

# Arrive

CULINARY  
OFFAL TRIPE SWEETBREADS PICKLED  
mashed potatoes sauce ORGANIC slow  
kim chi TONGUE RESERVATIONS food  
SMALL PLATES OPEN TABLE Spanish  
grits BAKED BEANS GRAZING Asian tapas  
fine dining locavore MOLECULAR GASTRONOMY bone marrow TASTE BUDS  
CHARCUTERIE

•2010•  
Celebrating a  
decade of  
Arrive  
magazine

kobe beef English breakfast  
white tablecloths PIGS' FEET  
DESSERT family-style Latin ARTISANAL  
LAMB FRIED sous vide FOUR STARS

# EAT UP!

Some of the Northeast's best chefs discuss our ever-changing tastes and why dining out is better than ever

# Dinner

## CONVERSATIONS

Some of the Northeast's best chefs talk about the past, present and future of food—and why going out to eat is still so much fun

By Liz Johnson

Photography by Billy Kidd  
Food stylist Richard Aybar

Ask a group of chefs to predict what the future of food will be, and you're sure to get answers as varied as their own styles of cooking. But we asked anyway. Because one thing is for certain: Restaurants have changed a lot over the past 10 or 20 years, and they're going to continue to evolve.

For this special food story, we talked with some of the Northeast Corridor's most experienced, innovative and forward-thinking chefs—Jamie Bissonnette of Toro and Coppa in Boston; Andrew Carmellini of Locanda Verde in Manhattan; April Bloomfield of The Spotted Pig and The Breslin in Manhattan; José Garcés, who owns five restaurants in Philadelphia—Amada, Distrito, Tinto, Chifa and Village Whiskey—and recently became Food Network's next Iron Chef; and Cindy Wolf, who owns four restaurants in Baltimore—Charleston, Pazo, Petit Louis Bistro and Cinghiale.

Everyone agrees fine dining is on shaky ground; yet no one wants to see it go away. Small plates are still big—people want to graze. (And they want their animals to do so, too: They care about where their food comes from.) And the local, artisanal food movement continues to influence farmers and producers to create great ingredients for these chefs to work with.

Some of our chefs are fed up with trendy ingredients (eggs, pork belly, cupcakes); others find it laughable that we'd even ask about them (if they're good, they'll stick around). Three (Garcés, Bissonnette and Bloomfield) think Americans will open their minds and mouths to try stronger flavors (such as lamb); two (Wolf and Carmellini) say people like what they like and they're not going to change.

All have strong ideas about where dining has been, and where it's going. So we just thought we'd let them speak for themselves. Read on.



*Small plates*

*Pork belly*

*Organic*



*Locavore*

*Open Table*

*Lamb*



*Latin*

*Organic*

*Eggs*



*Reservations*

*Grazing*

*Artisanal*



*Charcuterie*

*Tripe*

*Farm-to-table*

*Foam*

*English breakfast*

*White tablecloths*

*Molecular gastronomy*

*Tongue*

*Spanish tapas*

*Cupcakes*

*Pigs' feet*

*Fried chicken*

*Kobe beef*

*Grits*

*Sweetbreads*

*Asian*

*Sauce*

*Family-style*

*Culinary*

*Pulled pork*

*Slow food*

*Fine dining*

*Offal*

*Pickled*

*Four stars*

*White tablecloths*

*Molecular gastronomy*

*Sous vide*

*Dessert*

*Bone marrow*

*Mashed potatoes*

# Jamie Bissonnette

Toro  
Coppa

Boston



*What has changed the fastest in the past three years and how do you see that trend moving in the next three?*

A lot of things have changed. Small plates have been really big everywhere. Farm-to-table, a lot of people have always done it, but now it's even corporate restaurants that are doing it, [places] you'd never expect to see using local farmers. Charcuterie is one of the things that has boomed around the country. Michael Ruhlman's book [*Charcuterie: The Craft of Salting, Smoking, and Curing*] changed everything.

But lamb is going to be the next pig—the pig has been everywhere: it's pork belly, pigs' feet, charcuterie. The next big thing is going to be lamb. Farmers are realizing that they need to have diversity in their animals, and part of that is the lamb.

