

NEWCITY

RESTO
100CHICAGO'S
ESSENTIAL
RESTAURANTS

Resto 100 is, as it has been in years past, a list of "essential" restaurants, which is most definitely not synonymous with "best." We strive to reflect a world of dining in a constant state of innovative transition, to capture a snapshot of the state of the food world at this time.

In these particular hard economic times, we find ourselves dining out a lot more at the BYOBs, mom-and-pop-spots and small ethnic joints than we do at the high end. That being said, while we didn't set out to consciously create a list to address our lighter wallets, it sure turned out that way. More than ever, this list is a cross section of the wealth of culturally diverse and reasonably priced restaurants Chicago is lucky to have.

Maybe most surprising to the readers (or maybe not), this is the first time we dropped Charlie Trotter's off of the list. We don't dispute the fact that his Lincoln Park spot was influential in building the world-class food city we have today, but in recent years he's been a victim of his own success, as protégés and followers have gone on to provide more cost-accessible and innovative quality restaurants by watching him.

Also, with Trotter's failure to complete the "Elysian" hotel project downtown and amidst rumors of potential trouble with other projects, we wonder if he has the drive or the pull to really be a creative culinary force anymore. You could argue that we're not being fair by keeping stalwarts like Everest or TRU, but Everest still has one of Chicago's best views and a refinished dining room, while the team at Tru has made tremendous strides in wine service with their sommelier-driven tasting menus. Of course, that's the beauty of any list. You may not agree, so let us know. (Michael Nigrant, Resto 100 editor)

\$ = most entrées under \$10

\$\$ = most entrées \$10-\$20

\$\$\$ = most entrées over \$20

\$\$\$\$ = most entrées (or degustation menus) over \$30

All restaurants accept major credit cards, unless otherwise noted

LOOP

Lockwood

New American

17 E. Monroe, (312)917-3404. \$\$\$\$

Rarely does four-star dining have a sense of humor, but super-blogging chef Phillip Foss' recent unveiling of a deconstructed Chicago-style lobster dog ensures that he has the loudest gourmet laugh.