

A Taste of Atlanta's Rising Restaurant Scene

Caribe Café: Marietta's Best Kept Secret

Just a few blocks east of the square in Marietta sits the unassuming Caribe Café, a culinary diamond in the rough. Don't bother looking for a flashy valet parking sign or architecturally inspired interior when you arrive. Look for Chef Harry Lorius — a recovering accountant with a degree in culinary arts from New York's Art Institute and kitchen experience in the likes of Tribeca Bar and Grill, Waldorf and the Four Seasons. He'll likely be working his magic with plantains and collard greens, twisting up Caribbean, Southern and seasonal ingredients into his own unique, delicious plates of glory.

*This is an example of a caption.
The font is called Sabon Italic.*



PHOTO COURTESY OF ?

Intimate and tidy, the restaurant has about 11 tables and alcohol (for now) is BYOB. The menu reads like a global food dictionary ... complete with Indian, Caribbean and Southern dishes. "We play with our food; it's not always Caribbean food. We have a wide variety of customers and there is always something new going on in the kitchen," explained Lorius, who is a native of Haiti.

You could waste precious time debating between the likes of curried coconut cheese ravioli, conch fritters, seafood etouffee or Haitian whole fried snapper. The better choice is to simply order the four-course menu (at a mere \$35, it's a ridiculous bargain).

Chef Lorius might start things with a platter of salmon croquettes (akin to hush puppies) and a mixed green salad. For an appetizer expect a crab cake with a ginger butter sauce over a slaw of onions, habanero, cabbage and peppers. Delicious, yes, but the main course gets even more interesting with selections such as a shredded jerk chicken with four cheese ravioli or a duck a l'orange with plantains. Finish it all off with refreshing passion fruit mousse and you'll understand why people come back week after week.

On a recent visit, I treated myself to a pan-seared tilapia with fermented black bean vinaigrette, fried plantains and collard greens. The table shared a pulled pork beignet with sliced granny smith apples and our platter of fried plantains dusted with a whiff of powdered sugar was utterly addictive. If you're feeling adventurous let Chef Harry put something together especially for your table; you might be surprised with a surf and turf of braised oxtail and grilled prawn in a red wine butter sauce.

Caribe Café
45 N. Fairground St. N.E.
Marietta
678-213-1434
www.tasteofthewestindies.com

A dish of Norah's mac n' cheese (named for his daughter) is pure creamed heaven and probably the best version I've tasted in Atlanta. Chef Harry attributes his passion for cooking to his mother. "Anytime she cooks there is always a big crowd, which brings laughter and old memories and we tend to forget about problems and the bills ... all the negative things. I watched that and I thought cooking just may be something I could get into."

We're so glad he did.

— Reviewed by Katie Kelly Bell



PHOTO COURTESY OF ?

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Guru Leads the Way to Gastronomic Enlightenment

Historic Roswell certainly isn't lacking in restaurant choices. It has been easy enough to find a place to enjoy a great steak, a pile of pasta or even a plate of crepes, but for Indian food I had been either schlepping down I-285 or trekking up 400. And for that very reason I would wait until my hankering had become a full-on craving before climbing in my car and making the trip. Imagine my surprise when the heavens sent Guru almost literally to my doorstep. Appearing without fanfare this summer in Founder's Square Shopping Center in the heart of Roswell, you might consider it simply good timing, but I see it as nothing short of divine intervention.

Alex Banvait, president and owner of Guru, delivers North Indian cuisine in traditional gravies, smooth cheeses and a generous hand of earthy spices. Starters range from simple and light to hearty and filling. Papadam are crunchy crescent wafers of lentil and black pepper that will lightly whet your appetite. They're served with a trio of dipping sauces, a refreshing mixture of mint, cucumber and lemon juice, a rich tamarind garnish, and spicy onion chutney. The vegetable samosas are crisp, over-stuffed turnovers filled with mashed potatoes and sweet peas that are surprisingly satisfying in their own right. Try the pakosas if you want to take the edge off your hunger without ruining your appetite. This pleasing plate of fried spinach, bell peppers, eggplant, potato and cauliflower resemble tiny bite-sized birds' nests.

