Dining In

Check out these rising-star chefs without even leaving your hotel.

BY SHANE MITCHELL

There's no arguing that the celebrity kitchen has reached cult status. We've all heard of top chefs and iron chefs and even nightmare chefs, but what about talented chefs who preside over refined dining rooms without a fuss and produce inventive menus cued to their region and local resources? Many can be found right in America's best hotels - hidden gems, if you will, who are actually in the kitchen rather than in front of a camera. Watch for these top toques the next time you check in.

The Chef: Joseph Lenn
The Barn, Blackberry Farm
Walland, Tennessee

Why Go Now: Rural Southern comfort food goes haute. Presiding over Blackberry Farm's rustic dining room in the Smokey Mountain foothills, Knoxville-born Lenn has the good fortune to source ingredients directly from the 4,200-acre farmstead's orchards, garden plots, and flocks. (Blackberry also produces its own sheep's milk cheeses.) Sommelier Andy Chabot oversees a wine cellar that highlights a global collection of Rhône varietals; the inn's Dogwood Bar has an extensive selection of small-
batch American whiskeys. The farm regularly hosts special epicurean events pairing such culinary stars as Alain Ducasse and cookbook author Patricia Wells with renowned wineries, including Château Palmer, Turley Wine Cellars, and Movia. Lenn graciously shares his kitchen with other regional chefs who come to pay their respects, especially during the annual Southern Foodways Alliance “Taste of the South” (January 12 through 14, 2012; for more about the hotel, turn to page 96).

**SIGNATURE DISH:** Chicken and dumplings (chicken confit, herbed potato gnocchi, poached egg, and hen-of-the-woods mushrooms).

**CHEF’S NIGHT OUT:** On his night off, you’ll catch Lenn at Knoxville’s Public House (www.knoxpublichouse.com), an urban bar with white truffle popcorn and adobo boiled peanuts.

**THE CHEF: WAYNE HIRABAYASHI**

**Hoku’s, The Kahala Hotel & Resort**

**Honolulu, Hawaii**

**WHY GO NOW:** Papus are hot again.

An advocate of Hawaii Regional Cuisine, a movement that honors the melting-pot culinary heritage of the Islands’ Asian, Portuguese, and Polynesian immigrants, Oahu-born Hirabayashi presides over a serene oceanfront dining room at The Kahala Hotel. He spends early mornings on the other side of Diamond Head at busy Pier 38, where the Honolulu fish auction takes place. Frequently, seafood lands right at the kitchen door: One of his sous chefs likes to spearfish octopus while paddling nearby tide pools on a surfboard. Hoku’s Sunday brunch is considered one of the best in Hawaii.

**SIGNATURE DISHES:** Wok-fried red snapper; a trio of ahi tuna musubi.

**CHEF’S NIGHT OUT:** Side Street Inn (www.sidestreethn.com), a sports-bar chef hangout, where peers such as Iron Chef Masaharu Morimoto show up to share fried pork chops after hours.

**THE CHEF: DREW DZEJAK**

**The Grill Room, Windsor Court Hotel**

**New Orleans, Louisiana**

**WHY GO NOW:** Tradition with a twist.

A relative newcomer to Windsor Court’s formal dining room, Dzejak has created an innovative menu that lends a Continental contribution to creole cuisine. Start your evening with a Sazerac cocktail in the adjacent Polo Club jazz lounge, where head bartender Roger Blais and sommelier Sara Kavanaugh conduct a popular monthly mixology class.

**SIGNATURE DISH:** Belgian endive and wild arugula salad, with grilled Ibérico pork, farm egg, mini croutons, and truffle vinaigrette.

**CHEF’S NIGHT OUT:** Susan Spicer’s Bayona (www.bayona.com) for a date night in the French Quarter or La Bocca (wwwЛАbocasteaks.com) for steaks and pisco sours.

**THE CHEF: CHRISTOPHER KOSTOW**

**The Restaurant, Meadowood**

**Saint Helena, California**

**WHY GO NOW:** Three Michelin stars and counting.

Kostow holds a degree in philosophy but chose à la carte over Descartes for his career. He takes full advantage of an on-property greenhouse and Napa Valley producers for his enlightened interpretations of modern California cuisine. During the long, bountiful season, he serves an all-vegetable tasting menu and creates playful, inventive main courses such as goat poached in whey or ocean trout in a buckwheat crust. Master sommelier Gilles...
Sue Schickler and (right) her signature ravioli at The Pitcher Inn's 275 Main restaurant.

THE CHEF: SUE SCHICKLER
275 Main, The Pitcher Inn
Warren, Vermont

WHY GO: Now. Fresh air and even fresher ingredients.

Schickler's seasonal New England menu features locally raised beef and cheese from purveyors linked to the Vermont Fresh Network, although she also favors flavors that would not be out of place in Provence or Tuscany. During the winter season, a hearty meal at this elegant Green Mountains inn proves the ideal ending for a day on the slopes at nearby Sugarbush or Mad River Glen. At the height of summer, villagers gather on the Inn's columned front porch to celebrate one of New England's most colorful Fourth of July parades.

SIGNATURE DISH: Braised Vermont beef short rib risotto topped with shaved Moliterno sheep's milk cheese infused with black truffles.


de Chambure hosts evening wine tastings that introduce guests to such local vintners as Tim Mondavi or Cyril Chappellet.

SIGNATURE DISH: Roasted sturgeon with bone marrow, compressed pear, and crisp brussels sprouts.


Jambo! Welcome

Jambo means hello! With every spectacular sunrise, opportunity and adventure dawn across the picturesque Kenyan landscape. Picture yourself traveling aside a thundering herd of wildebeest or feeling the vibrating footfall of an approaching herd of elephants. Imagine the thrill of climbing snow-capped mountains, crossing searing deserts and relaxing in cool highland retreats.

From safaris to action sports, photography to spa treatments, and horseback riding to romantic getaways, Kenya provides stunning backdrops and invigorating interactions; endless opportunities for adventure, discovery, and relaxation. No other country offers the visitor as much to see and do; much more than you would ever expect...

To plan your Magical Kenya safari today