

AUSTIN

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M O N T H L Y

A TASTE OF AUSTIN

Our Salute to the Austin Dining Scene

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WHEN IT COMES TO RESTAURANTS,

everyone has their own personal favorites. Depending on our mood or on the occasion, sometimes we seek familiar flavors that remind us of home or exotic new taste experiences or a fabulous place to celebrate a special event in our lives. In any case, dining out is usually a fun-filled experience. While many area eateries have either disappeared or seen better days, Austin is still home to many restaurants that deserve recognition because of their remarkable cuisine, the experiences they create or the purpose they serve. The food staff writers at *Austin Monthly*, with the help of some of Austin's most respected food experts, have explored a few categories in our local dining scene to give you a view from the insiders' perspective. This is, by no means, an all-inclusive list, but we believe each and every one of these restaurants and chefs do an especially exceptional job at filling their individual niches in Austin's growing dining scene. We hope that the people and places we highlight inspire you to go out and find your own favorites.

For a complete listing of how to find the following restaurants, see page 59.

MEET OUR FOOD EXPERTS

CLAUDIA ALARCÓN A native of Mexico City, Alarcón graduated with honors in anthropology from the University of Texas at Austin after working for nearly 16 years in the Austin restaurant scene. She is a freelance writer who has written extensively on the cuisines of Mexico and is a local expert on the history of tamales.

PAULA BIEHLER Biehler has a public relations and marketing consulting firm that specializes in the food, restaurant and hospitality industries. Her clientele ranges from restaurants and boutique businesses, to resorts and trade shows. She also chairs the local chapter for Share Our Strength, the Texas Book Festival's Bon Appetit Y'all event and is a member of the Austin chapter of *Les Dames d'Escoffier*.

CATHY COCHRAN-LEWIS As the former director of all Central Market cooking schools, Cochran-Lewis was the person responsible for their development and growth into the nation's largest non-vocational network of cooking schools. She now owns a culinary consulting company where she serves some of the nation's best chefs and food personalities.

SAM DICKEY Dickey is chef-owner of the Granite Café in Austin. He brings more than 20 years of experience to the panel and has worked in many of the area's finest restaurants. He's known for his exceptional cuisine and easy-going personality in the kitchen.

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