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COME HUNGRY, LEAVE INSPIRED.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: MASON ERWIN; COURTESY OF RADISH; ERIN MILLER



Clockwise from top: Chef Tyler Lyne at
1856; Radish; Black Radish

ALABAMA
FLORIDA
MISSISSIPPI



gulf
COAST



Line prep in the kitchen at 1856.
Opposite: Wild game pithivier

ALABAMA

BY JENNIFER KORNEGAY

→ 1856 Auburn

When classes began for 2022's fall semester, students in Auburn University's Horst Schulze School of Hospitality Management got their first taste of the state-of-the-art education now being served at the new Tony & Libba Rane Culinary Science Center, a \$110-million facility that's changing the culinary school game not just in Alabama but also across the country. It's blending comprehensive, hands-on training in almost every aspect of the culinary and hospitality fields and building a workforce pipeline for the South's growing hospitality and tourism industries.

A key ingredient is 1856, a 48-seat fine-dining restaurant named for the year the university was founded, and fully staffed by students. They're at the host stand smiling and warmly greeting guests. They're waiting on diners at their tables near the wall of windows, affording a view of stately Samford Hall across the street, or adjacent to the open kitchen, where other students are chopping, whisking, sautéing, and saucing, all with the guidance of each year's chef-in-residence (CIR). Current CIR Tyler Lyne praises the center's avant-garde approach as well as the dedication of the first batch of students. "What makes the culinary science center so special and impressive is that it is something new and innovative," he says. "And these students have a 'head-down, ears-back' work ethic. They are future industry trailblazers."

Freshmen and sophomores run the lunch service, and at dinner, upperclassmen prepare and serve a nine-course tasting menu with wines paired by a master sommelier, Thomas Price, and pulled from the restaurant's two-story, temperature-controlled wine room. The experience is invaluable for students with an eye on a career in food, but the surrounding community is eating up the benefits, too. Diners are relishing every drop of foraged mushroom and farro soup and each bite of the 72-hour-braised short ribs that practically melt over silky potato puree and delicate sweet onions.

And 1856 puts equal emphasis on service, Tyler explains. "The book *Unreasonable Hospitality* notes, 'Service is black and white, and hospitality is the color,'" he says. "You learn the right and wrong way to do something in service, but hospitality is how you make the guest feel. That positive feeling, the color, is what I hope guests of 1856 take with them when walking away." @1856auburn

BERGAMOT SOUR MAKES 1 COCKTAIL

1856 uses marigolds from the Rane Center's rooftop garden.

¾ ounce Italicus Rosolio di Bergamotto
1½ ounces Tanqueray gin
1 ounce lemon juice
1 ounce Thrive Farmers Egyptian
chamomile syrup
1 egg white
Garnish: Marigold

Add all ingredients (except garnish) to a cocktail shaker. Dry shake for 30 seconds. Add ice and shake for 30 seconds. Strain into a coupe or large nick and nora glass. Garnish with marigold.



CAN'T MISS AT 1856

LEMONGRASS MARGARITA

This refreshing riff on the basic marg is built with lemongrass grown in the culinary center's rooftop garden and Casamigos Blanco tequila infused with spicy ginger and orange liqueur, plus a hint of simple syrup, and served in a glass with a curried-sea-salt-crusted rim.

WILD GAME PITHIVIER

This hearty dish—a rustic yet refined pie of airy puff pastry encasing squab and pheasant—is Lyne's favorite 1856 creation so far. He calls it a fancy, more complex beef Wellington. "It's a timeless, old-school dish that still holds its own and is an example of cuisine that you don't come across often, the perfect blend of flavor and technique," he says.

BRUNCH SMASHBURGER

This big burger is the cure for a bottomless appetite and almost anything else that ails you. It features a sunny-side-up fried egg shining atop a hefty, cheddar-blanketed beef-sausage-mix patty and crisp bacon on a tender brioche bun slathered in truffle dijonaise. Take it over the top with the addition of foie gras.

YUZU MERINGUE TART

A smooth curd of tangy, fragrant yuzu rests in a buttery tart shell with buttons of meltaway meringue, velvety white chocolate sauce, and sugared huckleberries.



