

living INTOWN

September/October 2014 • FALL ISSUE

Atlanta's
best dining
districts

Taste OF THE City

PLUS: Insider Tip contest winners

The allure of living
on the BeltLine

*Favorite haunts:
A tour of local ghosts*

A PRODUCT OF

ajc The Atlanta
Journal-Constitution
Leading. Purposeful. Connected.

[editorial]



[The Reynolds Group Inc.] [www.thereynoldsgroupinc.com]

Up in the heirloom

Story by LANE EDMONDSON
Photo by JENNI GIRTMAN

I can't grow tomatoes to save my life. I've tried to an extent that scared people. I've spread compost, pulled weeds and watered vines, my face redder than my tomatoes would ever be, confident that healthy, robust beefsteaks, san marzanos and early girls would thrive in profusion. But the tomato-growing gene skipped me. Somewhere, generations of green-thumbed ancestors watch, clucking in disapproval.

A girl's gotta satisfy her craving for that bright, earthy taste of real tomatoes, so I outsource. Friends and family share the bounty of their backyard plants. And with farmers markets sprouting up everywhere you turn, "real" tomatoes are easier to find than ever.

How lucky I feel that local chefs share this zeal. At the Old Fourth Ward's 4th & Swift, Jay Swift and his staff keep their own productive garden nearby, so during the hot months, their menu bursts with red, yellow, green, pink and purple tomatoes.

On a recent visit, I had a chance to inhale their heirloom tomato salad – a summer menu fixture that varies in composition depending on what's in season. That week, smaller tomato varieties, including green zebras, were in play.

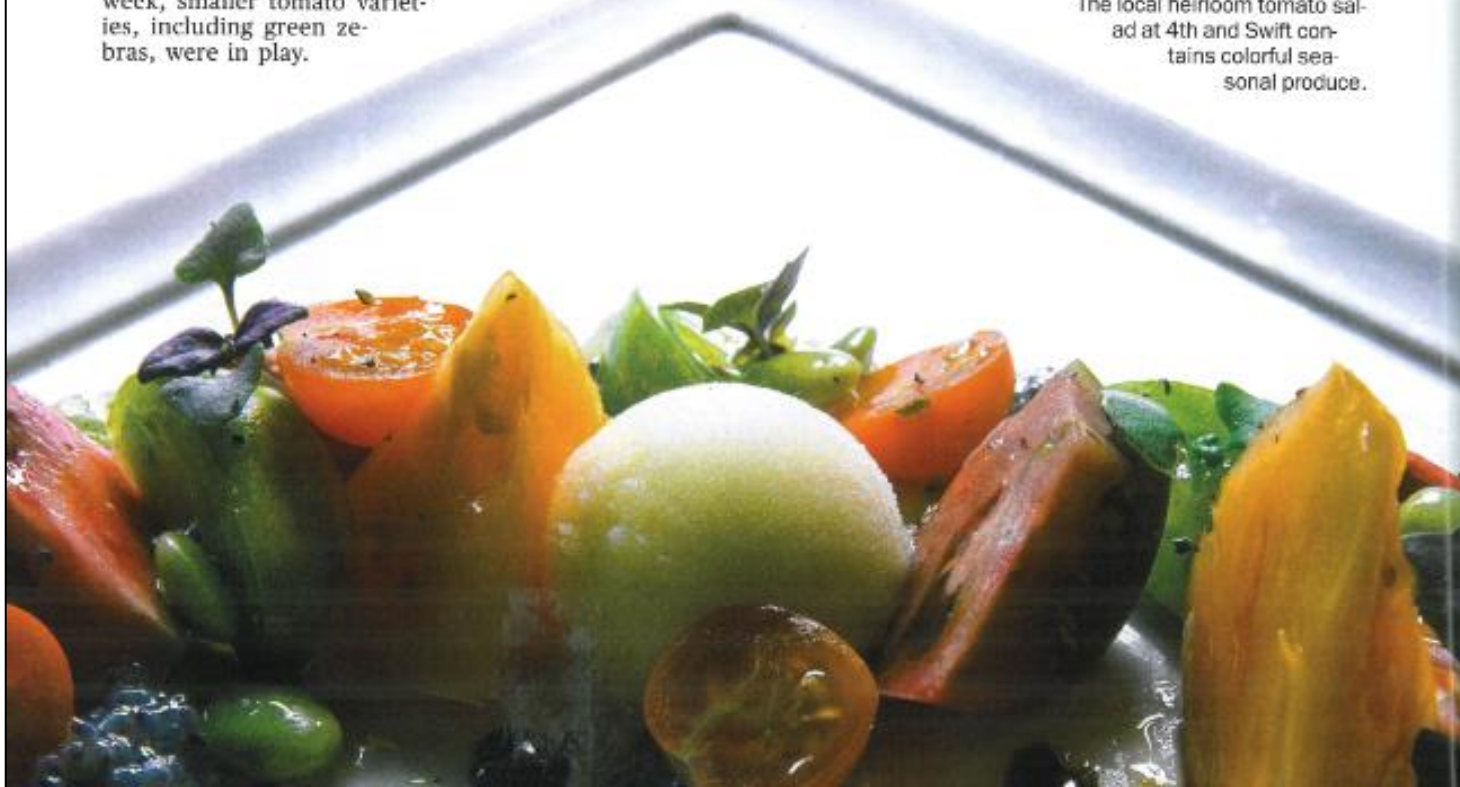
Though the plate features a lovely melon sorbet, cucumbers and "summer legumes" (in this case, a type of seaweed called sea beans), the tomatoes play the starring role, set off with a simple vinaigrette. About the size of a golf ball, the green zebras have a bright, lemony character and don't yield to the teeth as easily as the standard super-ripe beefsteaks that we grew up eating. They're paired with more demure, sweet reds for a lovely contrast and backed up with a scattering of sun golds that are just barely tangy.

The Swift kitchen manages to deploy tomatoes in surprising ways, showcasing the fruit's flexibility. Their version of panzanella (bread salad) is a breaded, deep-fried cube of luscious burrata, filled with the tomatoes of the moment and bursting with deliciousness. Their grilled octopus boasts a healthy drizzle of sun gold butter – a happy concoction of the little gold tomatoes cooked down with butter to a luscious, velvety puddle.

A proper tomato excursion begs for a summery wine, and at 4th & Swift, I found that Whispering Angel rosé nicely accompanied summer's plenty. While walking off the meal, I noticed the restaurant's garden and leered enviously at all those lovely, healthy plants.

4th & Swift, 621 North Ave. 678-904-0160.
4thandswift.com ■

The local heirloom tomato salad at 4th and Swift contains colorful seasonal produce.



[editorial]



[The Reynolds Group Inc.] [www.thereynoldsgroupinc.com]