



The dining room at Mildred's Temple Kitchen

Worshipping flavour

Mildred's Temple Kitchen

85 Hanna Ave., Suite 104 Toronto, ON 416-588-5695 www.templekitchen.com

Chef and media personality Donna Dooher unveiled her new, long-awaited Mildred's Temple Kitchen in the heart of Liberty Village, Toronto this past November. Patrons were heartbroken when Mildred Pierce, Dooher's first restaurant, closed after almost 20 years, and so were Dooher and her husband/restaurant partner, Kevin Gallagher. "I went to bed for three months with a duvet over my head and a bottle of whisky," she quips.

Like a phoenix from the ashes, after a 16-month hiatus, Mildred's Temple has arisen near the original Mildred Pierce location. The restaurant is a contemporary, coolly stylish, industrial-chic place. The washrooms are

unisex, with lights like those on a plane that illuminate when someone's occupying them. Each of the four large, very private rooms has its own sink and funky music; I got Dolly Parton's version of "These Boots Were Made for Walking" playing in my stall. Mildred Pierce apparently had a history of shenanigans in the toilets and an obviously un-prudish Dooher says, "I wanted to make sure we had sexy washrooms here."

Open seven days a week for both lunch and dinner and on Sunday for its city-famous brunch, Mildred's Temple is already drawing a steady crowd of enthusiasts. Past regulars have insisted the menu keep the classic Mildred burger with aged Irish cheddar, onion relish and frites. Roast chicken breast biryani

is another staple that cannot be removed. There was an uprising when Dooher tried to do away with the profiteroles with milk chocolate ice cream and caramel and chocolate sauce, so they stayed, too. However, chef Tyler Cunningham has latitude to express his own creativity. He is actively involved with the Local Certified Farmers' Market, so the chef's new menu is full of locally sourced, seasonal offerings. With an eye to the eco-movement, instead of pre-bottled water, Temple's taps serve up flat and sparkling drinking water, filtered and carbonated in-house from Toronto tap water, using a state-of-the-art reverse osmosis process. The 40-label wine list is constantly evolving, with a focus on Ontario, though not exclusively. (Margaret Swaine)



Chef Donna Dooher

SYMBOLIC AND SAVOURY

KIRIN SEAFOOD RESTAURANT

2nd Floor, City Square, 555 West 12th Ave., Vancouver, BC 604.879.8038 www.kirinrestaurant.com
Kirin's traditional grand kitchen puts on a powerhouse Chinese New Year dinner. The elegant room is packed with boisterous families tackling multi-course menus designed for parties of 10, which also takes the guesswork out of ordering. The food is deliciously celebratory and full of lucky symbolism. The house roasted suckling pig evokes bars of gold, while the whole braised chicken promises a happy beginning and ending to the New Year, and the softly braised noodles in abalone sauce signify long life. To meet heavy demand, dinner is served with military precision in two seatings; choose the later mealtime if you plan on lingering. (Lee Man)



DIM SUM EAST

LAI WAH HEEN IN THE METROPOLITAN HOTEL

118 Chestnut St., Toronto, ON 416.977.9899 www.metropolitan.com

Lah Wah Heen's dim sum served at lunch times is still the best in the city — perhaps even the country. However, this sophisticated room, with its white tablecloths and attentive service, offers much more than Chinese snack food. While the majority of the dishes are haute Cantonese, you can have a virtual tour of China by sampling from executive chef Ken Tam's signature Chinese regional dishes enhanced with fresh local product. No matter what you choose, it will be authentic and flawlessly prepared. The split-level room, in soft beige with blond woods accented with black granite stairs and Chinese calligraphy by renowned Southeast Asian artist Cheung Ming, is as elegant as the food. The two-course Peking duck carved at the table, tofu soft and light as a cloud, braised de-boned oxtail, Wuxi-style clay pot beef ribs and exotic Chinese ingredients such as shark fin, abalone and sea cucumber bring in the city's wealthy Asians and Caucasians. The wine list focuses on varietals and regions that match with Asian cuisine. (Margaret Swaine)



DIM SUM WEST

YANK SING AT RINCON CENTER

101 Spear St., San Francisco, CA 415.957.9889 www.yanksing.com

In San Francisco, they say if you haven't had dim sum at the upscale Yank Sing, you haven't had dim sum. Located near the Embarcadero in the Rincon Center (a former U.S. Post office), the Chan family has been offering more than 80 varieties of dim sum (literally: touch the heart) on ever-circulating carts since 1958. Signature dishes include a trio of dumplings — har gow (shrimp), dau miu gow (snow-pea-shoot) and sui my (pork) — as well as Imperial roasted walnut salad, Peking duck with steamed seashell buns and creamy custard tarts. There's a second casual location at 49 Stevenson St. (415.541.4949). Lunch only. (Kasey Wilson)