Prohibition



Ravello



Abadir's

➔ PROHIBITION Madison

Belying its name, this 1920s-themed lounge and speakeasy is providing full permission for flavorful fun from top to bottom. In the downstairs pub, dig into an eclectic mix of Asian, Latin, and Southern smoked tastes. On the roof, up your libation game with a tangy tequila and mezcal-based Springtime on the Moon (acknowledging the Rocket City's key role in space exploration). Prohibition also offers large-format platters piled with meats, homey barbecue-joint-style sides, and pickled items and salsas for a crowd. [@prohibitionhsv](#)

➔ BAR LA FÊTE Birmingham

Travel to Paris with a fork instead of a passport at Bar La Fête, the newest venture from chefs Victor King and Kristen Hall. The downtown bistro brings the City of Light's flavors and vibrant energy to the Magic City, but mirroring modern Paris, the menu isn't exclusively French. "Paris is packed with multicultural influences, so you see some of that here, too," Hall says. Sip wine (130 bottles are on the list, including a few vintages from lesser-known regions like Jura) and nosh on shareable snacks like deviled eggs crowned with paddlefish caviar, small plates like a potato pavé that King dubs "a beautiful expression of what a potato can be," and sweets that transport your tastebuds to a Seine-side sidewalk cafe. [@lafetebham](#)

➔ RAVELLO RISTORANTE Montgomery

In July 2022, after months of delays, when Ravello Ristorante welcomed its first diners to an exhaustively and thoughtfully renovated and refreshed historic bank building in downtown Montgomery, it instantly elevated the capital city's culinary credentials. Chef Eric Rivera's combo of strictly traditional coastal Italian cuisine—mastered with the help of a friend and chef in Pietrasanta, Italy—and a few creative takes on the same has proven well worth the wait. [@ravellomgm](#)

FROM LEFT: COURTESY OF PROHIBITION; COURTESY OF RAVELLO RISTORANTE; OPPOSITE: SARAH COLE

RESTAURANTS WORTH WATCHING

SOCIAL TACO, HOMEWOOD

Their opening was delayed by more than six months, but the Southern-Mexican combo cuisine from the team behind SoHo Social and SoHo Standard is now open for business. [@socialtacohomewood](#)

BARBECUE & BIRYANI, BIRMINGHAM

Opened in December, this family-owned restaurant serves authentic and Halal Hyderabad cuisine,

including kabob platters, biryani, curries, and wraps—and seafood appears prominently on the menu. [barbeque-biryani.com](#)

THE FRENCHIE, BIRMINGHAM

This bar, restaurant, and patisserie from celebrated Tasting TBL chef and current 1856 chef-in-residence Tyler Lyne (read more on page 67) is set to open this spring, amid much anticipation. [@tastingtbl_bham](#)

➔ ABADIR'S Greensboro

In Alabama's Black Belt region, Sarah Cole's pop-up Abadir's draws on her family's Egyptian heritage. Middle East-meets-American South dishes elicit compliments exclaimed through mouths full of toasty tahini cookies and sourdough pita pockets stuffed with za'atar-spiced carrot and eggplant—manners be damned! Abadir's scored a cottage on the edge of Greensboro's downtown last fall and will soon be a "regular" restaurant, but it's currently hosting sporadic lunches and other eating events announced on Instagram, while still popping up around central Alabama. The space is also home of the Black Belt Food Project, a food-and-nutrition-focused nonprofit Cole founded to address the region's health issues and inequalities. [@eatabadirs](#)

➔ PEARL Fairhope

The hyperfresh bounty of the nearby Gulf, including farmed oysters, is the true jewel and only constant on the Pearl's seasonally changing menu, which is diminutive but diverse. Its shotgun space fronting a side street in Fairhope's quaint and quintessentially small-town downtown is equally intimate and anchored by a raw bar where diners can down ice-cold platters of oysters, peel-and-eat shrimp, and crab claws marinated in nouc cham and serrano alongside the signature cocktail, a fusion of vodka, lemon, bubbles, and elderflower liqueur. [@pearlrestaurantfairhope](#)



