

DINING | CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK

Beef tongue agnolotti with seared halibut cheeks, asparagus purée and sauce vierge, from Driftwood



Ben Torres/Special Contributor



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Omar Flores, formerly of Abacus, revels in the chance to create seafood dishes at Driftwood.

Catch a rising star

Meet six chefs who are changing the Dallas restaurant scene

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

Omar Flores. Jason Maddy. Jonathan Rivera. Michael Ehlert.

A year ago, you probably hadn't heard of any of these talented young chefs. Today they're heading some of Dallas' most talked-about restaurants.

With 36-year-old Maddy in charge of its kitchen, Oak — the quietly sexy Design District restaurant — was an instant hit, a tough reservation even before it garnered a four-star review. Maddy's cooking is refined and somewhat formal, as in slices of raw fluke fashioned into rosettes and accented with rose petals and pickled radish, or a terrine of beets and horseradish-spiked fromage blanc that's at once slippery and voluptuous. In the winter, Maddy set slices of roasted duck breast over Puy lentils and bathed it all in a rich burgundy sauce; now he's serving the magret with sunchokes, baby leeks and a foie gras flan.

There's a serious résumé behind



Eve Edelheit/Staff Photographer

Jason Maddy's refined, somewhat formal cooking has drawn diners to Oak in the Dallas Design District.

See **MEET** Page 5E

CONCERT REVIEW

Coldplay unleashes color, catharsis

By **MARIO TARRADELL**
Music Critic
mtarradell@dallasnews.com

It looked like Christmas in June. A sea dotted by multicolored lights. Showers of fluorescent lasers. A spherical screen of swirling rainbow shades. A deluge of pastel-hued confetti.



TELEVISION REVIEW

HBO's 'Newsroom' is unquestionably Sorkin

By **CHRIS VOGNAR**
Movie Critic
cvognar@dallasnews.com

The Newsroom

9 p.m. Sundays, HBO. 75 mins.

In *The Newsroom*, HBO's new series premiering Sunday night, a jaded cable-news anchor played by Jeff Daniels has a public meltdown,

Wing. He's also his own man, which is what lands him in hot water.

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The Coldplay show Friday night American Airlines Center was e of the most colorful and exhilar- ating concert performances I've er seen. Chris Martin, Will ampion, Jonny Buckland and y Berryman delivered nearly two urs of passionate and accessible y rock that teetered between



Kye R. Lee/Staff Photographer

Lead singer Chris Martin was unbridled energy during the first of Coldplay's two nights at the American Airlines Center.

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In *The Newsroom*, HBO's new series premiering Sunday night, a jaded cable-news anchor played by Jeff Daniels has a public meltdown, starts speaking truth to power and leads his hyper-articulate crew to glory and heartbreak. Already you can trace the show's lineage: journalism movies and series creator Aaron Sorkin.

Daniels' Will McAvoy is part Howard Beale, the "mad prophet of the airwaves" from *Network*, and part President Bartlet, the idealistic commander in chief of Sorkin's *The West*

Wing. He's also his own man, which is what lands him in hot water.

A moderate Republican disgusted with the radical bent of his party, a gruff manager tired of coasting along on ratings, he wants to buck his industry and commit some actual journalism on his evening news show, *News Night*. Naturally, not everyone is pleased.

