

FEELING BLUE?
TRY "GREEN" THERAPY

YOUR GUIDE
TO THE ULTIMATE
THANKSGIVING

WAR AT HOME:
THE PLIGHT
OF NATIVE VETS

600+
Restaurants
The Essential
Dining List
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Minnesota Monthly®

Best New Restaurants

WHERE TO EAT NOW
PLUS OUR PICKS FOR CAN'T-MISS CLASSICS

- FINE DINING
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- POWER LUNCH
- ROMANTIC DINNER
- SUBURBAN
- BRUNCH
- BISTRO
- WINE BAR
- BURGERS
- LATIN
- CULINARY ADVENTURE

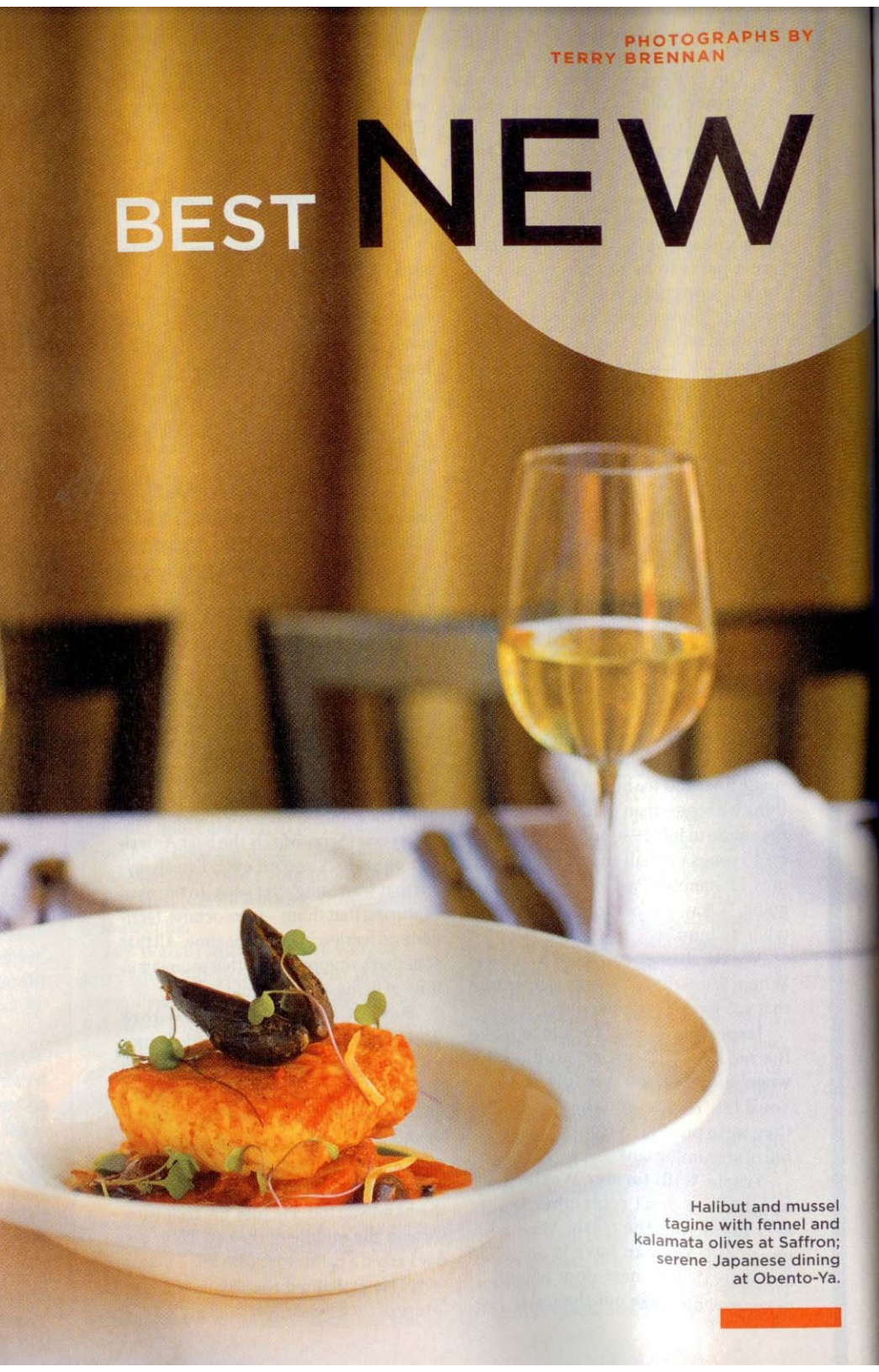
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TERRY BRENNAN