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: COURTESY OF ADIÓS; COURTESY OF BISTRO SAINT EMANUEL; CRAIG GODWIN PHOTOGRAPHY. OPPOSITE: CRAIG GODWIN PHOTOGRAPHY



Jesús Méndez, Adiós



→ **BOTANIC** Opelika

Do it all in this soothing green garden space: Shop home decor, local art, and nursery items—and eat. Choose from salads, pastries, and specialty coffees at the Market. Graze from boards stacked with Southern-cured meats or rich, bite-sized desserts at the Patio Bar. Or snag a table at the Grille, where chef James Jolly's whimsical twist on the perennial Southern snack combo of Coke and peanuts is a standout: cola-braised short ribs topped with peanut gremolata, orange zest, and a drizzle of green peanut oil. A fourth eating option, the Garden, is still sprouting but will immerse diners in an oasis of plants and blooms under a retractable greenhouse roof. [@shop.botanic](#)

→ **ADIÓS** Birmingham

Focusing on Mexican cocktail culture with a more authentic lens was the aim of Adiós owners José Medina Camacho and Jesús Méndez. As Birmingham restaurant-biz veterans born in Mexico, the duo hopes their downtown bar (opened last fall) will have guests saying farewell to notions confining their heritage to solely tequila margaritas and mezcal, and hello to fresh flavors like the Central American fruit guanabana and less familiar spirits like single-barrel, 20-year-aged Mexican rum. “There’s so much more to Mexico. We want to showcase it all,” Camacho says. [@adiosbar](#)



Bistro Saint Emanuel

→ **BISTRO SAINT EMANUEL** Mobile

A part of Fort Condé Inn, a collection of accommodations (historic cottages as well as rooms in a circa-1836 house) tucked among gas-lantern-lit cobblestone streets in downtown Mobile, this new eatery expands upon the indulgent breakfasts once reserved for inn guests. Harkening back to Mobile’s rich melting-pot past, menus are dominated by classic European fare fashioned with Alabama ingredients (like nuggets of state-fave Conecuh sausage cozied up to Gulf-caught crab in an omelet). [@fortcondeinn](#)

FLORIDA

BY LAUREN TITUS

➔ **BLACK RADISH**
Tallahassee

Like many other Southern cities, Tallahassee’s dining scene is dominated by casual American cuisine. Enter Black Radish, a vegetable-focused concept that has captured the interest of local diners, both vegetarians and meat eaters. “Nontraditional concepts with a focus on vegetables and a beverage program featuring biodynamic wines wouldn’t be out of the norm in large cities with a vibrant food scene,” says chef-owner Matthew Swezey. “But in Tallahassee, that definitely is. Fortunately, it’s evolving, and the reception Black Radish has received is evidence of that change.”

Black Radish comes with a great pedigree: Swezey’s partner is Jesse Edmunds, who leads the prolific team behind the Liberty Bar, the Hawthorn Bistro & Bakery, El Cocinero, and Bar 1903 in the city. “I had been working with Jesse for about five years when he approached me about creating my own concept,” Swezey says. “I had in mind a super-quaint, super-personal restaurant serving food that I liked to eat, which is mainly vegetables and pasta. Jesse found a former restaurant across the street from Liberty Bar that ended up becoming Black Radish. With 90 seats, it’s not quite as small as I envisioned, but with Jesse’s support and expertise, he helped bring everything to life.”

The pricing at Black Radish is not fine dining, but the attention to detail creates an upscale yet approachable atmosphere. “We don’t want this to be just a special occasion destination, and we priced the food accordingly,” Swezey says. “I would rather see you once a week several times a month than every three to six months for a special occasion.”

While the menu is 85 percent vegetables, pasta, and nonmeat dishes, Swezey doesn’t refer to Black Radish as a vegan or vegetarian restaurant. “We want to show people that if you source good products and pay attention to how you treat the ingredients, they can be interesting, fun, and exciting,” he says. “You can eat an entire meal of just veggies and leave full and satiated without having an eight-ounce portion of protein.”

