

His iconic black cod with miso helped Nobu Matsuhisa build a global empire.



20TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

hall of fame

50 best new chefs

We love all of our Best New Chefs from the past two decades, but these 50 exemplify four different kinds of success stories: as entrepreneurs, hometown heroes, creative visionaries or one-restaurant monogamists. **by jane sigal**

ENTREPRENEURS

From a sushi star with 21 restaurants worldwide to a bread mogul-turned-pizza expert, these nine chefs have used their talent to build empires.

daniel boulud, '88

His exquisite dishes first got attention at New York City's Le Cirque. Now Boulud has six restaurants of his own from Manhattan to Las Vegas that represent every register of French cooking: superrefined dishes at his flagship palace, Daniel; foie gras-stuffed hamburgers at DB Bistro Moderne; and the I-must-be-in-France wine-focused Bar Boulud. The Boulud brand even extends to rapturous dinner parties; his Feast & Fêtes

is one of New York's top caterers. **FAMOUS DISH** Café Boulud's chilled five-pea soup (for a simplified version, see recipe, p. 114). danielnyc.com.

nobu matsuhisa, '89

Iconic sushi chef Nobu Matsuhisa's 21 Nobus and Matsuhisas in 15 cities around the world sprang from a single Beverly Hills storefront, where he experimented with raw fish using influences from China (stir-frying, chile paste), France (clarified butter, tartare) and Latin

America (jalapeños, tacos). When loyal patrons refused to let him renovate the original, dowdy Matsuhisa, he opened a flashy, David Rockwell-designed spot down the street. **FAMOUS DISH** Nobu's black cod with miso (for a simplified version, see recipe, p. 120). noburestaurants.com.

todd english, '90

English's roots may be in Massachusetts, but his empire of gutsy Med restaurants, including Olives and Figs, now encompasses 18 spots in nine cities. His latest frontier is airports: There's a Bonfire steak restaurant at both Logan

in Boston and John F. Kennedy in New York, with more planned for Las Vegas and Chicago. **FAMOUS DISH** Olives' fig-and-prosciutto flatbread (for a simplified version, see recipe, p. 118). toddenglish.com.

nancy silvertown, '90

Silvertown began baking the now-ubiquitous La Brea Bakery bread in Los Angeles in 1989, then sold most of the company in a \$79 million deal. Having helped stimulate America's desire for artisanal bread, she's moved on to fulfill L.A.'s insatiable desire for Italian food. She serves creamy buffalo mozzarella at

Jane Sigal is a Food & Wine contributing editor based in New York. She is researching a book on Paris wine bars.

PHOTOGRAPHS: EIICHI TAKAHASHI FOR NOBU BY SHIBATA PUBLISHING CO. LTD. (BLACK COD); STEVEN FREEMAN (MATSUHISA); VICTORIA PEARSON (KELLER)

Osteria Mozza and puts it on the chewy charred pies at Pizzeria Mozza, both opened with partners Mario Batali and Joe Bastianich, but there will be more Mozza bars soon. **FAMOUS DISH** Osteria Mozza's Caprese, with burrata and roasted tomatoes. mozza-la.com.

tom colicchio, '91

Before he was the head judge on *Top Chef*, Colicchio cooked at and co-owned Manhattan's premier farm-to-table spot, Gramercy Tavern. Then he pioneered mix-and-match mains and sides at the 10-year-old, ingredient-driven Craft, also in New York City. More recently, he's rolled out the dressed-down Craftbar, the 'Wichcraft sandwich kiosks and Craftsteak,

with outposts in Dallas, Las Vegas and Los Angeles. Colicchio's legacy includes the seminal cookbook *Think Like a Chef*. **FAMOUS DISH** Craft's braised short ribs (for a simplified version, see recipe, p. 122). craftrestaurant.com.

terrance brennan, '95

Brennan, with help from fromager Max McCalman, first introduced New Yorkers to handcrafted cheese at his Med-influenced town-house restaurant, Picholine. Then he opened Artisanal, a sprawling bistro and fromagerie with 250 varieties from around the globe, and Artisanal Premium Cheese Center, a 10,000-square-foot aging complex that sells perfectly ripened specimens to home cooks, shops and

BEHIND THE SCENES

lee hefter, '98 Hefter might not have the name recognition that his business partner, Wolfgang Puck, does. But he's a major force behind their restaurants and catering business—and a great cook, who creates the menus at the rarefied Austrian-inflected flagship, Spago, and the American CUT steak house. Hefter also oversees Puck's three superaccessible franchises, including WP Express (in 21 states). **FAMOUS DISH** Spago's corn and mascarpone agnolotti. wolfgangpuck.com.

restaurants. Brennan branches out to Chicago this fall with Artisanal Bistro & Wine Bar. **FAMOUS DISH** Picholine's red snapper with black olive tapenade (for a simplified version, see recipe, p. 122). artisanalcheese.com.

