

DINING ESSENTIALS

Top Flr

674 Myrtle St. NE (Midtown)  
404-685-3110

**Hours:** Tues.–Thur. 4:30 p.m.–1 a.m.,  
Fri.–Sat. 4:30 p.m.–2:30 a.m.,  
Sun. 4:30 p.m.–midnight

**Reservations:** Yes

**Dress Code:** Urban hip

**Cuisine:** American

**Alcohol:** Full bar

**Cost:** \$5–\$10, appetizers and salads;  
\$10–\$14, pizza and pasta;  
\$8–\$12, entrees;

\$4–\$6, sides; \$3–\$5, desserts.

**Credit Cards:** All major

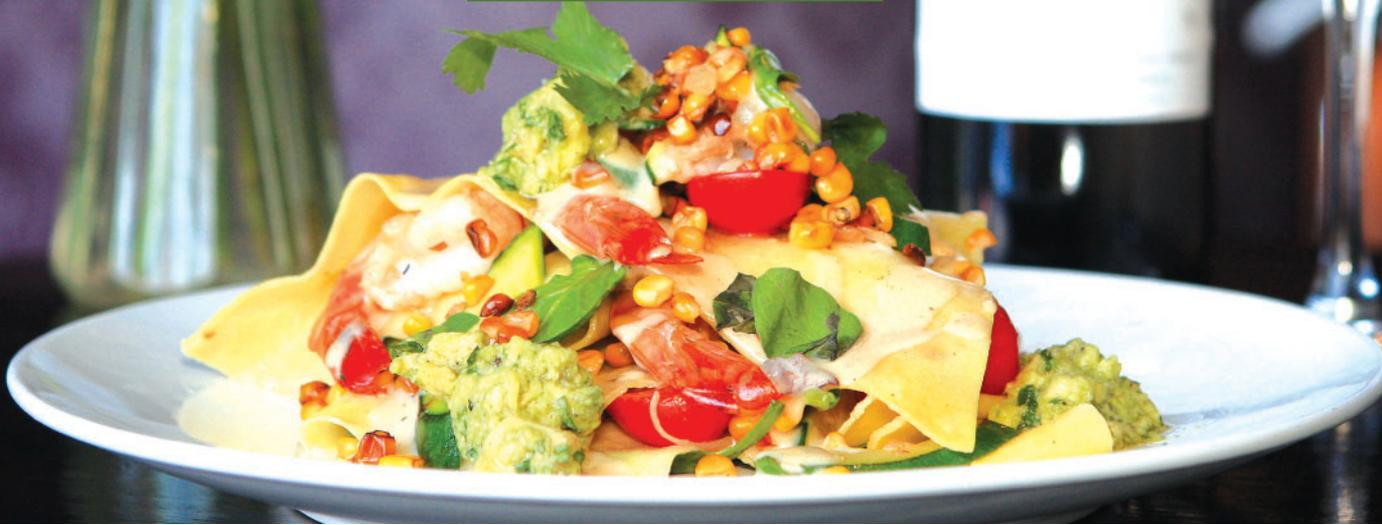
**Outdoor Seating:** A few tables

**Parking:** Street and small lot

PHOTOS/SPARK ST. JUDE

TOP DOG

Ravioli with shrimp, zucchini, corn, grape tomatoes and avocado



Tap into the quietly sophisticated scene at Top Flr, and you won't be disappointed

BY KATIE KELLY BELL

What to make of the intriguing Top Flr? It's a unique place, to be sure: a converted two-story space with a bar/lounge on the main floor and exceptional dining on the, yes, you guessed it, top floor. The top is indeed where it's at. The eclectic interior is a rather odd mixture

MAIN COURSE

of color with two white walls, one painted with a robust paisley-like pattern and two others (toward the back) shaded in dark hues. White tables with black trim are outfitted with mod, space-age, black-and-white chairs. A corner of windows adds some natural

light to the space, but overall, it's striving for an urban SoHo art-gallery feel. A captivating range of music is piped in while conversation buzzes all around. Top Flr is piquing the attention of hipsters who seek a premium dining experience without all the fuss and gloss of fancier restaurants (read: no valet parking here).

Co-owner and former DJ Jeff Myers hustles around in his wool cap and long hair looking more like a roadie for a rock

band than a proprietor of a restaurant. I hesitate to call it upscale (too snooty) or even stylish (too forced). Top Flr is more a mixture of urban savvy and what appears to be a keen appreciation for well-prepared food and unique wines. The menu is a marvelous cross-section of things we love: gourmet pizzas, fresh pasta, seafood and a good ol' steak.

Chef Mike Shorn leans on traditional ideas for cuisine but deftly adds flair to keep things interesting. An oven-roasted

salmon is fresh and zippy with a dollop of citrus tapenade, while the pan-roasted ginger-crusting tofu with pomegranate-miso dressing is altogether exotic (not sure I'm in love with it, but it works).

The wine list has pedigree, and I must tip my hat to the crew at Top Flr for managing to offer a spectrum of interesting wines without getting top heavy on chardonnay and cabernet sauvignon.



Top Flr offers a chic setting for hip Midtown dining.



Grilled hangar steak

These guys know what they're doing. Appetizers such as the lamb skewers with daikon tazi and cauliflower couscous or the mussels with an aromatic coconut-lime broth are worth investigating. The portions are ample and make for easy sharing, but you will not want to share the supple free-form ravioli with plump gigantic shrimp and a medley of zucchini, corn, grape tomatoes and avocado—a dazzling, garlicky delight. Dusted with parsley, the presentation is lovely. A fire-roasted pork tenderloin with a sherry thyme Vidalia jus is a tender bite with a savory edge to it, but the grilled hangar steak with shallot demi glace is a true meat-lovers dish. And at a mere \$12, it's one of the best deals in town.

Missing dessert here would be a travesty. A selection of dessert wines, cognacs and whiskeys demonstrates Top Flr's stealth sophistication, which tends to pop up and surprise you throughout the meal. Consider the three unique truffle offerings (crafted with only fair-trade chocolate). Each wickedly dark Colombian chocolate orb is infused with the likes of fennel, caramel rice and green tea, easily worthy of any five-star dining experience. That may be what sets Top Flr apart, the nuanced upscale touches (boutique wine list, savory menu, gorgeous truffles) set amid a relaxed, urban dining scene (park your own car, convivial noise level). It's a combination that makes Top

Flr a top-notch restaurant. **SP**