

Guide

FAMILY FUN
Cirque Musica
debuts in
Frisco

Splendors of the Sea



LESLIE BRENNER
APPLAUDS BIG D'S
FINEST FISH SPOTS

MOVIES: BRAD PITT BATTLES ZOMBIES IN 'WORLD WAR Z'

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Ora King salmon at Driftwood; see critic Leslie Brenner's picks for The Best in DFW: Seafood Restaurants on Page 26.

Photo by Evans Caglase/Staff Photographer

Design by Marilyn Bishkin/Staff Designer



File 2010

My assignment simply said, "For Best in DFW: Seafood, we'd like beauty shots of Omar Flores' gorgeous seafood dishes." (You can find Leslie Brenner's Best in DFW story on Page 26.) Omar Flores is the chef at Driftwood in Oak Cliff. I love to photograph food. I really love seafood. This was going to be a good afternoon. The assignment was scheduled before the restaurant would open; that helped, since I wouldn't have to worry about people tripping over lights or cables. The room is very light and bright, too bright for the photos. I decided to bring in my lights instead. That would give me total control and help with contrast. Food photos benefit from directional light. After getting set up, I was ready for the plates. I always tell the chef I would rather wait on the food than have the food wait on me. I want everything to look as fresh as possible when it gets in front of the camera.

Evans Caglase
Staff photographer

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Contributing editors: Cathy Barber, Leslie Brenner, Laura Schwed, Leslie Snyder

Production editor: Amy Burt

Copy editors: Kim Oglethorpe, Joy Tipping

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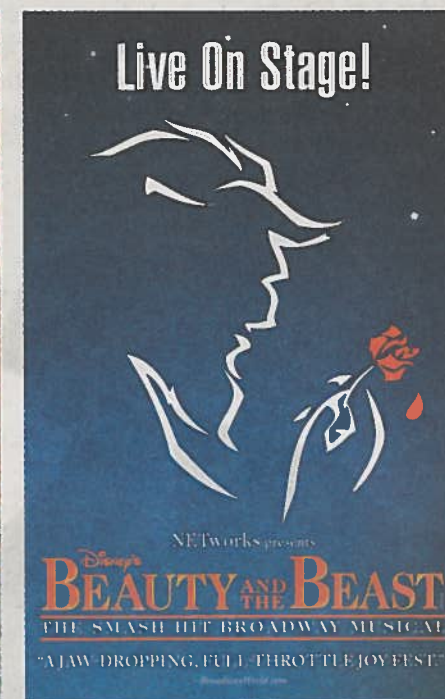
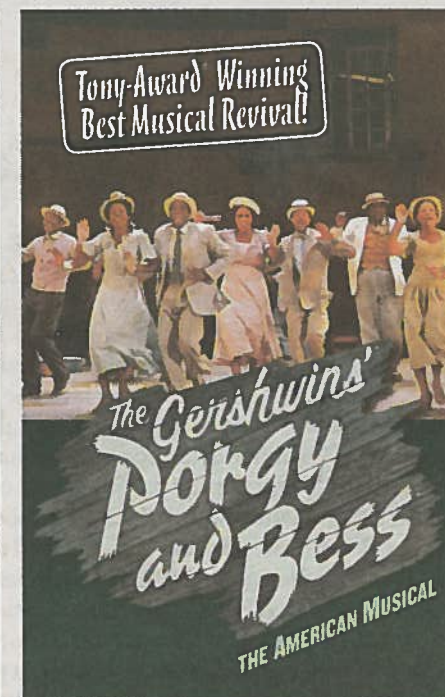
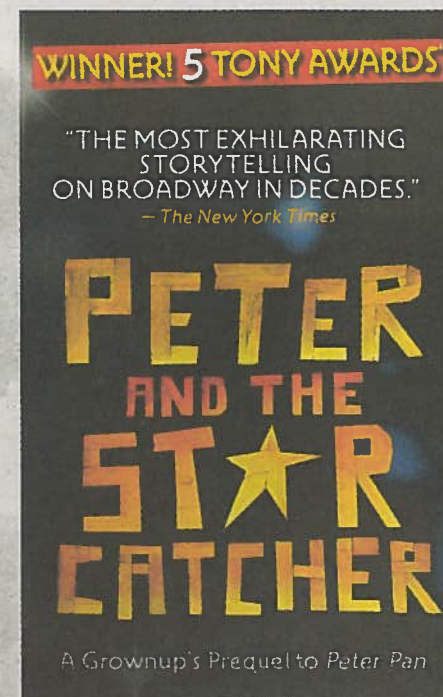
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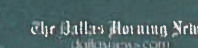
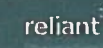