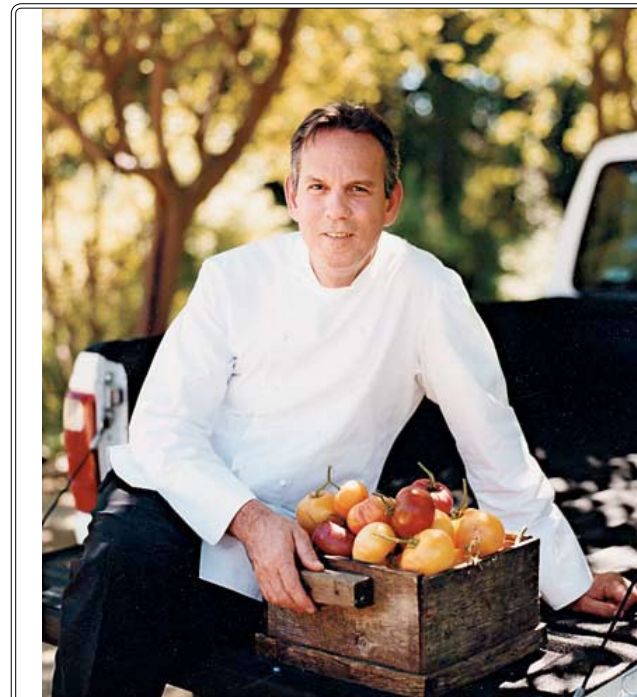
laurent tourondel, '98

French chef Tourondel found fantastic success reinventing the classic American restaurant. His

BLT group—short for Bistro Laurent Tourondel—began with a haute steak house, quickly followed by BLT Fish, BLT Fish Shack, BLT Prime, BLT Burger and the seasonal *épicerie*-restaurant BLT Market (all in New York City), with BLT Steak locations in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and Washington, DC. **FAMOUS DISH** BLT Steak's double-cut sirloin with garlic confit. bltrestaurants.com.

thomas keller, '88

At cooking demos, Keller quips, "You can ask me anything—except how to get a reservation at the French Laundry." He is the one American chef worshipped by the world's best cooks for his complex, whimsical food at Napa Valley's French Laundry and Manhattan's Per Se. His burgeoning number of bistros—Bouchon, Ad Hoc and Bouchon Bakery—have improved the chances of getting a Keller table somewhere. And his *French Laundry Cookbook*, which repopularized the coffee table chef's cookbook, has made it possible to eat Keller's food at home. **FAMOUS DISH** French Laundry's cornet of salmon tartare (for a simplified version, see recipe, p. 116). frenchlaundry.com.



HOMETOWN HEROES

Not all chefs want to open in Vegas. Some stay loyal to the cities that launched their careers, opening two (or three, or four) terrific restaurants there.

susan spicer, '89

Yes, Spicer's home base is a 200-year-old Creole cottage in New Orleans's French Quarter, and her 2007 cookbook is called *Crescent City Cooking*. But the people of New Orleans adore her for giving the city something beyond gumbo at the globally oriented Bayona. At Herbsaint and her artisanal bakery, Wild Flour Breads, Spicer finds special inspiration in Italy. **FAMOUS DISH** Bayona's grilled shrimp with black bean cake. [bayona.com](#).

celestino drago, '93

"The only things my family bought were sugar and salt," says Sicilian-born Drago about their cooking-from-scratch ethic. Los Angeles locals can't get enough of the stewed boar at his flagship Italian restaurant, Drago—he's a passionate hunter—or the regional cooking at Celestino, Il Pastaio and elegant wine bar Enoteca Drago. **FAMOUS DISH** Drago's pappardelle with roasted pheasant. [celestinodrigo.com](#).