Based on feedback from customers, Swezey may be onto something. “It’s a great feeling when guests come in and tell us, ‘I’m a steak-and-potatoes person, and we didn’t have any meat here. But we enjoyed ourselves and feel full.’ A little less meat, a few more veggies—diners are starting to understand the concept, and we’re happy to be a part of that evolution.” @blackradishtlh



CAN’T MISS AT BLACK RADISH

The menu at Black Radish is seasonally driven, and as a result, some dishes come and go according to the time of year, while others have developed a loyal fan base and will be available long-term.

BUBBLE POTATOES
These have a crispy hash brown exterior and creamy mashed potatoes inside and are served with smoked paprika aioli and chives. This dish has been on the menu since the beginning. “It will stay because we’re afraid there will be riots in the streets if we take it off,” says Swezey.

SPINACH TORTELLONI
This spinach-laminated pasta dough is filled with ricotta, parmesan, a little basil, and lemon zest and rests in a butter sauce.

FRIED TOFU WRAPS
This large-format dish, intended to serve several people, comes with bulgogi barbecue sauce, kimchi, gochujang mayo, and chili peppers.

WHOLE CHICKEN ROULADE
Another large-format dish to share with the table, this whole-baked, deboned chicken is served with chili-garlic crunch sauce, cilantro, jasmine rice, and bok choy.

CHOCOLATE PEANUT BUTTER FREEZER PIE
MAKES 1 PIE

This pie requires two overnight freezes so be sure to plan ahead.

For the crust:
1¼ cups graham cracker crumbs
3 tablespoons cocoa powder
¼ cup granulated sugar
½ cup melted butter, plus more as needed

For the filling:
2 cups plus 2 tablespoons heavy cream
Scant ¼ cup granulated sugar
8 ounces cream cheese
⅔ cup smooth peanut butter
3 tablespoons powdered sugar

For the ganache:
½ cup heavy cream
¼ cup corn syrup
1 cup semisweet chocolate chips

- 1. Make the crust:** Preheat oven to 325 degrees. In a bowl, combine all ingredients and press into a greased springform pan. Mixture should bind in your hand like wet sand and clump together. If crumbly, add more melted butter. Bake for 10 minutes. Let cool completely.
- 2. Make the filling:** In bowl of a stand mixer fitted with whisk attachment, whip 2 cups heavy cream until soft peaks form. Add sugar and continue mixing until it reaches a fluffy, whipped texture. Transfer to a separate bowl.
- 3.** Clean out mixing bowl and switch to paddle attachment. In a clean bowl, combine cream cheese, peanut butter, powdered sugar, and remaining heavy cream. Mix until incorporated, then in-



Chocolate peanut butter freezer pie.
Opposite: Spinach tortelloni in process

crease speed to medium-high and mix until light and fluffy in consistency.

4. Gently fold whipped cream and peanut butter mixture together and stop once fully incorporated. Pour mixture into baked crust and use a spatula to smooth and level filling. Freeze overnight. The following day, remove springform pan sides and release bottom. Place pie on a wire rack.

5. Make the ganache: In a saucepan set over medium, heat heavy cream and corn syrup until just below boiling. Place chocolate chips in a bowl. In three stages, pour cream mixture over

chocolate while stirring to fully melt and incorporate, then pour through a strainer to remove any possible lumps. Quickly pour mixture over top of pie and spread out over the edges so ganache drapes down over sides. Once sides are covered, use a spatula to smooth chocolate on top of pie. Return to freezer and freeze overnight. Pie can be portioned and kept in freezer until ready to serve or slowly brought to temperature in the refrigerator until it reaches desired consistency.



