MONOCLE

Drinking & Dining Directory

Ⓜ **AFFAIRS**: Tasty hijinks abound on the US-Mexico border **BUSINESS**: *Food entrepreneurs* **ESSAYS**: Opinions on tap
DESIGN: *Dining details* **ENTERTAINING**: Back to the buffet **SCOOPS**: *Biscuit barons and South Korea's Chicken Alley+*

Starter's orders

Serving a spread of tasty tales, The Monocle Restaurant Awards,
plus the *(not so)* skinny on global good living. Cin-Cin!

**Launch
issue!**

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THE MONOCLE RESTAURANT AWARDS

There's plenty to be written about novel restaurants and fresh chefs and we celebrate them most months in Monocle. But what of the neighbourhood spots that have catered for us for years, or those special openings with the makings of future classics? That's where our annual restaurant awards come in. Now in its fourth year, our rundown celebrates a clutch of restaurants in which our editors have eaten well (or enjoyed a great cocktail) and felt looked after. Expect new spots in Bangkok, Seoul, Zürich and Mexico City among others, plus a celebration of lesser-known independents alongside a few familiar dining rooms that deserve extra helpings of praise. Let us show you to your table.

Architect of her own success
Ruth Rogers started The River Café in 1987 with the late Rose Gray. The venture began as a small bistro serving the studio belonging to her husband, British-Italian architect Richard Rogers.

1.

The River Café

London

The riverside haunt in Hammersmith belonging to Ruth Rogers (*pictured*) celebrated 30 years of service in 2017 and, though we don't normally go in for anniversaries (too often sentimental and self-congratulatory), this is a poignant one. A quick headcount of the lauded chefs who cut their teeth in this Italian kitchen is one measure of Rogers' success. Another is her stoic refusal to move, franchise the restaurant's good name or branch out at the expense of her one-and-only spot.

What you'll experience instead is Italian food that's elevated to mystifying heights in humble-sounding dishes, such as polenta with cavolo nero and stracciatella ice cream or Taleggio-topped pizzettas. — JAF
rivercafe.co.uk

Overall Winner

45.

Pfarrwirt
Vienna

Vienna's oldest restaurant is housed in a building that dates back to the 12th century. Meals are served in three gothic and baroque-style dining rooms; the beautiful wooden porch was added in 1872 to reflect Vienna's popular coffee culture. Take a seat in "Beethoven's favourite spot" and let the kitchen spoil you with classics such as prime boiled beef and wiener schnitzel. It's a 20-minute drive from the centre of town but it's well worth the trip. — MSS
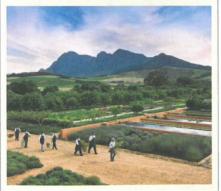*pfarrwirt.com*

46.

Babylonstoren
Simondium, South Africa

Consisting of a number of standalone whitewashed cottages and suites, and a manor house that dates back to 1777, Babylonstoren keeps things simple – and is simply superb at most things it attempts. Almost everything at the vineyard-facing farm hotel is produced on site; the wine is made from the vineyards and the bountiful garden supplies the daily produce.

The Greenhouse, a daily garden café that's set next to an airy conservatory, serves salads and sandwiches; and the main restaurant, Babel, dishes out bold, colorful plates made up of seasonal fruit and vegetables. The newly added bakery is now where all of the restaurant's bread is made. — MHO
babylonstoren.com

47.

Gero
Rio de Janeiro

Restaurateur and hotelier Rogério Fasano decided to bring his lauded São Paulo bistro to Rio in 2002 and, in the process, he raised the gastronomic bar for the city. Step in for lunch on any given day and you'll find yourself brushing shoulders with the city's politicians, TV stars and business leaders.

But Gero does everything in a charmingly understated way. The interior, designed by Aurélio Martinez Flores, features exposed-brick walls and a wonderful indoor tree, while the menu is heavy on classic Italian staples such as lamb shanks and veal ravioli. Our top picks are the saffron risotto with ossobuco and the crushed potatoes with goat's cheese and egg yolk. — MAL
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