michael cordúa, '94

Nicaraguan-born Cordúa nudged Houstonians past their burrito habit 18 years ago with chimichurri-basted

beef at Churrascos. His seven Latin-inspired restaurants now include the perpetually packed, high-end Américas, decorated with Inca motifs, and the swank, self-serve Amazón Grill. **FAMOUS DISH** Churrascos's charcoal-grilled beef tenderloin. [cordua.com](#).

gale gand & rick tramanto, '94

At Tru, culinary team Gand and Tramanto gave Chicagoans an excuse to dress up with dishes like the Caviar Staircase: each glass step bearing roe or caviar. Recently, they debuted a clutch of casual places—a surf-and-turf spot, an *osteria* and a coffee bar. **FAMOUS DISH** Tru's not-your-usual lemon meringue pie (for a simplified version, see recipe, p. 120). [trurestaurant.com](#).

traci des jardins, '95

Des Jardins focuses on sustainability at all three of her restaurants in San Francisco. Her Cal-French place, Jardinière, emphasizes seasonal produce from local farmers. As a consulting chef at Acme Chophouse, she ensures the kitchen uses only hormone-free



suzanne goin, '99

One of Los Angeles's best chefs is also its green ambassador—Goin is fanatical about local and organic ingredients. She riffs on Med classics at Lucques and at A.O.C., her chic wine-and-small-plates spot. She and husband David Lentz also serve sustainable seafood at the cheeky raw bar the Hungry Cat. **FAMOUS DISH** Lucques's suckling pig with risotto carbonara. [lucques.com](#).

beef. In the Ferry Building, Mijita serves Mexican street food prepared with as many organic items as she can find. **FAMOUS DISH** Jardinière's scallops with mashed potatoes and truffles. [tracidesjardins.com](#).

clifford harrison & anne quatrano, '95

Harrison and Quatrano are exceptionally good at sourcing the ingredients they use at their three terrific New Southern restaurants in Atlanta: Bacchanalia, Quinones and Floataway Cafe. Happily, many of the products, like Painted Hills rib eye and semolina-rosemary bread, are for sale at their **FAMOUS DISH** Floataway Cafe's *tagliattini* with white shrimp. [starprovisions.com](#).

michael schlow, '96

For years, Schlow has impressed Bostonians at both his fancy Asian-French Radius and the Italian Via Matta. Now, with Alta Strada in Wellesley, he's brought his top-notch Italian cooking to the suburbs. **FAMOUS DISH** Alta Strada's *chitarra* pasta with spicy lobster. [viamattarestaurant.com](#).

john besh, '99

More than ever, the cooking at Besh's New Orleans flagship, August (he also owns Besh Steakhouse and brasserie Lüke), leans toward Louisiana and the produce he grows at his restaurant La Provence, north of town. **FAMOUS DISH** August's chopped salad (for a simplified version, see recipe, p. 118). [restaurantaugust.com](#).

paul kahan, '99

Until Kahan opens his beer-focused place in the Fulton Market, Chicagoans are delighted to wait at his side-by-side restaurants: minimalist Blackbird, where he and Mike Sheerin cook French-Midwestern dishes, and the cedar-paneled wine bar Avec, where Koren Grieson (an F&W BNC 2008, see p. 248) serves Mediterranean tapas. **FAMOUS DISH** Blackbird's bouillabaisse. [blackbirdrestaurant.com](#).

marc vetri, '99

Vetri famously reduced the number of seats at his *alta cucina* Vetri to 35 to make room for a 1958 Faema Urania coffee machine and Berkel model 21 (circa 1948) meat slicer. So Philadelphians cheered last year when he opened a pizza and *salumi* spot, Osteria, to accommodate Vetri's extra customers. **FAMOUS DISH** Vetri's spinach gnocchi. [vetri-ristorante.com](#).

michael leviton, '00

For nine years, Leviton persisted in doing one thing well (unapologetic French food) in one place (Lumière in Boston). Then the chef opened the locally sourced, ingredient-focused restaurant Persephone in the Achilles Project, a food-and-fashion mecca. **FAMOUS DISH** Lumière's seared sea scallops with peas, pea sprouts and mint. [lumiererestaurant.com](#).

hugh acheson, '02

At Five & Ten in Athens, Acheson mixes Georgia's best ingredients—country ham, grits ground by mule power—with Old World Parmigiano and quince paste. In 2004 he launched Gosford Wine nearby, and in 2007, he unveiled the National, where he serves small plates made with low-country products. **FAMOUS DISH** Five & Ten's flounder with peanut beurre blanc. [fiveandten.com](#).

