

TASTE Spotlight



Bernie's Lunch & Supper serves Mediterranean small plates in a breezy space designed by the powerhouse firm 555 International.

Detroit Import

now open

A MOTOR CITY RESTAURANT GROUP TAKES ON THE WINDY CITY WITH **BERNIE'S LUNCH & SUPPER.**

When Zack Sklar of the Detroit-based restaurant group Peas & Carrots Hospitality was developing his first Chicago concept, he knew he had to bring his A-game. "We love Michigan," he says, "but people in Chicago are more adventurous with cuisine." Now Sklar is sharing his culinary creativity with the Windy City at the newly opened Bernie's Lunch & Supper. Named after Sklar's grandfather and designed by the powerhouse Chicago firm 555 International (Embeya, Girl & the Goat), the River North restaurant beckons with exposed brick, cozy camel leather chairs, and a pop of color in turquoise banquettes, plus a menu of Mediterranean-inspired small plates like lamb hashwi (a hummus dish made with lamb and lamb fat) and pickled mussels with goat cheese, jalapeño, and basil. Says Sklar, "It's been exciting to come to another city, share what has always been important to my family, and pay homage to my grandfather." 660 N. Orleans St., 312-624-9892; bernieslunchandsupper.com **MA**



COOL JERKY

Jerky has long been considered a humble convenience-store staple, but Chicago native Ricky Hirsch is turning that notion on its head. With **Think Jerky**, he has worked with chefs like Gale Gand and Matt Troost to create an all-natural alternative in flavors such as Thanksgiving (with free-range turkey and cranberries). "Jerky is high-protein and low-sugar but has never been considered cool," says Hirsch. "We've modernized it, rebranded, and taken it from junk food to health food." Available at Mariano's; thinkjerky.com

SWEET SURPRISES

With the approach of the holidays, two of Chicago's top bakeries are offering sweet alternatives to typical seasonal desserts. Logan Square's **Bang Bang Pie & Biscuits** (2051 N. California Ave., 773-276-8888; bangbangpie.com) puts a creative twist on the classics with pies like sage pumpkin-seed brittle, apple crumble with salted rosemary caramel, and pecan with goeey chocolate. And at Lincoln Square's **Baker Miller** (4610 N. Western Ave., 312-208-5639;

bakermillerchicago.com), sweets lovers will find a variety of confections, including frozen take-and-bake buttermilk biscuits and sourdough cinnamon rolls; custom cookie tins featuring butter cookies made with butter cultured in-house and Russian tea balls crafted with freshly milled soft pastry flour; and a butterscotch pie filled with a from-scratch whiskey and smoked salt butterscotch custard and topped with a house-made oatmeal cookie crust.



Baker Miller puts a whole-grain spin on bars, cookies, and other pastries.

TRUFFLE TIME

During a fleeting six-to-eight-week season each autumn, coveted white truffles from the Italian town of Alba make their way onto the menus of the city's most discerning dining destinations. At River West's **Piccolo Sogno**, chef Tony Priolo has grand plans to serve them two ways: by shaving a generous seven grams of the truffle over either a simple tagliolini with butter or a white risotto, and by serving a truffle-infused sunny-side-up egg (soaking the egg in white truffle overnight) over pasta. Still, Priolo wants to keep things simple. Says the veteran chef, "I try to utilize truffles in their purest form so customers can enjoy and experience the taste." 464 N. Halsted St., 312-421-0077; piccolosognorestaurant.com