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Julianne Murat works the wood-fired bread oven at Vermont's Vergennes's Laundry



flavorful Chef Set meals; and, with her husband, oversees the 75-acre Siena Farms. She is known for combining Middle Eastern flavors with down-home classics—harissa BBQ duck (\$16) and fried chicken with tahini remoulade come to mind. Her latest triumph is a true neighborhood canteen in the quaint Somerville. Borrowing from the meyhanes of Turkey, the menu is comprised of small seasonal meze for sharing. Her “all-time personal favorite” is the pumpkin fritter (\$5). sarmarestaurant.com

VERGENNES LAUNDRY From the state that brought you Ben & Jerry's People have been known to take detours while driving through New England just to have one of **Julianne Jones'** perfect croissants or morning buns. The wood-fired bakery she opened in 2010 with her husband, Didier Murat, in a former laundromat in Vergennes, Vermont, serves lunch and brunch. Feel free to pop in for a quince tart (\$4) or sablé at tea time, or show up for a late-day glass of wine with a fleet of oysters (\$17.50/half dozen). vergenneslaundry.com

VIA CAROTA Two beloved NYC chefs create an Italian renaissance **Jody Williams** and **Rita Sodi** each own two of the most beloved neighborhood restaurants in the West Village. The couple recently opened their first collaborative restaurant, which draws on the spaciousness and convenient hours of Williams' *Buvette* (it's open for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and late night) with the serious Italian focus of Sodi's *I Sodi*. Expect al dente pastas (left) and roasted squab with farro, sage, and pickled fruit (\$20), plus an A-list crowd: Sodi is a former Calvin Klein Jeans executive, and Emma Stone and Jake Gyllenhaal are regulars at *Buvette*. viacarota.com



TAKE ROOT 12 seats + these 2 women = a Michelin star Running a restaurant with only two employees and 12 seats may sound like a problematic business model, and hardly one to gather national attention. Yet Brooklyn's year-old *Take Root*—run by 26-year-old chef **Elise Kornack** and her wife, **Anna Hieronimus**, who oversee every detail right down to the dish washing—was awarded a Michelin in the fall, thanks to out-of-the-box dishes such as house-cured duck with black-garlic pudding, walnuts, and pearl-onion shells and chamomile ice cream with molasses, bee pollen, and honey crisp. If the

limited space and fancy star aren't indication enough to call in advance for a reservation, consider that the couple offer only one seating for their five-course, \$105 tasting menu three nights a week. take-root.com

V STREET Cheesesteak, shmeezesteak When chefs Rich Landau and **Kate Jacoby** launched *Vedge* in 2011, they did the impossible: persuade even die-hard carnivores to embrace vegan. Now it's one of the most sought-after reservations in Philadelphia, so in October, they responded by opening a bar-and-street-food concept in Rittenhouse Square. Jacoby is a wizard when it comes to vegan desserts: You'd never know that her soft-serve (\$5)—which comes in inventive flavors like Thai tea and lemongrass—is dairy-free. vstreetfood.com

WESTERN DAUGHTERS BUTCHER SHOPPE This slaughterhouse rules When Denverites want to bring home the very best beef, they go to Western Daughters, located in the trendy LoHi district. **Kate Kavanaugh** (a 26-year-old former vegetarian, wouldn't you know!) founded the butcher shop in 2013 with fiancé Josh Curtiss. They make their own bone stocks, meat butters, and sausage in out-of-the-box flavors such as cheeseburger. Though their store is only 720 square feet and technically has no seats, customers flock here for made-to-order sandwiches (\$12). Crowd favorites such as house-smoked brisket and pork liver and BBQ pork bân mi are the perfect way to embrace Kavanaugh's “eat better meat less often” philosophy. westerndaughters.com

CURE Because ordering a “pinot grigio” is so 2000 Cure's wine director, **Caitlin Graham**, 29, forgoes the leaden notes of a traditional drinks menu and, to Rochester, New York, customers' delight, describes her deliberate list of 16 French wines in poetic terms, all “crisp nights,” “sharp stilettos,” and “glistening scales.” Don't forget to order chef Dan Martello's eponymous charcuterie plate (\$17), as well as the roasted Camembert with fingerling potatoes (\$14). Both are perfect sides to a glass of “wasted youth,” or champagne, as the less literary might call it (glasses range from \$8 to \$12). curebar.net

Reporting by: *Jennifer Arellano, Lisa Chase, Cotton Codinha, Charlotte Druckman, Amanda FitzSimons, Emily Holt, Michael Matassa, Elyse Moody, Naomi Rougeau, and Sierra Tishgart*

pressed Bar Panini might be the Fog City's most perfect meal. toscacafesf.com

NIGHTBELL Wunderkind Katie Button goes after Asheville's night owls One of the culinary industry's brightest young stars, **Katie Button** knows her tapas—she trained at the hallowed *elBulli* under Ferran Adrià—and her first restaurant, *Cúrate*, paid respectful homage to the Spanish small-plates tradition. Now comes a restaurant and lounge that stays open late, drawing the city's college students and visiting film crews, and boasts a drinks menu with a sliding scale of “boozy”-ness. It features the tapas format, but with dishes like Canadian waffle topped with duck confit, foie gras poutine, and cheddar mousse (\$14) and ricotta and egg yolk ravioli with espresso-infused pancetta (\$12). thenightbell.com

SEMILLA Eating your vegetables never seemed so enticing At this 18-seat Williamsburg, Brooklyn, eatery, vegetables take center plate. Per Se alum chef José Ramírez-Ruiz and pastry chef **Pam Yung** opened *Semilla*—“seed” in Spanish—as an ode to seasonally available ingredients. (The constantly rotating prix-fixe tasting menu—\$75—does feature meat and fish.) Recent veggie-heavy dishes have included

burdock arancini with miso aioli and house-dried peppers, a vegetable roll interlaced with foie gras, and a pepita-studded pumpkin soup served in a mini pumpkin. semillabk.com

SPICE TO TABLE Spicy biryani goes to Hotlanta In Atlanta's loft-laden Old Fourth Ward neighborhood, Kerala-born **Asha Gomez** is giving diners a chance to celebrate oft-overlooked southern Indian cuisine. Yoga moms and their kids stop by for spiced chai while hipsters and neighbors turn up for reimagined kati rolls; Gomez gives the traditional skewered street food a new twist by serving it open-faced on skillet-roasted Indian flat bread with made-to-order fillings baked (not fried) and filled with curried chicken and a pleasant streak of heat. NB: Her Amma's seven-spiced carrot cake is available to go. spicetotable.com

MEAUXBAR Bam! Emeril alum revives a NOLA classic Chef **Kristen Essig** paid her dues at Big Easy institutions Emeril Lagasse's *Emeril's*, Anne Kearney's *Peristyle*, and Susan Spicer's *Bayona*. Now she's hit it big at this revamped French Quarter jewel box, catering to artsy locals. Her reimagined comfort food—Bolognese over spaetzle (\$19), French onion grilled cheese (\$17)—is impossibly chic and utterly satisfying. meauxbar.com

SARMA James Beard winner Sortun bestows Middle Eastern meze on Boston **Ana Sortun** has won a James Beard; opened laid-back *Oleana* and café-bakery *Sofra* in Cambridge; developed a series of semi-homemade, healthy, boldly

“Their bread is breathtaking. Pam Yung, the baker, is a total badass. At the moment, it's my top pick nationwide.”
—Sara Kramer, chef