nobuo fukuda, '03

Fukuda introduced Scottsdale, Arizona, to *izakaya*, Japanese tapas-style cooking, at Sea Saw. He recently revamped the place to offer only *omakase*, the exquisite experience of letting a chef create a multicourse meal. *Izakaya* lives on next door at Fukuda's bar, Shell Shock. **FAMOUS DISH** Sea Saw's tomatoes with handmade mozzarella and grilled octopus and wasabi aioli. [seasaw.net](#).

david myers, '03

Sona was Myers's first, swank Los Angeles restaurant with a menu of minimalist, Japanese-inflected French dishes. Next he launched pastry at Boule *pâtisserie*. Most recently, though, he's become expert at brasserie stalwarts at Comme Ça. **FAMOUS DISH** Sona's marinated big-eye tuna with eggplant marmalade. [sonarestaurant.com](#).

colby garrelts, '05

After cooking stints in New York City and Chicago, Garrelts headed back to Kansas City, Missouri, to ramp up his hometown's dining scene by opening the urbane, ingredient-obsessed Bluestem. In 2006, Garrelts expanded next door with Bluestem Wine Lounge, offering cured meats on the simple menu. **FAMOUS DISH** Bluestem's scallops with carbonated grapefruit. [bluestemkc.com](#).

cathal armstrong, '06

Dublin-born Armstrong, a one-man urban-renewal engine, kicked off a dining revival in Alexandria, Virginia, using French technique and local produce at Restaurant Eve. Next came Eamonn's Dublin Chipper, which combines fish-and-chips with drinks at upstairs PX. Last year, Armstrong revitalized the classic American menu at the landmark Majestic. **FAMOUS DISH** Restaurant Eve's pork belly confit. [restauranteve.com](#).

barbara lynch, '96

Lynch's food empire doesn't even cross Boston's Charles River. No. 9 Park, in a Beacon Hill mansion, serves French-Italian combinations. In the South End, her seafood counter, B&G Oysters, and market-restaurants, the Butcher Shop and Plum Produce, give shoppers access to chef-quality ingredients. **FAMOUS DISH** No. 9 Park's prune-stuffed gnocchi. [theno9group.com](#).



PHOTOGRAPHS: AARON COOK (LUCQUES), GREG NIESES (B&G OYSTERS)

VISIONARIES

Driven by an idea—organics, avant-garde equipment, the ultimate pork bun—these men and women have inspired countless other chefs.

david bouley, '89

Twenty years ago, Bouley first introduced the country to New American classics like tomato water and organic ingredients. Today the Manhattan-based chef is still innovative, staging experimental Japanese cooking demos at his Test Kitchen and seamlessly combining market-driven dishes with sushi at his tiny restaurant Upstairs. **FAMOUS DISH** Bouley's honey-glazed duck with cabbage (for a simplified version, see recipe, p. 124). davidbouley.com.

gray kunz, '93

Anytime you spot chiles and kaffir lime leaves on a fancy American menu, you can probably thank Kunz. At Lespinasse, the phenomenal cook dazzled with his Asian-fusion cooking, the product of training in Singapore and Switzerland. Kunz's plans for the future: taking his small-plates lounge, Grayz, and haute brasserie, Café Gray (closing soon), beyond New York. **FAMOUS DISH** Café Gray's short ribs with Meaux mustard. grayz.net.

wylie dufresne, '01

After establishing an avant-garde food frontier on Manhattan's Lower East Side at 71 Clinton, Dufresne set up his immersion

circulator a block away to create his own eccentric place, WD-50. Every visiting chef in New York invariably stops in to check out Dufresne's amazing menu. **FAMOUS DISH** WD-50's eggs Benedict with cubes of hollandaise sauce coated with English muffin crumbs. wd-50.com.

grant achatz, '02

At Chicago's Alinea, Achatz has almost singlehandedly forged an American version of Spain's experimental molecular cooking that's both thought-provoking and delicious. Using stabilizers, centrifuges and other gadgets, he creates dishes like liquefied caramel corn. (For a profile of Achatz, see p. 90.) **FAMOUS DISH** Alinea's Hot Potato, Cold Potato: potato soup with a needle-pierced potato ball. alinearestaurant.com.

