

By Providence Cicero  
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## Seattle Times food critic names her 10 favorite restaurants for 2012

Restaurant critic Providence Cicero picks 10 favorites from the past 12 months of reviews:

### Altura

Before I had a single bite of chef Nathan Lockwood's Italian-inspired food I was in love with Altura. Drenched in the patina of time, with ancient fir beams and antique furnishings, the 36-seat Capitol Hill restaurant is a haven from the hullabaloo of Broadway. Servers welcome guests with an aperitivo on the house, followed by a tiny bite gratis from the kitchen, and only then present the menu. Altura primes the senses for a Lucullan feast, whether you devise a three-, four- or five-course meal of your own choosing or opt for the extravagant chef's tasting menu paired with wines. [www.alturarestaurant.com](http://www.alturarestaurant.com); 206-402-6749

### Terra Plata

There are few better perches from which to savor the cityscape than Terra Plata's triangular, glass-walled dining room or its rooftop patio. Chef Tamara Murphy laid out the earth-to-plate road map in her cookbook, "Tender." And now at her ebullient restaurant adjacent to Capitol Hill's Melrose Market, she is following her locavore heart. The kitchen takes a Mediterranean view toward flavors but relies on Northwest-grown, artisanally made ingredients. The menu is always in flux, but her signature roast pig is a fixture. [www.terraplata.com](http://www.terraplata.com); 206-325-1501

### bin on the lake

When chef Dylan Giordan jumped from the Eastlake kitchens of Serafina and Cicchetti to the east side of Lake Washington, he breathed new life into bin on the lake, the Woodmark Hotel's wine-focused restaurant at Carillon Point. With 80 Enomatically-preserved wines available by the glass or taste to complement such dishes as horseradish-crusting wagyu steak or roasted Alaskan halibut with braised baby artichokes and cured black olives, dinner vies with the view for your attention. [www.thewoodmark.com/bin-on-the-lake/](http://www.thewoodmark.com/bin-on-the-lake/); 425-803-5595

### Anthony's Seafood Grill

When Anthony's Restaurants ventured into landlocked Lynnwood, opening Anthony's Seafood Grill at Alderwood Mall, they proved it's not just the water views that have made this homegrown chain a favorite for more than four decades. I was hooked by lively shrimp-and-mango lettuce wraps, luxurious crab and corn chowder, and classic wild Chinook cooked on an alder plank. Given the striking interior, a nautical fantasyland complete with blown-glass jellyfish, who needs a view? [www.anthonys.com/restaurants](http://www.anthonys.com/restaurants)

### Restaurant Zoë

Relocating Restaurant Zoë from Belltown to Pike-Pine, side-by-side with the Oola Distillery and tasting room was a smart move by owners Scott and Heather Staples. Eating there feels new, but not unfamiliar — like rekindling an old romance. I admire the gauzy lighting and vintage look, the savvy staff and smart wine list, but my crush on Zoë mostly involves the food: robust, playful and inventive plates that range from classic duck confit and dainty ricotta gnudi, to tamarind-glazed lamb ribs and mussels steamed in verjus with mint and jalapeño. [www.restaurantzoe.com](http://www.restaurantzoe.com); 206-256-2060

### Mezcaleria Oaxaca

The best seats at Mezcaleria Oaxaca, the Queen Anne bar opened by the family behind Ballard's La Carta de Oaxaca, are not at the tables wedged into the brightly lit backroom. They are in the ocher haze of the front room, either at the bar, the kitchen counter or the pair of deuces across from the kitchen. The best dishes? It's hard to go wrong, but I would steer you toward pozole, anything that involves mole, and especially barbacoa de cabrito, tender strands of chile-infused roasted goat. Be daring and down a smoky, searing shot of mezcal. [www.mezcaleriaoaxaca.com](http://www.mezcaleriaoaxaca.com); 206-216-4446

### **Oddfellows Café**

Some restaurants peak early; others need time to find their footing. Three years after it opened, Linda Derschang's Oddfellows Café found its groove. So relaxed is this all-day, everyday Capitol Hill gathering place, it wouldn't surprise me to see folks showing up in their bathrobes for the biscuit-and-egg breakfast that's served until 3 p.m. Lunchtime's saucy, cheesy, meatball-stuffed baguette was as unforgettable as a summer supper of diminutive gnocchi with sweet corn, cilantro and red pepper relish. [www.oddfellowscafe.com](http://www.oddfellowscafe.com); 206-325-0807

### **Ma'ono Fried Chicken & Whisky**

At Mark Fuller and Marjorie Chang Fuller's West Seattle restaurant, Ma'ono Fried Chicken & Whisky (the reinvented Spring Hill), there are other good things on the menu (pork buns and the Portuguese sausage Ma'ono Dog, for example) but fried chicken is the surest bait. The local birds are brined, breaded and fried to a dark and determined crunch. One chicken yields 10 pieces piled in a big paper-lined bowl, with rice, kimchi and two dipping sauces on the side. As for the whiskey, it has traveled a lot farther — from Kentucky, Tennessee, New York, Canada, Ireland, Scotland, even Japan. [www.maonoseattle.com](http://www.maonoseattle.com); 206-935-1075

### **Momiji**

Playful is the adjective that comes to mind when I think of Steven Han's Momiji, starting with the intricate lighting installations by Yuri Kinoshita. Venture beyond the dim decadence of the front bar and lounge to discover two dynamic dining areas separated by a tranquil garden. On the menu: tempura-fried maitake mushrooms, grilled salmon collar, noodle bowls and soups, plus some 60 sushi rolls, more than a few in permutations that would make a sushi purist gasp, but that are, in fact, delicious. Sake flights and a coursed kaiseki menu can also be arranged. [www.momijiseattle.com](http://www.momijiseattle.com); 206-457-4068

### **Restaurant Marché**

Add Greg and Betsy Atkinson's Restaurant Marché to the growing list of destination dining options in Winslow that includes Hitchcock, The Four Swallows and Café Nola. Betsy is the effusive presence at the door. Greg is the kitchen wizard whose technical skill and passion for local ingredients combine to put a Northwest spin on traditional French bistro fare. [www.restaurantmarchebainbridge.com](http://www.restaurantmarchebainbridge.com); 206-842-1633

Providence Cicero, Seattle Times restaurant critic, co-hosts "Let's Eat" with Terry Jaymes at 4 p.m. Saturdays on KIRO Radio 97.3 FM. Reach Cicero at [providencecicero@aol.com](mailto:providencecicero@aol.com).

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