*Diners also appear to be getting more adventurous in what they'll taste. At one time, oxtail was weird. Now menus have everything from tripe to tongue. Do you see that continuing? What will be the next "it" offal?*

I think the heart, because a heart is like tongue—it's a muscle, not an organ. Just muscle that you're not used to eating. If you didn't know it was a pig's heart to begin with, you might think it was a shoulder: It's dark red with a porky flavor and it's delicious.

*First bacon, now fried chicken. What's next for Southern food trends? I've been noticing a lot of pimento cheese.*

I was eating at Animal in L.A. a couple weeks ago, and they have a really big Southern influence. And there's Hungry Mother [in Cambridge]. But you can only refine that food so much. ... Still, I do think we'll see a little bit more of that—the next trend will be chicken fried steak.

*Fried chicken also falls under the Korean food trend. Do you see that holding on? Will another Asian cuisine come forward?*

I'm tired of Korean fried chicken. I was at an anniversary party at Pigalle [in Boston] and every course was a fried chicken theme: fried lobster, fried sweetbreads. Maybe it's because [Momofuku chef-owner] David Chang's book came out, or more people are becoming familiar with it. I've always used [Korean foods] like kim chi, but not tell people what it is—they're just getting the flavor of it without knowing. But now I think we're going to see things like kim chi and bulgogi listed on menus.

*Burgers went fancy with foie gras and truffles in the burger wars during the middle of the decade. Now, with places like Shake Shack, they're getting—surprise!—simpler. Where are they headed next?*

People are going to start going back to tradition. People were so concerned about how to make their burger look fancy, and they'll be more concerned about how they cook it. They'll pay more attention to the craft.

*There will always be special occasion restaurants. But will fine dining as we knew it from the 1950s to the 1990s ever be back?*

If you look at who won *Food & Wine's* best new chefs awards over the years, they've been the same quality of cooks. But Nate Appleman [who won the award for his simple cooking at A16 in San Francisco] is not going to open a Per Se—even though he could. It's the same quality of chef, but instead, he'll go more small and casual.

The guys at Animal, they're just doing really good, quality food cooked really well with quality ingredients. I'm not saying the other guys are wrong. But take Rob Evans [in Portland. His restaurant] Hugo has that French Laundry kind of chemical kind of influence—and his food is great. But he knows he's got [the restaurant] Duck Fat next door. He's got french fries that are cooked perfectly in duck fat. And those kinds of restaurants are the future.

“What trend do you think will implode soon? Besides cupcakes, of course.”

I hate quotations on menus. Somebody puts down spaghetti “carbonara” and the carbonara is pancetta foam with pancetta dust and a two-hour egg—and I'm like, what is that? It's “carbonara”? I'm also tired of seeing Tater Tots. If you're going to make mashed potato balls and fry them, call them croquettes. And Kobe hot dogs. I've seen them on, like, eight menus. Drives me nuts.”

# W

*What have you seen change the fastest, and how do you see that trend moving in the next few years?*

One of the major changes in food has been the whole molecular gastronomy thing. Over the last 20 years, I've watched it be an influence in chefs. Ten years ago it was the top chefs in the country; now it's filtered down to, like, the guy at Volt. [*Top Chef* Bryan Voltaggio's restaurant in Frederick, Md.] And the Food Network influences everything, too. But I feel a little like that stuff doesn't affect us.

For Baltimore, we do not have an expense account town. We have more of people who are dining to entertain themselves, or special occasion or being with family, and I haven't really seen much of a change in how people are doing this in the last three years. People come to us in particular because they're going to get great food and great service. I can still get buffalo—I'm getting buffalo from a local farm—and the chef at Cinghiale had three eels swimming around in his sink yesterday. So we can serve whatever we want, and it's a great market that way.

