

FOODIES, GRAB YOUR FORKS

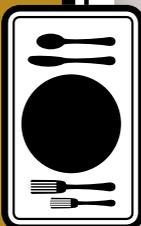
IT'S THAT PALATE-PLEASING TIME OF YEAR ONCE AGAIN. WE PROUDLY PRESENT THE 2006/2007 *HAMPTON ROADS MAGAZINE* PLATINUM PLATE AWARDS

By Patrick Evans-Hylton



PHOTO: ANTONY FLATT

Above: Coastal Grill's Seared Pepper Yellowfin Tuna with a Lemon Thyme Butter; Signature acorn squash
Opposite Page: Coastal Grill Chef/Owner Jerry Bryan and Executive Chef Maureen Cucciaro.



Food continues to be a common denominator in a region that is spread across thousands of square miles, crossing rivers, streams and even the Chesapeake Bay.

As we've reminded you before, some 2,000 restaurants feed Hampton Roads (discounting those that have animated characters as spokespersons). We all have our favorite places based on varying criteria, from quality of food and service to ambiance to price.

Food critics have their favorites too, and for the last five years we've asked them to share their top spots for a great meal. This article once again presents a perennial readers' favorite—the 50 restaurants honored with a *Hampton Roads Magazine* Platinum Plate Award for making the grade.

The list is varied, from casual eateries to upscale dining. There are restaurants represented across the region and across cuisine types. This is one of the most diverse lists we've had since we began dishing out the Platinum Plates.

There are restaurants that serve incredible barbecue sandwiches, piled high with sinfully seasoned pulled pork and creamy cole slaw; restaurants that specialize in the flavors of Asia, like pho, sushi and dim sum; eateries with Mediterranean and Old World European tastes; classic American diners and everything in between.

The grouping is geographically diverse as well: our critics located food finds all across Hampton Roads, from Williamsburg and the Peninsula to downtown Norfolk, the Virginia Beach Oceanfront and a few in Chesapeake, Suffolk and elsewhere in our region.

So no matter what HR city you call home or what kind of food fills your plate, grab a fork and get ready to go out and satisfy that appetite. The only hard part is figuring out which top 50 restaurant to try first. **HR**



RANK—7
SCORE—92
Vintage Tavern
 1900 Governors
 Pointe Dr., Suffolk
 757-238-8808
www.vintagetavernvirginia.com

The tagline of Sam McGann's Vintage Tavern reads "seasonally Southern," and he is definitely correct. Open about a year, this charming tavern tucked in northern Suffolk features stone walls, exposed ceiling beams, hardwood floors and spectacular wooded vistas. The atmosphere is appropriate for McGann's sophisticated interpretation of rustic regional classics. This is this eatery's first Platinum Plates award.

Critics' Comments: "A gorgeous destination restaurant, it preserves and refines Southern foodways." "It's especially nice to take pre-prandial cocktails out on the back patio." "Gorgeous and elegant atmosphere." "A spectacular foray into seasonal Southern dining." "Save room for dessert." "Try the sampler platter as an app for a taste of Sam's genius and the way upscale Southern should taste."

Left: Vintage Tavern's Chef Sam McGann plating Southern goodness.

Todd Jurich's Bistro's city-feel seating.

PHOTO: ANTHONY PLATT



RANK—8—TIE
SCORE—91.5
Todd Jurich's Bistro
 150 W. Main St.,
 Norfolk
 757-622-3210
www.toddjurichsbistro.com

With experience at such venerable Virginia Beach eateries as Coyote and Crowdad cafes and Menus, Todd Jurich ventured to Norfolk to open Bistro 210 in the early 1990s, which evolved into

Todd Jurich's Bistro. His offering, a culinary gem in downtown Norfolk, features upscale but comfortable surroundings; a fresh, seasonal menu; and an incredible wine list. All create a winning recipe.

Critics' Comments: "The place to impress." "The addition of an outside dining area is a nice complement to this top-notch restaurant." "The constant search for only the best product results in only the best dishes."