The menu is quite lengthy and dishes are grouped by cooking styles. Tandoori entrées are cooked inside clay ovens on skewers. The seekh kabab is a sizzling platter of minced lamb chunks and seasoned beef topped with bell peppers and onions. Hints of garlic, ginger and rosemary add warmth without too much fire, but you can request mild, medium or hot. It might pay to be conservative on your first visit, as even the milder plates can have a little heat.

Of course, there are the requisite curries and hot



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Food for Thought

biryani rice dishes, all of which are worthy of praise. But with such unrestrained options, it's worth being adventurous. The sagwala style wraps chicken, lamb, beef or shrimp in a symphony of ginger, tomato, onion, kale, spinach, fennel and mustard. The portions are liberal, but worth taking home since they're just as tasty the next day. Indian desserts are subtly sweet, but they're a calming follow-up to such flavorsome meals. Rice pudding with cardamom and nuts is a popular choice, as is the homemade mango ice cream. If you're feeling daring, opt for the unexpected Ras Malai, scoops of cottage cheese dipped in saffron cardamom milk, or have a post-dinner drink like the Royal Afza, which includes rich vanilla ice cream and sugary red rose syrup.

Guru Indian Cuisine
555 S. Atlanta St.
Roswell
678-461-9565

If it's atmosphere you're after, make it take out. Though comfortable, the space is humble and decorated with pretty carved wood tables and Indian accents, like a brass Ganesh statue and a few wall hangings. But if a great meal is what's on your mind, relax and enjoy Banvair's friendly service and tasty food. There's enough seating so that you won't have to wait for a spot, and a deck out back for fresh-air dining.

— *Reviewed by Tamara Holly*



Good Friends, Good Beer, Good Times at TAP

Think about the convivial spirit and exuberant camaraderie of an English pub. Now, envision a trendy restaurant/bar with 20- and 30-somethings dressed to the nines. Throw in some fancy bar snacks and six tasty entrées, for a good measure, and you have TAP — an American “gastropub.”

Located in the heart of Midtown across from Shout! on Peachtree, TAP is the newest venture by Concentrics restaurateurs Bob Amick and Todd Rushing, creators of the acclaimed ONE. midtown kitchen and TWO. urban licks. They wanted to establish a destination that would bring others together to eat and drink in a welcoming setting — a gastropub fit the bill.

A gastropub, as it is called in Great Britain, is an old pub that has been converted to house a stronger food element; the term is derived from the words gastronomy and public house. TAP has the beer or “pint” selection of a pub (21 on tap, 21 in bottles), the wine selection of a winery (16 on tap, four sparkling by the bottle), and the food of a chef who brings culinary expertise from around the world.

The beer, ranging from Chimay beer made by monks in Belgium, to Numbers Ale developed by the Atlanta Brewing Company, are served in glasses particular to the type of beer, allowing guests to properly savor the flavors and aromas. A special cask-conditioned beer containing live yeast and no preservatives will be offered, as well.

“It's not your average pub,” said Executive Chef Todd Ginsberg, who has worked at the world-renowned Alain Ducasse in New York City and The Dining Room at The Ritz-



*Smoked Salmon, Red Flannel Hash,
2 Eggs and Horseradish Sauce*

PHOTO COURTESY OF ?



Carlton in Atlanta. “The food was influenced by my travels — New York, Paris, Bangkok, Vietnam, Spain, London and here in Atlanta.”

Ginsberg devised a menu full of seasonally driven comfort food — many of which originated overseas and have since been tweaked to include a Southern flair. The Alaskan halibut with creamed peas and spätzle is a real treat. The roasted scallops and summer vegetable minestrone is light, yet flavorful. But to really partake in the jolly environment, order snacks like the pickled roots and pint of pineapple with chili salt, and plates like the buffalo fried calamari tossed with Irish Cashel blue cheese and celery; share with your friends and enjoy!

For some of the best people-watching in the city, sit on the patio. If you prefer indoor seating, the third floor offers the best view with floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking Peachtree and an open kitchen. The second floor is filled with wooden tables and red leather chairs, while the bar, with an impressive glass vault housing the taps suspended above it, serves as the focal point on the first floor.

TAP serves dinner every night and lunch during the workweek, as well as brunch on the weekends. Great for large groups, TAP offers a friendly environment with good beer, good friends and good times.

— *Reviewed by Carly Felton*

TAP

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