dan barber, '02

Barber's farm-to-table ethos is extreme: He's even published an opinion piece in the *New York Times* about the Farm Bill. He also opened a branch of his Manhattan restaurant Blue Hill at the Stone Barns Center in Westchester, New York, to help support the nonprofit farm and education center, and to be close to the Berkshire pigs, heritage chickens and

vegetables on his menu. There, in a refurbished dairy barn, Barber spotlights his pristine ingredients. **FAMOUS DISH** Blue Hill's carrots with toasted spices. bluehillstonebarns.com.

maria hines, '05

Seattle-based Hines is so hyperlocal that she once designed a geographically circumscribed diet, using the Columbia and Snake rivers as rough boundaries. "My organic diet is a lot easier," she says. At Tilth, Hines obsesses over the best sockeye salmon, grass-fed beef and Puget Sound berries for her locavore

Pacific Northwestern menu. **FAMOUS DISH** Tilth's albacore tuna with deviled eggs and tomatoes. tilthrestaurant.com.

david chang, '06

In 2005, Chang put the miniscule, extraordinary Asian-accented Momofuku Noodle Bar on everyone's New York must-visit list. Now customers vie for seats at his Ssäm Bar, with its namesake caramelized pork butt *bo ssäm*, or go online to compete for one of the 12 seats at Momofuku Ko, his ingenious set-menu spot. **FAMOUS DISH:** Noodle Bar's steamed pork buns. momofuku.com.



rick bayless, '88

Bayless's monomania for Mexico is one reason American home cooks appreciate chiles and the diversity of Mexican cooking. He helped start the trend at Frontera Grill and Topolobampo, in Chicago, and with his six cookbooks and six seasons of the PBS series *Mexico—One Plate at a Time*. **FAMOUS DISH Frontera Grill's shrimp with tomatillo salsa. fronterakitchens.com.**

PHOTOGRAPHS: TIM TURNER (SHRIMP), BARBARA KRAFT (ALEX)

MONOGAMISTS

Concentrating their efforts at a single restaurant—at least for now—these chefs are dedicated to making their places as perfect as they can be.

gordon hamersley, '88

Red Sox fan Hamersley (all of his cooks wear baseball caps) has been preparing exquisite French comfort food at his Boston restaurant for the past 21 years. While he cooks in the open kitchen, his wife, Fiona, runs the dining room and picks the wines, just like the husband-and-wife team at La Ville de Sienne in Nice, the model for Hamersley's Bistro. **FAMOUS DISH** *Poulet rôti* (roast chicken). hamersleysbistro.com.

gary danko, '89

San Franciscans might be laid-back, but when they want to celebrate, they promptly book a table at the singular Gary Danko. The chef's sumptuous modern French restaurant has caviar service, suit-and-tie servers and a jeweler's-style case for the farmhouse cheeses. This fall he'll be opening a more casual French place in Ghirardelli Square. **FAMOUS DISH** Risotto with lobster and rock shrimp. garydanko.com.

allen susser, '91

Twenty-two years ago, Susser helped define New World food with his South Florida sensibility at Chef Allen's in Miami. He has remained faithful

to his only restaurant but does let his Caribbean-Latin-European tastes spill over into other projects, including *New World Cuisine* (one of three cookbooks he's written), a line of chef's sauces and even a mango cutter. **FAMOUS DISH** Pistachio-crust black grouper. chefallens.com.

daniel patterson, '97

Patterson focuses on one restaurant at a time, beginning with Babette's in Napa, California, then Elisabeth Daniel and now Coi in San Francisco. His obsession is scents, which he cleverly works into his compelling menu, even serving dishes with atomizers full of essential oil. (See his essay on p. 149.) **FAMOUS DISH** Asparagus panna cotta with coconut milk and makrut lime. coirestaurant.com.

ron siegel, '99

On the original *Iron Chef*, Siegel proved so adept at using Japanese ingredients that he defeated a Japanese master. He still adds Asian touches (yuzu gelée, satsuma mandarins) to his French menu at San Francisco's Dining Room at the Ritz-Carlton. He also plays with individual ingredients, such as salt or pepper, making them



alessandro stratta, '94

In Las Vegas, where his mentors Alain Ducasse and Daniel Boulud have outposts of their empires, Stratta runs the kitchen at a single restaurant, Alex. His Côte-d'Azur preferences—instilled by an Italian father and French mother—clearly shape his flawless menu. **FAMOUS DISH Braised short ribs with potato gnocchi. wynnlasvegas.com/alex.**

the theme of an eight-course tasting menu. **FAMOUS DISH** Spot prawn sashimi with yuzu—and—pink peppercorn gelée. ritzcarlton.com.