Cider Press Vegan Gastropub

➔ **CIDER PRESS VEGAN GASTROPUB**
St. Petersburg

An extensive plant-based menu awaits guests at this eatery in the historic Kenwood district. A Southern-Cajun influence is evident; fried jambalaya balls with a spicy sauce, chili cheez fries, a “shrimp” po’ boy, and other dishes can be savored by vegans and omnivores alike. The craft cocktails, mocktails, and ciders pair perfectly with the pub-inspired food. @cider_press_gastropub

➔ **LION & THE RAMBLER**
Coral Gables

Chef-owner Michael Bolen’s restaurant features a small-plates menu determined by seasonal Florida-grown meats and produce. Everything is done in house, including milling the wheat for bread and housemade salt. A few can’t-miss dishes include Gratitude Garden maitae, steak tartare, and anything from the dessert menu—some of the best in and around Miami. @lionandtherambler

➔ **THE PINERY**
Orlando

Located on Lake Ivanhoe, the name here is a nod to the area that once cultivated Florida’s former top export crop: pineapples. The Pinery is a celebration of the Sunshine State, with a chef-driven seasonal menu inspired by locally available produce, seafood, and other products. Guest favorites include alligator bites, the Florida-raised-beef burger, Cedar Key clams, bison tenderloin, shrimp and grits, and bread offerings that change with the seasons. @thepineryorlando

COURTESY OF CIDER PRESS VEGAN GASTROPUB. OPPOSITE: ERIN MILLER



➔ **THE BANDBOX**
Orlando

Orlando’s first spirit-free speakeasy tasting lounge offers a mixture of all things nonalcoholic: craft cocktails, prepackaged ready-to-drink cocktails, wine, aperitifs, elixirs, craft beer, and tasting flights of bitters, shrubs, and tonics. The cocktail menu, developed with Orlando bartenders’ input, is a mix of classic cocktails and custom signature drinks. To eat, there are complimentary popcorn and prepackaged bar snacks. @bandboxorlando

1592 Wood-Fired Kitchen
and Cocktails→ **BAR MOLINO**
Jacksonville

This intimate neighborhood bar in San Marco specializes in Spanish tapas, conservas, an extensive selection of wine, and sherry cocktails. They're open for happy hour and dinner, and the menu highlights include patatas bravas, tortilla Española, stuffed piquillo peppers, and Ibérico jamón. Housemade charcuterie from their sister storefront, the Swinerie, is a must. *@bar.molino.jax*

→ **GORKHALI KITCHEN**
Tampa

Tampa Bay's first Himalayan-inspired Nepalese restaurant serving food traditional to Kathmandu offers momo (steamed dumplings) and chatamari, a Nepalese pizza-style dish. Many dishes are based on 80-year-old recipes from the owners' homeland and seasoned with herbs and spices flown in from Nepal. Try the chicken flavored with jimbu, an herb in the onion family. *@gorkhalikitchen*

→ **1592 WOOD-FIRED KITCHEN AND COCKTAILS**
Sarasota

Chefs Alexandre Gosselin and Johnny Zaki hail from Canada, but the menu reflects a Mediterranean influence featuring fresh ingredients sourced close to home. Meat and fish dishes are cooked on a wood-fired grill, imparting robust flavors—the lamb chops are a crowd favorite. Order the Montreal poutine to share. *@1592kitchen*

BRANDON FORSCHINO. OPPOSITE: PETER ACKER

**RESTAURANTS WORTH WATCHING****BOULON BRASSERIE, TAMPA**

This self-styled modern French and American brasserie is "laid-back luxury" all day long, according to restaurateur Jeff Gigante—whether you're there for the restaurant, bar, patisserie, or all three. *@boulontampa*

TANKA, MIAMI

In a sophisticated space, executive chef Taek Lee highlights contemporary Chinese itera-

tions in Cantonese, Shanghai, and Szechuan styles, paired with izakaya-inspired cocktails. *@tankamiami*

ZERU, MIAMI

The Mexico City-based Zeru Group is opening a Miami location under the direction of chef Israel Aretxiga, who pledges to merge Miami ingredients with the restaurant's signature Basque and Mediterranean cuisine. *@zerumiami*

MISSISSIPPI

BY CAROLINE EUBANKS

→ RADISH Long Beach

In August 2022, William Rester and chef Lauren Joffrion opened Radish on the state's Gulf Coast, celebrating the best of the region's ingredients. The name comes from the Long Beach radish, a variety that helped earn the town the title of Radish Capital of the World. Residents of the Northeast enjoyed them as a bar snack before Prohibition led to a decline in popularity.