Labeled a liberal by the *New York*

See **'NEWSROOM'** Page 10E

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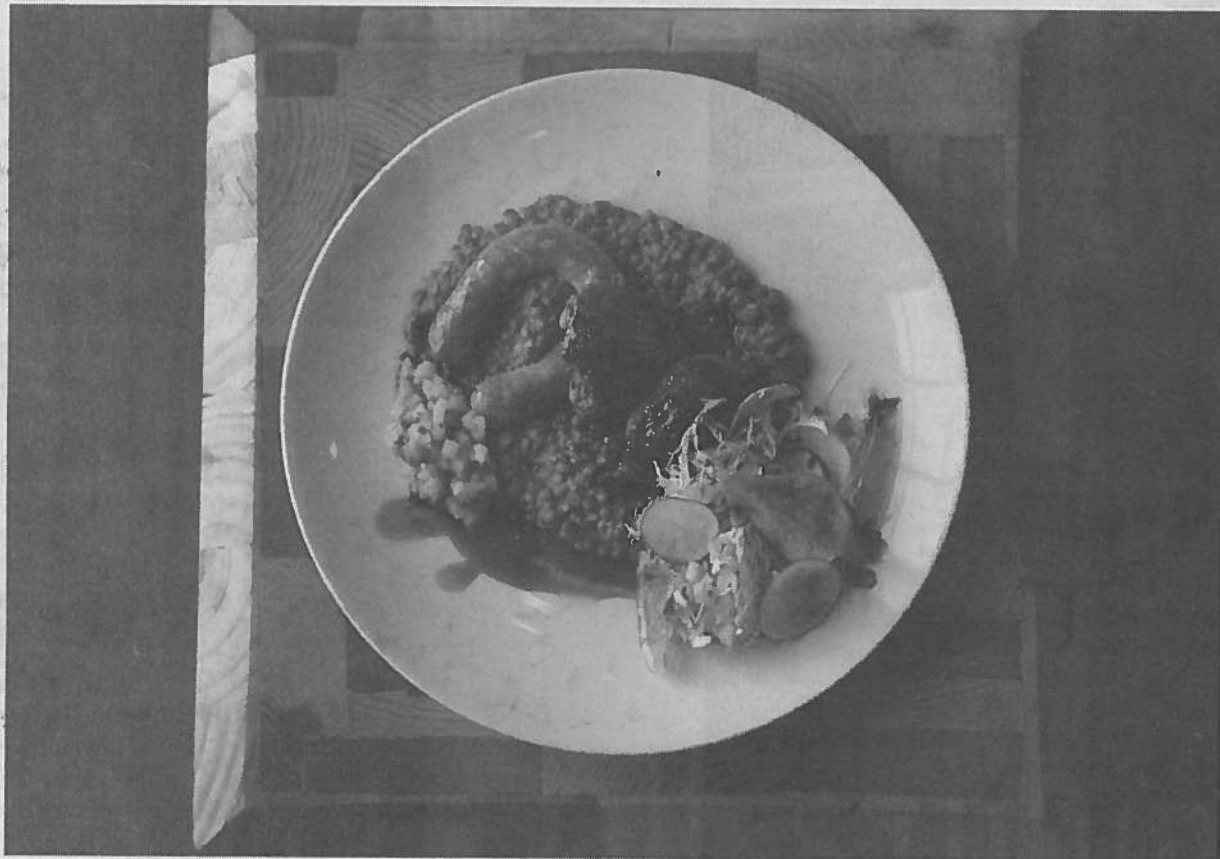
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Meet Dallas dining's new faces



Kye R. Lee/Staff Photographer

Pear cider-braised pork cheeks with pear mostarda from chef Michael Ehlert at Campo Modern Country Bistro

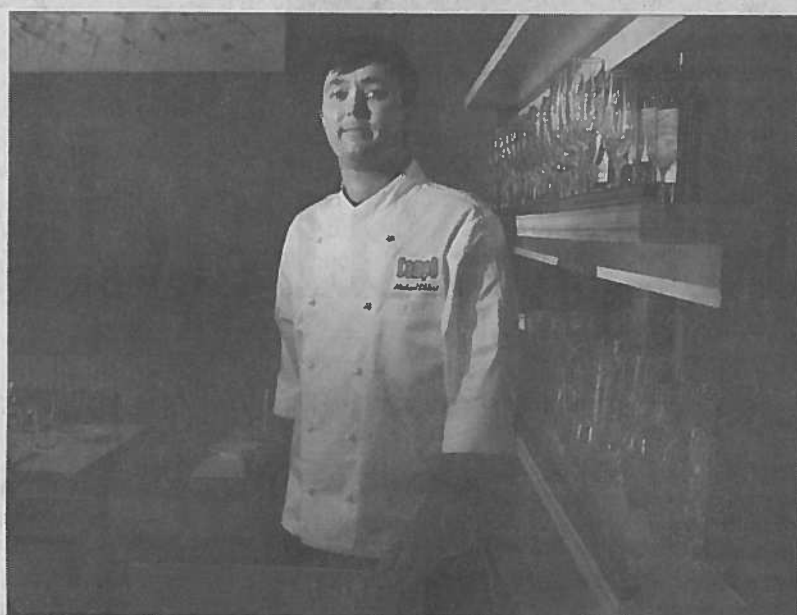
Continued from Page 1E

the range and vision that expresses itself on the plates at Oak. A native of Grants, N.M., Maddy came of culinary age in New York, where he graduated from the Culinary Institute of America and spent years working with renowned chef David Bouley at Danube. With Bouley (and later with chef David Bull, with whom he worked at the Driskill Hotel in Austin), Maddy had the opportunity to travel the world, which shows in his plates. More recently, he was chef de cuisine at the Mansion Restaurant.

