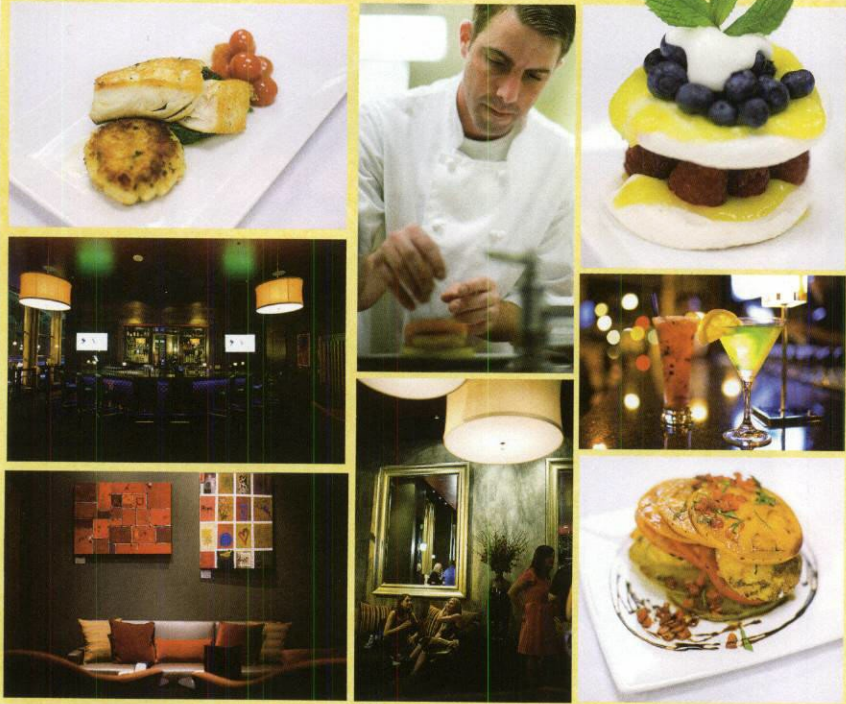


# dish

# bites



PHOTOS, MARC THOMAS KALLWEIT

BITES

## 3 Fires Lounge

Anchoring the new downtown Marriott, 3 Fires is a surprising find (all the more so because their signage hasn't arrived yet). Conceived as a hotel bar with small plates when it opened in April, this diminutive eatery—there are only about a half-dozen tables, but plenty of bar seats and a few couches—started serving full-sized entrées in early July and its ambitions are clearly bigger than its square footage (and its menu). The design is elegant, the servers are informed and friendly, and the food lives up to its impressively artful presentation. Chef Paul Gorton's heirloom tomato salad with crispy goat cheese is incredibly fresh and colorful. Small plates include tri-tip roulade, ahi tacos and squash blossoms with house-made chorizo. Entrées range from fresh pasta (the cheese tortellini with asparagus is excellent, but it changes weekly) to a petite filet mignon and a deeply flavorful halibut served on a Dungeness crab cake.

1501 L ST. 443-0500 EXT. 0. \$\$\$ D

### OUR POLICY

The restaurants in our listings are determined solely by the editorial staff, and will vary from issue to issue. The decision to include or exclude any restaurant is not influenced by advertising.

### PRICE KEY\*

\$10 & UNDER \$  
\$10 TO \$20 \$\$  
\$ ABOVE 20 \$\$\$  
\*AVERAGE ENTRÉE PRICE

### LEGEND

BREAKFAST B  
LUNCH L  
DINNER D  
BRUNCH B  
OUTDOOR DINING ☂  
VALET PARKING 🚗

## Sacramento County

### AMBROSIA CAFÉ

Sitting in a prominent corner of lively Cathedral Square at 11th and K, Ambrosia is a culinary oasis (and a great place to people-watch, too). Not content to serve up standard office-worker lunchtime fare, Ambrosia eschews cold cuts for roasted tri-tip, and Oscar Meyer for Niman Ranch organic all-beef hot dogs in a big, soft bun. There are also great salads and soups. And don't even get us started on the desserts. They are, quite simply, some of the very best in town, including cookies, cupcakes, cheesecake, éclairs and divine peanut-butter chocolate bars. The fare may sound simple, but doing simple very, very well isn't as easy as it looks. And speaking of sweet, where else can you find a warm "crème brûlée French toast" for breakfast? Yes, you read that right. 1030 K ST. SACRAMENTO. 444-8129 \$

B L D ☂

### BIDWELL STREET BISTRO

The epitome of a neighborhood bistro, Bidwell delivers richly satisfying fare in an unassuming location (by which we mean a strip mall in Folsom). A unique offering of wines by the glass and half-glass rotates weekly. The half-glass is perfect for those who want just a taste, have far to drive or want to pair wines as courses unfold. The Muscovy duck confit is the restaurant's signature dish, but the French onion soup coupled with Sciambra Bakery breads make for a light but satisfying alternative. The décor is unmistakably French bistro, complete with decorative vintage labels. Wine tastings often take place twice a month. 1004 EAST BIDWELL ST. FOLSOM. 984-7500 \$\$\$ L D ☂

### BLUE NAMI SUSHI & SAKE HOUSE

Providing popular Japanese fare, Blue Nami takes the art of sushi to a new level with its "Paris-style deviations"—bold creations that bring artistic flair to traditional nigiri-style sushi. The ingredients found in its rolls are likewise fresh and inventive, forming combinations that will enchant the tastes of budding and veteran sushi-lovers alike. The Girl Friend roll will surprise you with its layered flavors of cilantro, cashew and shaved bonito flakes on top of a plentitude of rich, spicy sea crab. Refreshing mandarin orange juices up the Avalanche deviation. Blue Nami may occupy a space in a nondescript mall, but the presentation of this modest neighborhood Japanese spot will woo even the most urban-hearted. Paper lanterns, bamboo and a wall of falling water create a tranquil scene that will prepare you for the pleasures of the meal. 8809 GREENBACK LN. ORANGEVALE. 988-2300 \$\$\$ L D ☂

### BOULEVARD BISTRO

A proverbial oasis in the world of Elk Grove fine dining, Boulevard Bistro offers a classic California