BEST NEW

RESTAURANTS



Halibut and mussel tagine with fennel and kalamata olives at Saffron; serene Japanese dining at Obento-Ya.



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BEST NEW RESTAURANTS

accompanied by ramps and trumpet mushrooms. The drink selection may be the best of the menu lists, as the carefully crafted cocktails are made with fresh herbs and juices. A blueberry mojito, watermelon margarita, or Bank's titular drink—garnished with flecks of gold leaf—should ease even the most difficult negotiations.

Best Meal: Start with the hot-chili raspberry cosmo, the shrimp rolls, and the arugula salad. Then have the lamb with braised white beans, ratatouille, and rosemary-mint gremolata followed by a few tiny, shot-glass-size desserts. 88 S. Sixth St., Mpls., 612-656-3255

The Classic

With its mahogany woodwork and polished brass, the **St. Paul Grill's** classic dining room feels like the clubhouse for last century's railroad magnates and lumber barons. The frosted-glass partitions between the booths allow extra privacy for politicians and power brokers to seal deals over steaks and single-malt scotches—the same way they've been doing things for decades. 350 Market St., St. Paul, 651-224-7455

DATE NIGHT

Café Maude

Unless you plan in advance, date night is going to have to be a late-night if you want to snag a table at Café Maude. The former Connor's Deli space has been mobbed by its Armatage neighbors since it opened this summer—and for good reason.

Café Maude possesses a comfortable sophistication: The walls are painted dark hues of red, gold, and blue, and the room is furnished with plush benches, eclectic art, and mismatched light



Bassist Anthony Cox and saxophonist Mike Lewis jazz it up at Café Maude; duck with vegetable *bisteeya* at Saffron.

fixtures. On weekends, live bands play experimental jazz or world music. It all goes together precisely because it doesn't: Opposites attract, just like you two, right?

The creative drink list

was crafted by La Belle Vie's stellar bartender Johnny Michaels, and a blackberry mojito or fig-esspresso martini is sure to relax the mood. For a non-alcoholic alternative, the sassy marshmallow

FINE DINING

Saffron

Minneapolis's Warehouse District has historically been home to artists, but today, culinary creatives are taking their place. Chef Sameh Wadi, whose cousins own Holy Land deli, is challenging the notion that fine dining equals European cuisine by fusing Middle Eastern flavors with formal techniques.

The result is delicately plated cross-cultural combinations unlike anything else in town: beef carpaccio with truffled brown butter and crispy chickpeas, blue-crab salad with curry, avocado, and citrus. Wadi's flavor palette is as refreshing as it is complex: Even a BLT can seem innovative when it's made with house-cured lamb bacon and roasted-tomato jam. Brave diners can try the pint-sized lamb brain, which tastes something like a hybrid of sweet-breads and fried oysters, while less adventurous eaters can stick with the upscale bar

foods, like charmoula-spiced mini-burgers and French fries served with a creamy feta dipping sauce. Like the food, the space finds a nice middle ground between classy and casual as the airy dining room's exposed brick and saffron-colored walls balance the formality of its white linens and wineglasses.

Best Meal: Braised-beef ravioli with eggplant and harissa, crab salad, and the BLT. 123 N. Third St., Mpls., 612-746-5533

The Classic

For celebrating the good life, **La Belle Vie** has all the right elements: lavish French-Mediterranean food, a 12-page wine list, expert service, and desserts made by pastry wiz Michelle Gayer-Nicholson. The best way to enjoy La Belle Vie is its eight-course Chef's Tasting Menu, but if you're on a budget, try the four-course version served in the lounge. 510 Groveland Ave., Mpls., 612-874-6440

duck with vegetable
bisteeya at Saffron.