fabio trabocchi, '02

When Trabocchi took over the kitchen at restaurateur Stephen Hansen's Fiamma in New York City in 2006, the word *osteria*, which denotes informality, was dropped from the name of the restaurant. Indeed, Trabocchi's Italian cooking is unrepentantly intricate, marked by indulgences like langoustines and white truffles. **FAMOUS DISH** Duo

of wagyu beef as both carpaccio and tartare. brguestrestaurants.com.

stuart brioza, '03

Since arriving in San Francisco in 2003, Brioza and his partner, pastry chef Nicole Krasinski, have been preparing some of the city's best and cleverest food at the wine-driven Rubicon. Brioza expertly weaves elements from the Mediterranean through his American menu. (For a story on Brioza's peach obsession, see p. 100.) **FAMOUS DISH** Morel and toasted rye bread soup. sfrubicon.com.

hall of fame

50 best new chefs

gabriel kreuther, '03

Kreuther has made a pair of restaurants at the Museum of Modern Art two of Manhattan's best places to eat. The chef brings his native Alsatian sensibility to the seasonal French food in both the Dining Room, an elegant restaurant overlooking MoMA's sculpture garden, and the casual, small-plates Bar Room, where the specialties include creamy bacon-topped tarte Alsatian. **FAMOUS DISH** Pastry-wrapped squab and foie gras. themodernnyc.com.

shea gallante, '05

Gallante's cooking could easily have been upstaged by his restaurant's 150,000-bottle wine cellar, but the David Bouley-tutored chef proves his gastronomic gravitas at Manhattan's clubby Cru. Using a kitchen full of cutting-edge equipment, Gallante prepares a global menu that's both stunning and experimental. **FAMOUS DISH** Langoustines with celery leaf-shiso salad. cru-nyc.com.

daniel humm, '05

Shortly after becoming a Best New Chef at San Francisco's Campton Place, the Swiss-born Humm was tapped by New York restaurateur Danny Meyer to take over Eleven Madison Park's soaring dining room. Humm's precise, rarefied French-American menu there

shows off his bent for reimagining classic flavor pairings. **FAMOUS DISH** Black truffle-stuffed poached chicken. elevenmadisonpark.com.

lachlan mackinnon-patterson, '05

Mackinnon-Patterson was drilled in the French tradition at Jamin in Paris and the French Laundry in Napa Valley. He has won

fame, however, at Frasca Food and Wine in Boulder, Colorado, for interpreting the little-known, regional cuisine of northern Italy's Friuli-Venezia-Giulia. His frequently changing menu is inspired as much by what's in the wine cellar as what ingredients are in season. Staff bonus: The Frasca crew travels to Italy together each summer to

creatively refuel. **FAMOUS DISH** *Frico caldo* (cheese and potato crisp). frascafoodandwine.com.

tony maws, '05

Maws developed a passion for the farm-raised and the locally grown at an obscure Michelin one-star, Larivoire, outside Lyon, France. At Craigie Street Bistrot, his tiny basement restaurant in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with maroon banquettes and Eartha Kitt on the playlist, Maws makes almost everything on the tightly edited, new-every-night menu from scratch—including charcuterie and pickles. **FAMOUS DISH** Spanish octopus with chorizo sauce and fresh hearts of palm. craigiestreetbistrot.com.

douglas keane, '06

Lespinasse and Gary Danko alum Keane created his own old-world ethic when he launched Cyrus in the Sonoma town of Healdsburg, California. Under vaulted ceilings of waxed Venetian plaster, servers parade a pre-dinner Champagne trolley and, in season, baskets of truffles (Keane has a weakness for them). His future plans include taking over a local Sonoma hangout, Healdsburg Bar & Grill, and opening a butcher shop. **FAMOUS DISH** Thai-marinated lobster with avocado and mango. cyrusrestaurant.com. ●

Johnny Monis, '07

*By cutting the seats at Washington, DC's Komi by about a third—from 64 to 38—Monis lavishes his guests with the kind of attention he must have received from his Greek grandmother. On his avant-garde Med-inspired menu, he transforms her rabbit stew into exquisite roasted rabbit with rabbit broth. **FAMOUS DISH** Crispy Caesar: Liquid romaine-filled crouton with Caesar dressing. komirestaurant.com.*

