raw tuna in the usual sequence of akami (lean), chutoro (semi-fatty) and otoro (fatty). The safest way to get a reservation is to book the seven seat private dining room. No website 81 3 3589 4412; Meal for two 350 Euros without alcohol