

MODERN LUXURY

MEN'S BOOK

ATLANTA

SPEED THRILLS

OUR ANNUAL AUTO ISSUE

MEN'S BOOK ATLANTA 3260 PEACHTREE ROAD NE, STE. 2300, ATLANTA, GA 30305

Guest Editor Jeff Arnold Takes the Helm

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[editorial]



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FIRE UP Clockwise from left: Tandoori-spiced duck sears on the grill; crispy quail legs; guests sample bourbon at the bar.



SIP AND SEE Guests await the first course.

Get Your Game On

There's no better time to be a man dining in Atlanta. One local food adventurer tells us why.

| By Jonathan Baker | Photography by Heidi Geldhauser |

If there is a place in Atlanta that perfectly straddles the line between masculinity and sophistication, it's 4th & Swift in the Old Fourth Ward (621 North Ave. NE, 678.904.0160, 4thandswift.com). Lodged in a former dairy and quietly tucked away behind the Ponce City Market on North Avenue, 4th & Swift is secluded enough to feel exclusive, rustic enough to feel cool, formal enough to feel significant.

And there isn't a more quintessential dining experience for the classic sportsman than the restaurant's yearly Bourbon, Bordeaux & Game Dinner.

A yearly tradition, it's a trifecta of dining that makes you feel as though you're exploring food that leads to discovery of what it means to dine like a gentleman. It's the kind of meal that galvanizes you to want to dress up, not down; one that merits bringing an old friend

rather than a business associate; one you look forward to each year, like the dining equivalent of opening day for bow season.

I arrive on this particularly chilly fall evening and meet up with men's lifestyle maverick Jeremy Blume, co-founder of Bearings, a Southern lifestyle site for men. At the back end of the bar, we join game-dinner patrons for a glass of Champagne, as trays of appetizers give an indication of what's to come: Boar chorizo wrapped in toasted naan begs for seconds; crispy quail legs are enjoyed like meaty lollipops; and buffalo tartare with a hint of lime is something I've never seen on any menu.

Soon, the group is corralled by chef-owner Jay Swift and is led to the private dining room in the back of the restaurant. Three tables of 10, draped in white tablecloths, are set against floor-to-ceiling windows that reveal the entire

kitchen, allowing diners to view the action in progress. Flanked by brick walls and vertical wine racks, you feel as though you're attending an intimate dinner party that just happens to be hosted by one of our city's best chefs.

Swift—a tall, stoic character—addresses us with a thoughtful thank-you and talks about the meal we are about to enjoy. There are details on why he chose each dish, the farms from which the food is sourced and the reasons for the wine pairings. Questions are asked and answered. And unlike most eating experiences, where you are lucky to merely get a glimpse of the chef, this feels like we have the culinary star all to ourselves.

Sitting shoulder-to-shoulder, friends and strangers are brought together on the simple premise of adventurous eating. And the four courses provide plenty of fodder for banter. Tandoori-spiced duck comes perfectly cooked and sits on a bed of yogurt spaetzle and red cabbage, an inventive fusing of Indian and German influences. Crispy pheasant breast is pan-roasted and served with golden chanterelle ravioli and truffle soy-scented consommé, a delicate French dish seemingly made for the accompanying '09 cabernet franc. The entrée is oak-roasted venison leg with wonderfully earthy Hen of the Woods mushrooms. The venison is equal parts smoky and unctuous—if you had told me it was steak and not game, I would have believed you. Paired with the final 2006 merlot, it was all going down too smoothly.

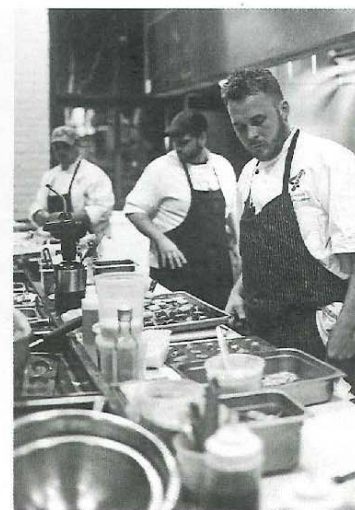
A homemade pear galette topped with toasted walnut ice cream arrives for dessert and tastes like autumn in a bowl. For the nightcap: a flight of three bourbons, each from boutique distilleries, aged six to 18 years. The gloriously burning nips made me scribble down each brand for certain future consumption.

And therein lies the beauty of these special chef-driven dinners across the city—they are about discovery: conversing with fascinating strangers. Trying new things opens your eyes not only to unique foodstuffs, but to a different way to dine altogether. The meal runs the game gamut, yet nothing is ordinary or prepared with pedestrian influences. After spending a gluttonous and glorious two hours at 4th & Swift, I walk away with a rare experience. And that... is really the meat of the matter. ■



FARE GAME

Clockwise, from top: Buffalo tartare on crisp crackers; Chef de Cuisine Jeb Aldrich heats up the kitchen; duck sits atop yogurt spaetzle and red cabbage; the evening's man-friendly menu



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