Around the same time Oak opened, the owners of the Chesterfield, which was a soon-to-open bar downtown, stunned the city's dining cognoscenti by bringing on board its own pedigreed chef. Like Maddy, 31-year-old Ehlert is a CIA grad who landed an important position with one of New York's top chefs — Ehlert was sous chef at Daniel Boulud's DBGB Kitchen and Bar. At the Chesterfield, Ehlert's baby artichokes barigoule and superb roulade of chicken seemed like escapees from an elegant white-tablecloth establishment.

Now, as executive chef at Campo Modern Country Bistro in Oak Cliff, his cooking is somewhat more relaxed, as in a smoked tomato and soft leek compote enriched with Cabrales blue cheese and topped with toasted almonds, with croutons for dipping. Or pear cider-braised pork cheeks served with a lovely little frisée salad and pear mostarda (a sweet Italian-style condiment). Ehlert serves as pastry chef, too. Lately I loved his crepes with Texas peaches and blueberries and house-made cream cheese ice cream.

Campo's is not an ambitious menu (in fact, recently I found it a little thin), but it definitely exemplifies a kind of laid-back sophistication we're seeing more and more around Dallas — the kind of cooking you find at places like Bolsa and Cedars Social. In Dallas, the serious neighborhood restaurant has finally come of age.



Kye R. Lee/Staff Photographer

Ehlert of Campo Modern Country Bistro delivers the laid-back sophistication we're seeing more of in Dallas.

"It makes for a very farmer-friendly type of deal," Johnson says.

Las Colinas

Cafe on the Green at Four Seasons Dallas at Las Colinas isn't at all a neighborhood restaurant, obviously. But while its menu certainly caters to the wishes of a steak-and-chop-demanding clientele, its new chef de cuisine, 29-year-old Rivera, cooks with enough imagination, panache and skill to bring a measure of sophisticated fun to the table along with the rack of lamb.

Dishes like seared ahi tuna topped with a warm salad of green beans, fennel, radish and orange, or "chicharrón shrimp," plump prawns coated in pork cracklings and panko and fried hot and crisp, recently earned him a four-star review. I can't help but wonder whether the Puerto Rico-born chef, who has been with the Four Seasons since November 2009, will soon want to stretch his wings; I can so easily see him heading a more personal, neighborhood restaurant.

That's pretty much what happened with Flores. The 32-year-old El Paso native, who spent five years

seafood while studying at the CIA. His roommate was from Gloucester, Mass., and the two frequently bopped around New England on fishing trips.

When he heard that Jonn Baudoin was seeking a chef for Driftwood, the seafood-centric Oak Cliff restaurant Baudoin was preparing to open, Flores jumped at the chance to meet him. The clientele at Abacus, he says, was pretty single-minded. "They want a steak on their plate. Seafood is a hard sell there."

Thus you can expect the unexpected at Driftwood, which opened two months ago. It might be wheelks: sea snails served in their beautiful, cone-shaped shells, the plate streaked with cilantro pistou. Or a nest of house-made black pepper linguini laced with shaved asparagus and topped with lobes of sea urchin roe. Both were recent specials. "I get bored of seeing the same stuff on the menu," Flores says.

That makes two of us — or probably more like hundreds of us.

With this new generation of chefs shaking things up all over town, my guess is that none of us will be bored for long.

On Twitter: @lesbren

Michael Ehlert, 31

Executive chef at Campo Modern Country Bistro

After graduating from the Culinary Institute of America, Ehlert worked at top kitchens in New York, including Daniel Boulud's DBGB Kitchen and Bar. Last year he moved to Dallas to open the Chesterfield downtown, where he earned a three-star review for his sophisticated dishes. At Campo, where he does double-duty as pastry chef, his cooking is more relaxed, as in pear cider-braised pork cheeks with pear mostarda.