*So you've been watching all these changes, but in Baltimore, it's solid.*

Yes, yes, that's a good way of putting it: solid. I'm an old world chef, and

## Cindy Wolf

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Charleston  
Pazo  
Petit Louis Bistro  
Cinghiale

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Baltimore



I've done a lot of research on Southern cuisine and the Lowcountry, and with Charleston I participate in that cuisine. I appreciate the classic French, and there is no new food, unless you are going to break it down and put it in a test tube. There just isn't. I prefer to stick with the old way. I don't know if that's the right way of doing things. But what kills me is this "new" idea of the local farmer. 'Oh, local farming!' But that's the way it's always been done—and then the airplane was invented. I'm not looking to make new food. I'm looking to make the guest as happy as I can make them.

*You serve small plates at all of your restaurants. How is it working? Is it something that is just a trend, or will it keep going?*

It works in all of them. Louie's is probably the only one that's not doing small plates, but, again, it's a bistro. You can go in and have an onion soup. And Pazo is a tapas restaurant. People love it there. I think it's the way people want to eat. But I don't think it's a new way to eat. In France, they've been doing tasting menus for hundreds and hundreds of years. At Charleston, I went to a tasting menu format when we redid the

interior—it's been almost four years ago now—and I've been doing tasting portions. I have 20 to 25 items on my menu, and they're all listed out. You pick three, four, five courses—however many you're into. And I get a lot of comments. People are so happy with that because they're tired of eating a 26-ounce portion. They want to be able to eat how much they want to eat and taste as many things as they want to. They can graze.

*Diners also appear to be getting more adventurous in what they'll taste. Do you see that continuing? What will be the next "it" offal?*

What's the next offal? I have no idea what the answer to that is. Again, this is how people used to eat—they used to eat the whole animal. But moving out of the '70s and '80s, people used to eat primal cuts. But by 1975, those guys were retiring; those were the guys who were breaking down the whole animal, teaching American chefs how to work with these things. I think we went from that to, oh, beef tenderloin—that's what everybody wanted to work with. They weren't breaking down the animals' meat. But everything comes full circle. All these things were not

thought of as being high-end, and now people are recognizing that these things have great value.

*There will always be special occasion restaurants. But will fine dining as we knew it ever be back?*

I like to think that's what we do at Charleston. I think people need special occasion restaurants. They're very important. We need all kinds of restaurants. It's expensive to operate a restaurant that has silver domes and beautiful flowers on the table. Thank God there are still restaurants that operate that way. As our culture changes, people don't want to get dressed up and they want to go out in their bluejeans. But there will always be a place for excellent dining and great tabletops and great food.

“Are you seeing taste buds change? Pickles, sauerkraut and kim chi are sour foods. Salty and savory are part of desserts.

I have two answers to that—and again, this is all old. German food and Northern Italian food is sweet and sour. It's the way that food has always been. And, as a chef, I look for food to have some contrast. But I disagree with a dessert being salty. Don't give me a soufflé without sugar, please.

In the end, people have to be satisfied with what they're eating and happy with what they're eating, and that to me is a trend. The whole salty in dessert thing, the whole sweet-and-sour thing—you want contrast in your food. If it's creamy you want something crunchy. Everything has to make sense. Everything has to be in balance.

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# Andrew Carmellini

Locanda Verde

Manhattan

*You've worked in French fine dining at Cafe Boulud and playful Italian at Locanda Verde—and your difference in styles seems to coordinate with the timing of how people like to eat: moving from fancy to casual. Coincidence?*

I don't really follow trends. For me, it's about what I want to do and gut feeling. And after doing really high-end French cooking for 10 years—Lespinasse, Le Cirque and Café Boulud—I wanted to do Italian. Because I got a great response with Italian at Café Boulud, and the more soulful presentation rather than the deconstructive, contrived presentation. And it wasn't necessarily only the Italian stuff—sometimes we would do Mexican—so that's kind of why I wanted to do something Italian as opposed to getting the next four-star review.

*Do you think people are just hungry for that kind of food?*

I don't know if it's based on recessionary trends or not, but a lot of chefs—some of my contemporaries—they feel the same way. They want to reflect personally on who they are as opposed to maybe the place they were working.

