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### Austin's Best Restaurants of the 2010

by Nicole Carbon - Citysearch Contributor - 13 Reviews - 16 Lists



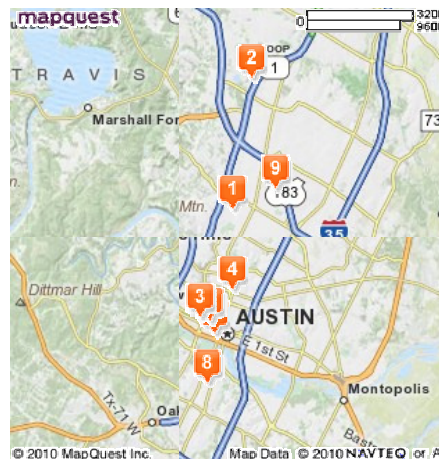
Updated: December 21, 2010  
Foie gras burgers, CIA-trained chefs and a diner equipped with a sommelier and beer specialist--yeah, Austin's dining scene is on the upswing. Austin has seen some sweeping talent take over its dining rooms in 2010. Here's my list of my favorite restaurants of the year, some new and others long-standing favorites.

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#### Austin's Best Restaurants of the Year: 2010



follow-along map?

#### 1 Uchiko



4200 N Lamar Blvd, Austin, TX 78756 (map)  
At this sister location to Uchi, you can expect the same impeccable service in a setting where everything is markedly bigger. North Lamar's Uchiko has a big lounge and bar area, dining room that looks out into the sprawling open kitchen equipped with a long sushi bar area with front row seats to Executive Chef Paul Qui and his uber-talented team (and a private dining room that anchors the back space). The innovative menu is a creation of Tyson Cole's chef de cuisine, Paul Qui; standouts include the Bacon Sen, a Berkshire pork belly and the Suzuki Yaki, a whole grilled loup de mer. The extensive wine list has selections by the glass and bottle and a stellar cocktail menu includes a sparkling wine concoction made with grilled thyme and a cured lemon. Bonus: they take reservations.



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#### 2 Bartlett's



2408 W Anderson Ln, Austin, TX 78757 (map)  
This is the same national chain franchise--Houston's--newly named and improved after original owner Tim Bartlett bought this franchise. Bartlett has kept most of the menu items the same, but he's now preparing them with locally sourced ingredients and Chef Arik Skot Williams uses herbs and other ingredients from his garden in his recipes. The atmosphere is warm and clubby with a front row view to the open kitchen.

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#### 3 Diner 24



W 6th St & N Lamar Blvd, Austin, TX 78703 (map)  
The chef is trained in New York at the Culinary Institute of America and there's an onsite sommelier and beer specialist, so you shouldn't really call this a diner. Menu items are made with locally sourced and premium ingredients, with standouts that include the juicy Texas roasted chicken and the fried chicken and waffles made with bourbon butter, raw sugar and topped with Grade A dark amber Vermont maple syrup. Service is fast, efficient and flawless.



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#### 4 The Carillon



1900 University Ave, Austin, TX 78705 (map)  
Chef Josh Watkins is turning out culinary masterpieces at this restaurant on the University of Texas campus, where and you can expect to rub elbows with UT alumni, Texas Longhorn football players and foodies in the vast dining room that has been recently renovated to include an intimate bar and lounge area. Try the olive oil poached chicken, tenderloin and the braised beef short ribs. The wine list is solid and a full-service bar turns out well-crafted classic cocktails.

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#### 5 Aquarelle





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**5**  606 Rio Grande St, Austin, TX 78701 ([map](#)) [Read Reviews](#)  
 You know it as the little yellow house, tucked just off West 6th Street. There's a reason it's been around for more than 10 years and table reservations are hard to come by; the folks at this French cuisine-inspired establishment are the friendliest around. It's not just a special occasion restaurant, but their wine bar and patio features an easy-on-the-wallet happy hour and nightly \$50 dinner for two.


**6**  **Lambert's Downtown Barbeque** [map](#) [Read Reviews](#)  
 401 W Second St, Austin, TX 78701 ([map](#))  
 The sign outside says fancy barbecue, but the kitchen turns out much more inside the doors of the Historic Schneider Brothers building. While the natural beef brisket and fall-off-the-bone country style short ribs make the mark, the cold smoked rainbow trout and broiled gulf oysters are stars on the menu. Don't miss the family-style sides of green chile cheese grits and the brussel sprouts in bacon and brown butter. And we haven't even gotten to the desserts. .. Save room!

**7**  **Whole Foods Market** [map](#) [Read Reviews](#)  
 525 N Lamar Blvd, Austin, TX 78703 ([map](#))  
 No, seriously--this is a secret hidden restaurant gem. Inside the flagship store resides five sit-down eateries. Standouts include 5th Street Seafood and the Northside Trattoria. Grab a bottle of wine (retail-priced, no corkage fee) and the chefs cook your meal fresh with the store's ingredients. Did I mention they serve you and there's no tipping?

**8**  **Vespaio** [map](#) [Read Reviews](#)  
 1610 S Congress Ave, Austin, TX 78704 ([map](#))  
 The line flows out the door and reservations are not accepted after 6:30pm—yes, there's a reason this South Congress Avenue staple for Italian dining is running stronger than ever. Vegetables and herbs from their outdoor garden provide key ingredients for handmade pasta dishes, seafood specialties and not-to-be-missed antipasti selections. Service and atmosphere are second to none.

**9**  **Foreign & Domestic** [map](#) [Read Reviews](#)  
 306 E 53rd St, Austin, TX 78751 ([map](#))  
 Sit at the bar that overlooks an open kitchen and ooh and aah over show-stoppers like the Richardson Farms pork belly and the parsnip and ginger soup finished with bowfin caviar. Don't forget an order of the melt-in-your-mouth gruyere popovers and check on the seasonal specials.

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