

***Texas Monthly, August 2011***

Ever since Tyson Cole won a James Beard award for best regional chef, getting a table at this ode to Japanese farmhouse dining is nigh impossible. But once you're in, the kitchen delivers food as well-crafted as any haiku. Consider the poetry of maguro tuna with slivers of sweet-tart apple and lush black-pepper goat cheese. But it's not all about the fish: Even simple brussels sprouts roasted in chile oil and fish sauce left the sweet and savory taste of umami lingering on the taste buds. The famed Tobacco Cream dessert—an oval of dark chocolate sorbet, maple pudding, and crunchy huckleberry “glass”—magically incorporates the peaty flavors of smoke and scotch. Pastry chef Philip Speer is an artist in his own right