

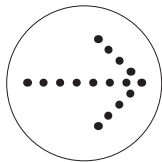


The bar at the 21 Club

Galatoire's

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA
209 Bourbon Street, 504-525-2021, galatoires.com

One of the traditions at Galatoire's, in the French Quarter, is that the menu stays the same. Indeed, this grande dame of New Orleans restaurants has been serving French Creole dishes since 1905—and that's just the way folks like it (including celebrated playwright Tennessee Williams, who called Galatoire's his favorite place to dine). Waiters, some of whom have been here for more than two decades, are on a first-name basis with many customers; regulars can put the dinner bill on their tabs. Locals and tourists alike appreciate the tiled floors, the 19th-century chandeliers and polished brass accents, but the real draw is the traditional fish dishes—oysters Rockefeller, shrimp rémoulade and trout amandine—not to mention the banana-bread pudding.



Tried-and-true favorites

It's time to revisit those classic restaurants that have been wowing you—and your clients—for more than 25 years.

By Jill Fergus

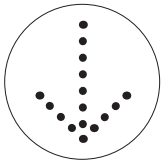
When you take clients to lunch or dinner during a business trip, it's tempting to book a table at the latest hot spot—but you never know how the experience will turn out, and often you (and the people you're trying to impress) can be left disappointed. But there's an alternative to the untasted: Dine at one of those places that's been around for more than 25 years, and take pride in the fact that very little—from the menu to the staff—has changed. These classics have not only survived but thrived for any number of reasons, from location, food and ambience to, perhaps most important, excellent customer service. On your next sojourn to the following cities, consider these restaurants that have stood the test of time.

Laurel Court

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA
950 Mason Street, 415-772-5000, fairmont.com

Everyone knows the Fairmont—this Nob Hill landmark is perhaps San Francisco's most celebrated hotel, and its restaurant, the Laurel Court, is certainly a classic. Visitors can't help but be awed by the striking design: large crystal chandeliers, Corinthian marble columns, a wraparound mural and tiled floors, all topped with three ornate plaster-and-gold leaf ceiling domes. The eatery has long been a meeting spot for the city's movers and shakers, who know the staff will take care of their every need—little wonder speaker of the house Nancy Pelosi is a regular. Executive chef James Pedro's menu is rich in California-inspired dishes, and the wine list includes local labels from the Napa and Sonoma Valleys.





Other classics

Dan Tana's

9071 Santa Monica Boulevard
Los Angeles
310-275-9444
dantanasrestaurant.com

For almost 50 years, this L.A. legend has been serving up Italian fare to everyone from Hollywood legends to up-and-coming stars.

Joe's Stone Crab

11 Washington Avenue
Miami
305-673-0365
joestonecrab.com

Started by Joe Weiss in 1913 as a small lunch counter, his namesake restaurant takes up a full city block (but it still doesn't take reservations).

Metropolitan Grill

820 Second Avenue
Seattle
206-624-3287
themetropolitangrill.com

Steak lover's emporium in downtown Seattle.

Olde Pink House

23 Abercorn Street
Savannah
912-232-4286

Located in a pink-hued building dating from 1771.

Old Ebbitt Grill

675 15th Street
Washington, D.C.
202-347-4800
ebbitt.com

This 1856 classic with a Victorian design has served up American fare to a roster of greats from Teddy Roosevelt to Bill Clinton.

21 Club

NEW YORK, NEW YORK
21 West 52nd Street,
212-582-7200, 21club.com

A row of painted cast-iron jockeys greets customers at this former speakeasy and beloved Manhattan institution. A who's who of the business, political and entertainment worlds has dined in the restaurant's clubby, wood-paneled Bar Room, whose ceiling is covered with toy planes and other memorabilia donated by customers. Expect American standards on the menu, including Caesar salad, burgers and steaks.

Regulars have their own tables, and many families have made a tradition of celebrating birthdays and anniversaries here. The most coveted table is the one in the historic wine cellar, where former mayor Jimmy Walker often had a few drinks during Prohibition and which is entered via a brick-wall "door." Despite its formal atmosphere, the restaurant recently rescinded its jacket-and-tie requirement for men.

L'Espalier

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS
774 Boylston Street, 617-262-3023, lespalier.com

Diners are in for a treat at L'Espalier, the elegant French restaurant opened by New Hampshire-born chef-owner Frank McClelland last fall (it moved from its long-time location in a Back Bay townhouse). Known for stellar service and the intimate atmosphere of its three dining rooms, this is an ideal spot for important business dinners, especially in the Library and Crystal rooms. Choose from the three-course prix fixe

Clockwise from right: in the kitchen at Morton's; jockeys at the 21 Club; Morton's steak; bread pudding with banana sauce at Galatoire's; front door of Galatoire's



menu, the four-course seasonal degustation or the extravagant chef's tasting menu, and expect dishes such as veal sweetbreads, scallops with saffron couscous and macaroni and cheese with black shaved truffles. Your sommelier can help navigate the wine list and make pairing suggestions.

Morton's

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
1050 North State Street, 312-266-4820,
mortons.com

There are dozens of branches of Morton's all over the country, but for many fans, the best is still the original on North State Street, which opened its doors in 1978. The basement setting, with its brick walls and dark wood, is reminiscent of a private club. Over the years, the menu has rarely changed, and the old-school waiters remember which cuts of meat customers prefer—whether it's the filet mignon or the double porterhouse (carved tableside), the New York sirloin or the slow-roasted prime rib. And just as beloved are the calorie-rich side dishes, like creamed spinach, mac 'n' cheese and hash browns. Regulars can purchase and store their wine in one of the restaurant's 54 wine lockers. **EI**