*It's sort of like everyone is maturing?*

Well, yes. We're also older. But if you look at dining in New York, you have the great restaurants and they were French or Continental, and mostly the chefs were European. If you were to trace it back to an event, you had the Labor Department reclassify being a professional chef from a domestic worker. And after that, it changed the game a little, psychologically. And some of the American guys—Charlie Palmer at the River Café and David Bouley got three stars and Charlie Trotter, in 1990, that was a really big deal—and these American guys were opening French restaurants. Before that, they all worked for French guys, like I did, or Italian guys.

*At first I thought you were going to say that it's because the owner used to be the personality of the restaurant and now it's become the chef front and center.*

I've experienced this both firsthand: the Sirios [Maccioni, the owner and face of Le Cirque] and the Daniel Bouluds of the world. You have this big personality in the kitchen turning out this great food and the focus started to happen on the food. That's great. You can see more personality in the dining room—it's not just walking around the dining room shaking hands and looking important. It's the way that I go out to eat: the service, the way the music is playing, do I

want to put on a jacket or go the way I'm dressed—what part of the whole experience do you want to strip away and translate?

*You balance that really well at Locanda Verde.*

Thank you. We took over the space from the old Ago, and one of our successes is that we're in a great neighborhood, so we wanted to keep it first a neighborhood restaurant and second a destination restaurant. It's the vibe, the reservations—we only book up to 70 percent and we left room for walk-ins. It's not just the hot restaurant in the neighborhood that no one can get into—we want to be here for 15, 20 years, and if you go too high-end you're not really a neighborhood place anymore, with good service and good food at a reasonable price.

*The way you prepare tripe makes it easy to love. But diners also appear to be getting more adventurous in what they'll taste. Do you see that continuing?*

Tripe is on the menu because I like tripe. But people are not getting more adventurous. That's a real falsehood. The mega-foodie culture is saying 'I love tripe.' But in the percentage of customers in New York who order tripe, it's still very small. I've seen this movement recently, a hipster culinary movement—a Brooklyn DIY culinary movement—and there's some interest in that, but it's a very small percentage of your day-to-day customer. Ten years ago

I would sell two tripe a night, and now I sell about eight. There is still some interest, but as much as we'd like the menu to have only the stuff that we like because it's fun to cook—and not just the rack of lamb—it's still 95 percent of any restaurant I've ever worked in. It's just the reality about that, and I'll argue with anyone about that. I think it's more fun to see Andrew Zimmern [of *Bizarre Foods*] on TV eat something, but beyond the foodie world; it's a real small percentage.

*What about fine dining? Will it ever be back? Like Le Cirque when you worked there?*

There is always going to be a place for special occasion dining—anniversaries or events. ... New places that open up will be more casual and have the steps of service, but not presented in such a pretentious way.

*So how would they be less pretentious?*

It's a hard balance here keeping our service standards up, but still having a friendly atmosphere. You encourage people to dress casually if you want—I'm not saying in the fine dining experience you'd want somebody in a football jersey—but without a lot of the extra flourishes that were associated with it before. There's no need to present somebody with 10 different kinds of water, or a bunch of pens to sign your check—it's about the food and the service, but not necessarily about how many notes you can strike.

“You've found a way to make the small plates concept work in a different way—by sharing throughout the meal.

We offer both. We encourage people to go that route, because I think it's more fun. It's fun to get a bunch of things and try them and then get a bunch of pastas—and then everyone orders a main course. And that's kind of how people are ordering anyway. We encourage people to have fun a little bit. It makes you use your hands—you're passing things around—it forces you to have conversations. It engages everybody.”





*What have you seen change the fastest in restaurants, and where do you see them going?*

Fine dining, white tablecloth, four-star, special-occasion-type restaurants have been becoming less attractive, and there's less and less of that style of dining. I see our customers and the market going to a little more rustic and home-style preparation, done on a finer level—not so rustic. Less about theatrics and more about the food itself and the products; molecular gastronomy and those types of styles had some legs for a little while, but I see chefs coming back to less about the theatrics and scene, and more about good cooking. Chef Daniel Boulud is the epitome of fine dining, but in the past couple of years he's opened more casual dining restaurants. DBGB is a sausage and beer house, and Bar Boulud is charcuterie, and those styles bring the food back a few levels. It's hearty and it's good and it's what consumers are looking for.