Now the humble radish is one of many seasonal and local ingredients to go into the restaurant's menu. The colorful and beautifully plated dishes include rotating pasta and fresh catch items such as Gulf shrimp scampi and cornbread-crusted redfish, and staples like the pork chop with molasses-glazed collard greens atop grits from Grit Girl in Oxford.

"We had spent all these years before we had kids going around and finding really great places to eat in New Orleans and Mobile and different places and taking things from each of those," Rester says. "So the idea for me when I got started would be this collection of memories because I would come home and try to re-create things."

The pair had opened a small coffee shop and breakfast sandwich place right before Covid-19. "I have impeccable timing," Rester says with a laugh. During the pandemic, they shifted and became a food truck and catered before the future space for Radish opened up on Long Beach's well-traveled Jeff Davis Avenue, just four blocks from the beach. "It was one of those locations where it's on the frontage of a downtown area that you can't miss driving by, with a huge traffic count," says Rester.

With 31 seats inside, including the bar, the restaurant isn't big on space, but that's part of the appeal: When you're sitting down to eat, you're going to get to know the people next to you. "It's a very familiar 31," Rester says. "We've had some really cool relationships develop between diners that will all come as a group now because they've gotten to know each other just by sitting together in the restaurant." *@radishlongbeach*

CAN'T MISS AT RADISH

MISSISSIPPI MULE

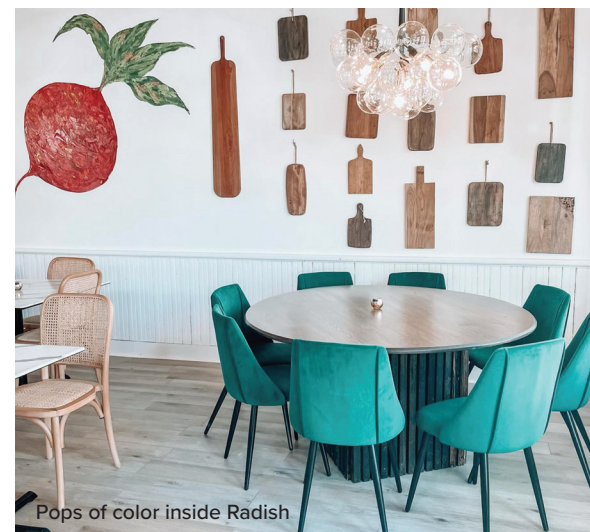
This refreshing sipper is made with Mississippi's Cat-head honeysuckle vodka, ginger beer, lime, and mint.

CRAB BEIGNETS

Lump crab meat fills these fried nuggets, which are set atop a beurre blanc and topped with a zippy pepper jelly.

GULF FISH ENTREE

The daily catch comes in fresh and is served with fried grits, green tomato salsa, and a lemon beurre blanc.



Pops of color inside Radish

WILLIAM RESTER. OPPOSITE: LAUREN JOFFRIAN



Roasted radishes with whipped goat cheese and chimichurri

ROASTED RADISHES WITH WHIPPED GOAT CHEESE AND CHIMICHURRI

SERVES 4 TO 6

For the whipped goat cheese:

1 cup goat cheese, at room temperature
¼ cup cream cheese, at room temperature
¼ cup sour cream, at room temperature
¼ cup local honey
2 tablespoons chopped fresh rosemary
1 tablespoon roasted garlic puree
Salt and pepper to taste

For the roasted radishes:

1-2 pounds radishes
½ cup garlic oil
2 tablespoons chopped fresh rosemary
Salt and pepper

For the chimichurri:

½ cup chopped parsley, finely minced
½ cup chopped cilantro, finely minced
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
3 garlic cloves, minced
1 small red chile, minced and seeded
½ teaspoon dried oregano
½ teaspoon coarse salt

To serve:

Raw radish slices
Mix of fresh herbs
Grilled or toasted bread

1. Make the whipped goat cheese: Combine all ingredients in a stand mixer fitted with whisk attachment. Whisk on medium-high for about 3 minutes. Set aside.