Campo Modern Country Bistro, 1115 N. Beckley Ave., Dallas. 214-946-1308. campodallas.com.

Omar Flores, 32

Executive chef at Driftwood

Also a CIA grad, Flores, a native of El Paso, spent close to three years running the kitchen at Abacus as executive sous chef. Having cultivated a great love of seafood while fishing and traveling around New England with his CIA roommate, a Gloucester native, he jumped at the chance to try out for the top toque job at Driftwood, a new seafood-centric restaurant in Oak Cliff. But you won't find fried calamari at Driftwood — more like sautéed wheelks with cilantro pistou or black pepper linguine with sea urchin and shaved asparagus. Flores handles pastries himself, too.

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



Brad Loper/Staff Photographer

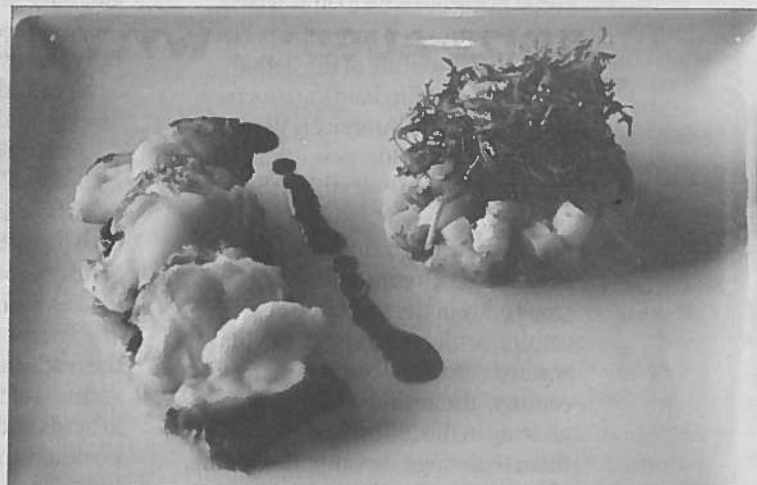
Colleen O'Hare and Jeana Johnson are behind Acme F & B.

Jeana Johnson, 34, and Colleen O'Hare, 38

Executive chefs and co-owners at Acme F & B

You probably know them as the chefs behind Good 2 Go Taco and Goodfriend Beer Garden and Burger House. Three-week-old Acme is the team's first fine-dining restaurant, or as they put it, "come-as-you-are fine dining." On the menu: Dungeness crab and grapefruit gratin, skate wing with green garbanzos, savoy cabbage and soffrito. The duo has put in place a "whole animal allocation," meaning they'll purchase, say, a whole pig, use the lesser cuts for tacos and burgers at Good 2 Go and Goodfriends, and the finer cuts at Acme.

Acme F & B, 4900 McKinney Ave., Dallas. 214-443-0003. acmefandb.com.



Eve Edelheit/Staff Photographer

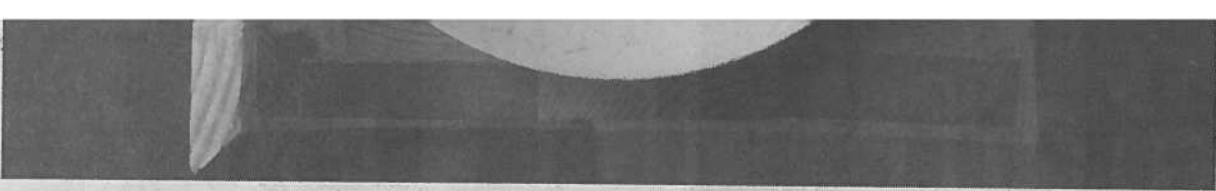
Rhode Island monkfish at Oak

Jason Maddy, 36

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Oak, 1628 Oak Lawn Ave., Dallas. 214-712-9700. oakdallas.com.