*What local producers do you see making a national name by focusing on tradition and quality?*

We like Country Time Farm in Berks County, Pa. They produce pretty fantastic large, black pigs, all-natural, no hormones, etc. With Latin restaurants, there are pork products throughout our menus, so it's important for me to get the highest quality pork we can get. And Anson

Mills grits. They have a pretty exceptional product. Who thought grits could be so great?

*Small plates are not just the size—people also like the concept. Everyone shares a couple of these, a couple of those, and nobody has to commit.*

The trend is going to continue to grow. When I opened Amada in 2005, it was natural to do a small plates format because it was Spanish tapas. But what we did, without even thinking about it too much, was a bar format. Small plates served at a bar. A tapas restaurant is different—you won't find that in Spain, to do that on a larger scale. Every concept since, I patterned after that small plates format.

*What about translating the sharing format to the right side of the menu? Making communal eating and sharing entrees, too?*

It's definitely been done. You see it, the real big example in the Italian family-style restaurants. I think portion size is driving a lot of this. For years, Americans were taught to have these giant portions of food, and the value perception was great. But I think as a consumer we're getting a little smarter, and I think that consumers are recognizing that quality is better than quantity.

*Are you seeing taste buds change, too?*

Diners are definitely getting more adventurous.

A good example is the pickle section at Village Whiskey. It's pickles on a larger scale, and really focuses on a seasonal ingredient that's been pickled. Our customers have been really reacting well to it. Pickles are not for everybody. They're very highly acidic, salty, briny—and that's a flavor profile that's typically more for chefs. And now we're seeing it come out a little more in the normal market.

*Diners also appear to be getting more adventurous in what they'll taste. Do you see that continuing?*

That whole movement has been great. We've been talking about sustainability and using the whole product—it's really been great that there's a movement toward that. Cuts that I like? I've enjoyed bone marrow for a long time, whether putting it in a sauce or using it as a highlight at Distrito—we noticed in Mexico City that bone marrow was served everywhere, with tortillas, in its simplest form. Lamb's tongue cooks pretty quickly and has pretty good flavors and is pretty tender. The tenderness of it is what I like. I've been practicing using it for one of our [Iron Chef] battles.

*What trend is going to implode soon?*

I can't take any more pork belly—and I have it on my menu! I enjoyed it for several years, but I'm trying to gradually get it off to something new.

*Will there be another regional American cuisine making headlines?*

It goes back to the idea of homey, comfort food. I think the economy plays a lot in that feeling of wanting that comfort: mashed potatoes, fried chicken. It's not expensive and it's great. I opened Village Whiskey and we have a great mixture of Southern and American items. There are 120 different varieties of bourbon and whisky and rye, and great specialty cocktails with those liquors. And we've got some great oysters, a pickle section, and I have two burgers—we grind our own meat that was sustainably raised on an organic farm. They are fantastic burgers. There's Carolina-style pulled pork, Kentucky fried quail.

*KFQ?*

Yes, KFQ! And we do biscuits and gravy, and a lobster roll.

*What other global food will be making its way to local menus?*

I would love to try to promote some Peruvian and Ecuadorean. I'm Ecuadorean, so naturally I'm going to try to promote that food. I did a culinary trip to Lima very recently and the markets and the foods and the way the chefs were elevating the cuisine from the more rustic standard form—it's a great area.

*Is there anything truly classic that could become un-classic?*

You would think that the egg would be classic, but the fact that you said that opens my eyes a little bit more.



**José  
Garcés**

Amada  
Distrito  
Tinto  
Chifa  
Village Whiskey  
Philadelphia

“OK. Who’s tired of the egg?”

[Laughs.] I’m not yet. I’m a huge fan of the egg. I think it’s timeless and I think when it’s done properly and it’s not so much in your face, it can be really great. I know, but I’ve seen it on so many dishes—and I’m always the one to order the dish with the egg—that it doesn’t seem like it’s that special anymore. Much like pork belly. As soon as a trend happens, the chefs just go crazy, the trend gets swallowed up so quickly.