RED LETTER CUISINE

SPRING MOON IN PENINSULA HOTEL

Salisbury Rd., Kowloon, Hong Kong, SAR 852.2920.2888 www.peninsula.com

The Peninsula's Spring Moon is arguably the finest Cantonese in Hong Kong. This is one of Hong Kong's most quietly stylish rooms, with gleaming hardwood floors, richly fabricbed carpets, an exhibition of historic teapots and vintage photographs of Hong Kong. Tea is taken as seriously as wine here — the list is 30-strong — and lunch may begin with an elite, aromatic Dragon Well green tea from Hangzhou. There are delicate little puff pastries stuffed with barbecued pork and levitating dumplings. Barbecued pigeon marinated in cinnamon is dense and gamey, the skin crispy, a critter that leaves you eating all but the head, with that look of peace-at-last on its face. (Jeremy Ferguson) **WA**



JUST FOR (WINE) LOVERS

GRANDE ROCHE IN THE CAPE

Plantasie Street, 7646 Paarl, Western Cape, South Africa 27.0.21.863.5100 www.granderoche.co.za
The Grande Roche, a Relais & Châteaux property in the Paarl Valley about 30 minutes from Cape Town, is about as perfect a destination for wine lovers as can be imagined. Breakfast on the terrace of this Cape Dutch-style manor house, overlooking vineyards and rugged mountains, is pure pleasure. Equally memorable is a meal in Bosman's Restaurant, a 70-seat restaurant that opens up to a 60-seat terrace in good weather. There, chef Frank Zlomke creates multi-ethnic dishes rooted in South African cooking and taken to culinary heights with his considerable talent and international experience. The flavours of the Cape menu include Malay seafood curry, Tandoori spiced ostrich burger and poppyseed-blackpepper Springbok loin. Cape sea dishes focus on such delicacies as local crayfish and kingklip. The well-stocked, award-winning wine cellar, with about 6,500 bottles and 300 vintage wines, has been called the best wine experience in South Africa. (Margaret Swaine)



Malaysian-style seafood dish
at the Grande Roche in the Cape



Changers Wine Bar and Restaurant

ROMANCE ON THE BEACH

CHAMPERS WINE BAR AND RESTAURANT

Skeetes Hill in Christ Church Parish, Barbados 264.434.3463 www.champersbarbados.com
Caribbean breezes waft through the dining room at Changers, as turquoise waters shimmer off Barbados' Rockley Beach. If the unbeatable view doesn't give you a warm glow, the food and service certainly will. It is because of places like this cozy romantic room that so many people consider Barbados the Caribbean's culinary capital. (It's the only island with a Zagat guide.) Locals and visitors alike adore Changers' contemporary Bajan-European dishes, made with indigenous ingredients like christophene (served alongside grilled tuna) and barracuda (prepared with a parmesan crust). The approachable, well-edited wine list offers some lovely bubbles for any couple who might just have something to celebrate in this most romantic of restaurants. (Joanne Sasvari)

NO MYTH

BASILIKO AT THE ANNASA RESORT

Baths of Aphrodite Road, 8840 Latchi, Cyprus 357.26.888.000 www.thanoshotels.com
If the goddess of love, laughter and beauty was around today, she'd be found with Adonis at Table 10 in Basiliko, the signature restaurant in the luxurious 35-acre Annasa Resort. Perched on the edge of the Mediterranean, the resort sits on the northwesterly tip of Cyprus, where Aphrodite is said to have risen from the sea. With a stone staircase descending into a limestone cavern lit only by candlelight, Basiliko redefines intimacy at its 12 two-seater tables. The Mediterranean-Asian menu features the bounty of the hotel's garden herbs and produce sourced from local villages. Dishes of langoustine, salmon and tuna get punched-up with Thai chilies, wasabi and coriander. Adventurous diners should choose from chef Stelios Theodorou's multi-course tasting menus, where selections can be paired with wines from the well-chosen list of vintage Champagnes and stellar New and Old World picks, including Cyprus's Commandaria, reputed to be the world's oldest wine. (Kasey Wilson)



Basiliko at the Annasa Resort

A BLACK FOREST ROMANCE

RESTAURANT BAREISS

Hotel Bareiss, Gärtelbühlweg 14, Baiersbronn-Mitteltal, Germany 49.744.2470 www.bareiss.com
Restaurant Bareiss in Germany's Black Forest is perfect for a romantic feast. The dining room — small and intimate, with a fireplace and deeply carved wooden ceiling twinkling with starry lights — has just eight linen-draped tables. Here, chef Claus-Peter Lumpf wants people to linger for as long as possible "for a truly memorable experience." Put yourself in the chef's capable hands, and take time to savour his cuisine, with its extraordinary, multi-layered tastes, textures and depths of flavour. Sommelier Jurgen Fendt, two-time finalist for the Meilleur Sommelier du Monde, is a walking encyclopaedia and genial guide to the world's wines. While there, drink local — the Baden region of Germany is winning plaudits and prizes for elegant, aromatic weissburgunder, grauburgunder and pätlburgunder. (Sue Style) **WA**



Restaurant Bareiss