2. Make the roasted radishes: Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Slice radishes in half and toss with garlic oil, herbs, and seasonings. Arrange evenly on a baking sheet and roast for 25 minutes.

3. Make the chimichurri: In a bowl, combine herbs, oil, vinegar, garlic, chili, and seasonings. (If you prefer a smoother texture, combine in a blender.)

4. To serve, place whipped goat cheese in a pastry bag. Pipe onto serving plates in a circle. In center of circle, place a few roasted radish halves. Top with chimichurri, fresh radish slices, and fresh herbs. Serve with grilled or toasted bread.



Catch of the day with fried grits



Sambou's
African Kitchen

RESTAURANTS WORTH WATCHING

PULITO OSTERIA, JACKSON

The menu rotates several times a week, but you can expect Italian staples paired with surprises like Sicilian ceviche at this refined concept from Jackson native and executive chef Chaz Lindsay. [@pulito_osteria](#)

QUACKS, OXFORD

By the time you read this, the gourmet hot dog counter and bar will likely be open and serving creations like the Little Italy dog, a riff on pizza, and the deli dog, a version of the reuben. [@quacksdogs](#)

→ SAMBOU'S AFRICAN KITCHEN Jackson

This family-run restaurant brings under-represented Gambian cuisine to the capital city. The spacious dining room is filled with photos and African jewelry. Here you can sample dishes like oxtail, jollof rice, and fufu, a breadlike side made with yuca and used to soak up sauces. [@sambouafricankitchen](#)

→ ETHEL MAE'S Tupelo

Named for the owner's mother, Ethel Mae's serves up chef Reginald Scott's neo-soul food in a welcoming environment. The menu has all of the favorites you'd expect from a family gathering, including fried chicken and wings, alongside seafood dishes like crawfish étouffée and shrimp and grits. [@ethelmaestupelo](#)



Ethel Mae's

FROM LEFT: COURTESY OF SAMBOU'S AFRICAN KITCHEN; ALEXIS OANH LE. OPPOSITE: COURTESY OF GOOD DAY CAFE

→ GOOD DAY CAFE Oxford

The alley alongside the Lyric Theatre has welcomed a number of businesses over the years, but the latest is Good Day Cafe. The walk-up restaurant opened in fall 2022 with 14 bar seats. The menu offers burgers and sandwiches as well as weekly pop-ups including, most recently, Sri Lankan food. [@good_day_oxford](#)



Good Day Cafe

→ ROBERTS PLACE CAFE Pass Christian

Dorothy Roberts, sister of Robin Roberts on ABC's *Good Morning America*, opened her dream breakfast joint in January 2022 in a charming 1930s cottage in downtown Pass Christian. The menu includes some of the family's favorite dishes and recipes, with interesting stories behind every plate, including the rosemary baked chicken. [@robertsplacecafe233](#)

→ ENZO OSTERIA Ridgeland

Restaurant industry veteran chef Robert St. John opened this Italian spot with a menu of classic Italian favorites like pizza and pasta, along with Aperol spritzes and negroni cocktails. The pasta stracciacatta was inspired by St. John's travels in Italy. Come for the live music on weekends. [@enzo_osteria](#)

→ BACCHUS ON THE BEACH Pass Christian

Gulf Coast restaurateur Jourdan Nicaud took over ownership of the Marina Cantina in 2022 and completely transformed the space into the first Bacchus on the Beach. The restaurant highlights Gulf seafood, including redfish, oysters, and blue crab, and has views of the water. Outdoor dining is best for watching the sunset. [@bacchusonthebeach](#)

➔ **SLEEPY CACTUS**
Oxford

Located in a converted gas station (previously home to Oxford Canteen), Sleepy Cactus was opened in May 2022 by Alexandra “Ale” Santiago, one of the canteen’s former cooks. Start the day with Texas-style breakfast tacos on homemade tortillas or the “gas station breakfast biscuit casserole” with horchata cold brew. The specials and desserts also shine. @sleepy.cactus.ms

STEPHANIE FISHER