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## April Bloomfield

The Spotted Pig  
The Breslin

Manhattan

*What have you seen change the most in the recent past and how do you see that trend moving in the future?*

Whether it's a trend, I'm not sure, but the farmers market has evolved tremendously since I've been here. When I first arrived [in New York from London] it was quite barren. I was a little worried, especially after spending three months in San Francisco—and the Ferry [Plaza Farmers] Market with all its beautiful produce—and coming to New York in October was a bit of a shock. Now I think it's almost outgrown its area in Union Square.

*Allan Benton's ham. La Quercia's prosciutto. Cowgirl Creamery's cheese. Rancho Gordo's beans. These local producers have made a national name for themselves by focusing on tradition and quality. Who's next?*

Hudson Valley Whiskey.

Oh? *Tuthilltown Spirits*?  
What do you like about it?

It's just a good business. I like the whole ethic. It's awesome. And it's damn good whiskey.

And what appeals to you about their ethic?

The tradition. It's an independent company, and they're very professional. And they do everything well. Their branding and marketing are fantastic.

Plus it's damn good whiskey. One of the things I understand about *The Breslin* is that it's all about meat. Is that so?

We sell a lot of offal at [The Spotted Pig] and it's just a little offshoot of that, but we've taken it one step further, where we make our own terrines and sausages, and our own blood sausages. We stuff pigs' feet. We don't get to do that at the Pig because it's too small.

Diners appear to be getting more adventurous in what they'll taste. Is that true?

In general, New Yorkers are quite adventurous. The food in New York is innovative and progressive and it's always evolving and changing. It's a fast-paced city and things keep progressing, and that's a good thing.

What about the next animal? Are we tired of the pig?

I think lamb is going to come into fashion. Over the last six months I'm serving a lot more lamb on my menu. It's a fallacy that Americans don't like lamb.

*Small plates are not just the size—people also like the concept. Everyone shares a couple of these, a couple of those, and nobody has to commit. Is this a good thing?*

I love it. And what we're trying to do at The Breslin is actually create a more communal, help-yourself feel. We have pig's foot for two and a roasted belly for two. It creates conversation and you can pass around plates. It's really nice to kind of share, and you get to taste a lot more. You don't get as full up and you're not obligated to eat so much.

*Are you seeing taste buds change, too? Several years back you didn't see many pickled or fermented foods on menus—now handmade pickles, sauerkraut and kimchi are de rigueur. Our cocktails appear to be getting tarter.*

I couldn't imagine anything worse than drinking a cocktail that's terribly sweet. People like balance. ... You get your little cocktail drinks in Boston that are nice and well balanced, too.

Absinthe, for example, in San Francisco. You Americans—you invented salty and sweet, you know, the chocolates with the salty peanuts? That was a whole new thing for me when I got here: salty chocolate!

What about other American regional cuisines? Are they influencing you at all?

I really like spicy baked beans on my menu for my English breakfast. It's a side of beans to complement the breakfast. We put jalapeño and bacon that we smoke ourselves, tomatoes and molasses ... it's not your boring old standard baked beans that you get in England. They've got a little character.

*You make your own sausages and smoke your own bacon, and even describe the ratio of your own mayonnaise. Is this kind of slow-food style—and I don't mean slow-slow—something people are adopting more and more?*

It's good to make your own stuff; it's good to know where your product comes from. It's better than opening a box and you don't know what you're eating, do you? If you learn how to cook and you start as far from scratch as you can—you can pass that along to your children. It's more healthy and you're more informed.

“And what about fine dining—is it over? Will it ever be back?”

I think people just want something different. It's been a long time coming. And in New York it's adapted really well. Since I've been here it's been becoming a little more casual. New Yorkers love their cute little small places, and after the recession and 9/11, people just wanted something a little more intimate and comforting. Like The Spotted Pig, really, it's very inviting and it's familiar, and people like things that are familiar. But people are always going to want to splurge. To treat themselves for something a little more extravagant for a special occasion. Maybe for your grandmother's 70th birthday, you'd like to go to a slightly more posh place.

All interviews have been condensed and edited.