



>> FOR THE SWEET TOOTH

## SECONDS OF SWEETS {HOUSTON}

Allison Young Chavez and her husband Ivan Chavez, both Wharton business school grads, are expanding their popular Rice Village creperie to posh CITYCENTRE on the west side. This second **Sweet Paris Creperie & Café** is 2,200 square feet with a 600-square-foot patio. On the menu, expect sweet and savory crepes, pastries and coffee drinks alongside waffles, an extended array of salads and creative sandwiches. In the expansion mode, the couple recently opened a Sweet Paris shop in Nuevo Vallarta, Mexico. [sweetparis.com](http://sweetparis.com)



>> FOR THE SUSHI LOVER

## ASIAN EATERY WITH A TEXAS TWIST {DALLAS}

If you haven't tried **Shinsei** yet, summer is a great time for a first visit to the eatery developed by Lynae Fearing and Tracy Rathbun, both of famed-chef association. The eclectic Asian menu is rife with fresh bites including pristine nigiri sushi, beautiful sashimi and irresistible entrees "with a Texas twist" that you won't find at other Asian eateries. With soothing green hues, comfortable banquettes, fresh flowers and a rollicking bar scene, no wonder the restaurant is always packed. Roll up your sleeves for robust entrees such as honey hoisin baby back ribs, pan seared jumbo scallops with Asian risotto, citrus marinated beef tenderloin, and mahi mahi with shrimp dumplings. [shinseirestaurant.com](http://shinseirestaurant.com)



>> FOR THE SOUTHWESTERN FAN

## NEW LIFE IN A FAMILIAR PLACE {AUSTIN}

Finally! The Radisson Hotel on Lady Bird Lake recently replaced its T.G.I. Friday's with a modern restaurant concept. Prominent—and ambitious—Austin chef Shawn Cirkiel of Parkside,

The Backspace and Olive & June brings us **Chavez**. The complete rehab of the interior, which reveals more outdoor views, gorgeous lightweight wood light fixtures and plenty of elbow room, was transformed by popular local architect Michael Hsu. On the menu, find a collection of classed-up Southwestern favorites like carne asada flank steak with grilled onions and pico de gallo, grilled quail en peanut mole, and grilled shrimp al mojo de ajo (with garlic and tequila). There are also sharable small plates, lovely salads and inventive soups such as the butternut squash with yogurt, lime and pepitas. Get up early for warm monkey bread with candied pecans, huevos rancheros and inviting brunch selections. [chavez-austin.com](http://chavez-austin.com)

>> FOR THE SURF & TURFER

## SEASONAL SELECTIONS {AUSTIN}

Repeatedly honored as having one of the best restaurant wine lists in the world by Wine Spectator, Austin's beloved **Finn & Porter** steakhouse has rolled out its seasonal menu. Executive chef Peter Maffei, veteran of top-of-the-line New York eateries, is dishing up inventive preparations of the region's finest seasonal ingredients. Anticipate pan seared gulf grouper with baby beets and snow peas, roasted corn chowder with smoked bacon, lamb two ways and grilled Watermelon Steak. The new vegetarian menu includes house-made pasta with zucchini pesto, morel mushrooms and heirloom tomatoes. Rather have seafood? Master sushi chef Triet Huyn continues to wow with his signature sushi menu and chef's favorites, which change weekly. Catch the weekly happy hour with half pricing on sushi, chef's tastings and special drink pricing. [finandporteraustin.com](http://finandporteraustin.com)



>> FOR THE BEACH BOUND  
**DISHING UP A VIEW**

{PORT ARANSAS}

If you're headed to the coast this summer, put this newbie on your radar. **The Black Marlin Bar & Grill**, a component of the new Palmilla Beach Resort & Golf Club, is open for lunch, dinner and drinks even though the resort is not yet complete. Unforgettable are the sweeping views of the Gulf of Mexico and Corpus Christi Bay from a third-story elevated bar! You'll find American eats from the grill—a great variety for everyone with a focus on locally sourced ingredients. Look for pan seared Gulf snapper with black garlic shavings, grass-fed petite filet mignon with wild mushroom glaze, shrimp specials and pasta dishes, in addition to small plates and creative salads by chef Kaharim Becerra. [blackmarlinporta.com](http://blackmarlinporta.com)



>> FOR THE CHEF FOLLOWER  
**WE HAVE A JAMES BEARD WINNER!**

{HOUSTON}

Kudos to Houston chef Chris Shepherd of Underbelly restaurant for winning the James Beard Foundation's title of Best Chef Southwest. It's been more than two decades since a Houston chef won this award from the foundation—the last one being southwestern culinary pioneer Robert del Grande of RDG + Bar Annie. Fellow Houston nominees who joined the May ceremony in New York in hopes of winning included Hugo Ortega of Hugo's and Justin Yu of Oxheart.



>> FOR THE CHIMICHURRI FANATIC  
**A NEW TAKE ON CHURRASCOS**

{HOUSTON}

Houston's favorite churrascaria has stepped up its game with a new location in the Gateway Memorial City complex, which has a unique menu and look from the other **Churrascos**. The stunning space seats 326 guests and was designed by San Francisco-based MBH Architects, the same firm that designed more than 1,000 Apple stores worldwide. It boasts an open kitchen viewable from all corners of the dining room and reclaimed wood intermixed with contemporary Latin American artifacts and murals. A large part of this menu is now Nicaraguan spotlighting Latin American comfort foods. Think seafood dishes like ceviche verde made with tilapia and tart green apples, decadent lobster campechana, and whole fried fish crusted in cornmeal and cinnamon. But of course, it's that mouth-melting smoky churrasco steak, cooked over a searing open flame and doused with green and garlicky chimichurri sauce that keeps us coming back for more. [cordua.com](http://cordua.com)



**ROBIN BARR SUSSMAN BIO**

Robin Barr Sussman is a Houston-based freelance writer who specializes in food, wine and travel. Her work has appeared in *Texas Monthly*, *My Table*, and *Private Clubs* magazine.



**SIDE SIPS**

**WINE EVENTS YOU CAN'T MISS**



**SONOMA WINE COUNTRY WEEKEND**

If you're lucky enough to be in California wine country during Labor Day weekend, plan a jaunt to the Healdsburg area for the annual Sonoma Wine Country Weekend, Aug. 29-31. Glam signature events include the Sonoma Starlight Dinner at Francis Ford Coppola Winery, a starry soiree surrounding the winery pool; the Taste at MacMurray Ranch with more than 200 wineries, 60 chefs, and numerous seminars and demos; and the Sonoma Harvest Wine Auction at Chateau St. Jean. Better reserve now for vintner dinners, lunches and alfresco barbecues throughout the weekend. [sonomawinecountryweekend.com](http://sonomawinecountryweekend.com)

**FERRARI-CARANO HARVEST**

The electrifying grape harvest is in full bloom and Sept. 19-21 offers you the chance to pick your own grapes in the California wine country and celebrate the season with the Ferrari-Carano winemaking team. After a hands-on lesson in sorting through the grapes and tasting, enjoy an al fresco lunch at Ferrari-Carano Winery, a must-see Tuscan style villa with sprawling landscaped grounds emblazoned in tulips ([ferrari-carano.com](http://ferrari-carano.com)). The package for two includes a two-night stay at the elegant European style Vintner's Inn ([vintnersinn.com](http://vintnersinn.com)) and a winemaker dinner at John Ash & Co. with a Saturday breakfast and a Sunday brunch. Cheers to the harvest! For reservations, email [teri@fcwinery.com](mailto:teri@fcwinery.com)