

# bon appétit

DECEMBER 2008

DEVIL'S FOOD  
CAKE WITH  
PEPPERMINT  
FROSTING

p. 125





9/ tackle box

## THE HOT 10/ best seafood restaurants

Today's new style of fish house—from a Maine-style lobster shack to a Napa Valley sushi bar to a high-end temple of seafood—has us hooked

**1/ reef/** HOUSTON, TEXAS/  
At this sunlight-filled, glass-walled seafood restaurant, steamed mussels arrive swimming in a Shiner Bock beer and toasted ancho chile broth; local redfish is grilled and served with fried mac and cheese; and roasted grouper gets the southern works (pecan-shallot cracklin's, collards, pot likker jus). We're sold! 2600 Travis St.; 713-526-8282; reefhouston.com

**2/ fins/** RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA/  
Chef and owner William D'Auvray sources seafood from near and far for the new downtown location of his popular Cal-Asian-inspired

spot. At the Japanese-style *robata yaki* bar, the daily catch is char-grilled; it is seafood at its most simple and sublime. 110 E. Davie St.; 919-834-6963; myspace.com/finsrestaurant

**3/ little fish/** PHILADELPHIA/  
Big things are happening at this minnow-size, open-kitchen B.Y.O.B. in South Philly. Credit goes to new chef-owner Michael Stollenwerk, who's responsible for such dishes as halibut with English pea spaetzle and scallop *nage*, and crab sausage with fennel and citrus salad. On Sundays, there's a \$28 five-course prix fixe that's a steal. 600 Catherine St.; 215-413-3464; littlefishphilly.com

**4/ go fish/** ST. HELENA, CALIFORNIA/  
At this sushi bar-fish house hybrid, from legendary Bay Area chef Cindy Pawlcyn, local fish shines in dishes like sand dab fish and chips and sole with sunchoke puree. The 80-seat patio is a favorite with Napa Valley winemakers. 641 Main St.; 707-963-0700; gofishrestaurant.net

**5/ dallas fish market/** DALLAS/  
Octopus salad with frisée, mango, and cucumber could win over even the most die-hard tentacle hater at this bright and modern restaurant. Perfectly seared skate wing with fried capers and lemon beurre blanc would make Escoffier proud. 1501 Main St.; 214-744-3474; dallasfishmarket.com

**6/ anchor & hope/** SAN FRANCISCO/  
Chef Sarah Schafer, a Boston native, keeps things simple, allowing the fresh seafood to do

most of the work. As you might expect, she makes a mean lobster roll, as well as excellent butter-crusted cod. There's also a huge selection of West Coast and East Coast oysters. 83 Minna St.; 415-501-9100; anchorandhopesf.com

**7/ lure/** NEW YORK/  
The luxury-yacht decor at this below-ground combination raw bar and fish house in SoHo is stunning and not at all gimmicky. There are reliable sushi and sashimi options, but the crispy bluepoint oysters, the tuna burger, and the simple steamed red snapper in a red curry broth are standouts. 142 Mercer St.; 212-431-7676; lurefishbar.com

**8/ blue sky on york beach/** YORK BEACH, MAINE/  
This second-floor charmer in a historic hotel—complete with a wood-burning fireplace and wraparound porch—comes from legendary Boston chef Lydia Shire. An entire section of the menu is dedicated to lobster dishes (lobster pizza, lobster stew); you'll also find riffs on classic Down East fare, including haddock on a smoked cedar shingle. 2 Beach St.; 207-363-0050; blueskyonyorkbeach.com

**9/ tackle box/** WASHINGTON, D.C./  
Evoking the look and feel of a beachside fish hut, Tackle Box gives you a choice of seafood (bluefish, tilapia, rainbow trout, catfish, oysters), grilled or fried and served with sides (house-cut fries, hush puppies) and sauces (classic tartar, basil-walnut pesto). Classic rolls (lobster, clam, and shrimp) round out the feel-good menu. 3245 M St. NW; 202-337-8269; tacklebox-dc.com

**10/ 120/** CHICAGO/  
Trained in France and inspired by Japanese techniques and ingredients, Laurent Gras unites the two influences with stunning results. Japanese snapper arrives with a crispy skin, ginger bouillon, and tapioca pearl. Black bass has the texture of warm butter and is served with shellfish bouillon. 2300 N. Lincoln Park W.; 773-868-0002; 120restaurant.com

~ANDREW KNOWLTON