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DINING



Smoked sturgeon
and eel headcheese
at Spoon Bar and Kitchen

Allison Slomowitz/Special Contributor



Seafood spectacular

Leslie Brenner reels in Dallas' top spots for fish

By **LESLIE BRENNER**
Restaurant Critic
lbrenner@dallasnews.com

In the last couple of years, Dallas has fallen head-over-heels in love with seafood. In the past 15 months, five significant seafood restaurants have debuted here — including three so impressive

For more dining options, go to
GuideLive.com/restaurants

they've made it onto this list of best seafood restaurants in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

Our love of seafood extends further than dining rooms dedicated to fish. The general quality of seafood we're finding in all kinds of restaurants has improved immensely, with much more variety than ever before. Remember when it was hard to find places offering more than just scallops, farmed salmon and maybe overfished Chilean sea bass? Now you find incredible selections of North Atlantic oysters in casual French bistros, charred octopus in laid-back gastropubs, wild salmon at the height of its season in all kinds of spots from Bishop Arts to Plano to Fort Worth.

And what you find in dedicated seafood restaurants can be even more remarkable.

Two of the newcomers are in a different league from the others on this list: Driftwood and Spoon Bar and Kitchen. Far more ambitious than the others, they're both chef-driven, featuring incredibly creative and forward-looking takes on the greatest treats our oceans have to offer. Not only are they far and away the best seafood restaurants in Dallas; they're two of the best *restaurants* in Dallas.

Do we have room to grow? Is there room for more ambitious, creative, interesting seafood spots? Certainly. A number of the restaurants on this list keep it very simple, and do their thing well, but I'd love to see more invention, and it wouldn't surprise me if we do before very long.

Surely you have your own favorite spots for fish. Please turn to Page 29 to learn how to tell us about them.

In the meantime, I'm thrilled to present, in alphabetical order, The Best in DFW: Seafood Restaurants.



Twin Maine lobsters at Lefty's Lobsters



Smoked sturgeon
and eel headcheese
at Spoon Bar and Kitchen

Allison Slomowitz/Special Contributor

By **LESLIE BRENNER**
Restaurant Critic
lbrenner@dallasnews.com

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Alaskan halibut
with ramp pistou
at Driftwood

Evans Caglage/Staff Photographer

Driftwood

"Our goal is to be the best seafood house in Dallas." That's what Driftwood owner Jonn Baudoin told me last June, a couple of months after he opened his breezy Oak Cliff restaurant with chef Omar Flores in charge of the kitchen. Well, mission accomplished. Flores' cooking, impressive from the start, has absolutely taken off; his plates are stunning. Dinner might start with a tartare of yellowtail dressed up with kumquat and a hit of Serrano chile, topped with avocado-lime ice cream. Alaskan halibut, beautifully seared and served on a vivid ramp pistou with fava beans, fiddlehead ferns, baby shiitake mushrooms and a silken smoked potato purée, makes a splendid main course. If soft shell crabs or King salmon are in season, Flores no doubt has something wonderful planned for them, too. Then they'll be gone, replaced by whatever catches Flores' fancy next. Driftwood's plates are formal, yet not fussy, with prices that are gentle for cooking of this caliber.

■ 642 W. Davis St., Dallas. 214-942-2530.
driftwood-dallas.com.

Flying Fish

Shannon Wynne's mini-chain is the best of its genre: casual, order-at-the-counter gulf-centric seafood spots with kooky fishing-theme decor. It also heats out casual.



File 2012/Staff Photo