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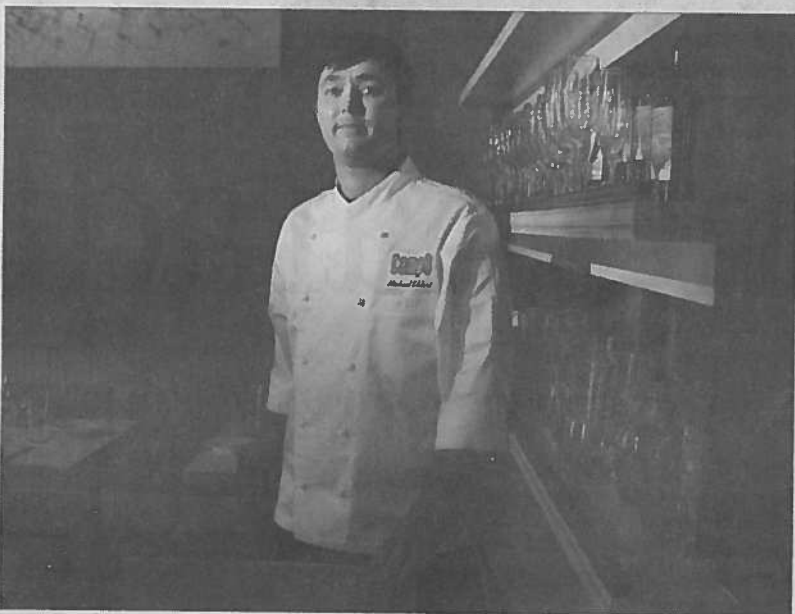
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Acme F & B

Almost as if to put an exclamation point on that fact, Colleen O'Hare and Jeana Johnson recently opened Acme F & B, where their American menu strays happily from the safe and mundane. You probably had heard of O'Hare and Johnson last year if you're at all plugged in to the dining scene; their Good 2 Go Taco is almost a cult following. Acme is the duo's first fine dining restaurant — or rather, as they describe it, "come-as-you-are fine dining."

If you're looking for grilled ormed salmon, Acme's not for you. Here you'll find dishes like river alleye pike with summer succotash, skate wing with a sauté of fresh green garbanzos, savoy cabbage and soffritto, or "farmer's cut" meats. Farmer's cut? O'Hare and Johnson, who are 33 and 34 respectively, practice what they refer to as "whole animal allocation." In other words, as Johnson told me in a phone interview, they'll use a whole pig by serving the lesser cuts at Good 2 Go Taco and offer the finer cuts, as available, at Acme.



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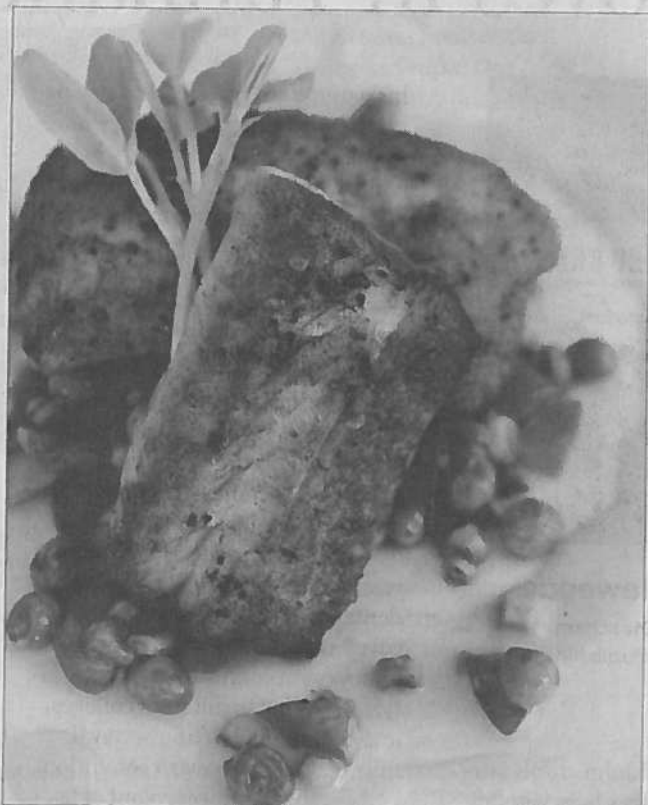
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On Twitter: @lesbren

Driftwood will be reviewed in this coming **Friday's Guide** section.



Brad Loper/Staff Photographer

Pike with summer succotash and beurre blanc at Acme F & B

urchin and shaved asparagus. Flores handles pastries himself, too. *Driftwood, 642 W. Davis St., Dallas. 214-942-2530. driftwood-dallas.com.*



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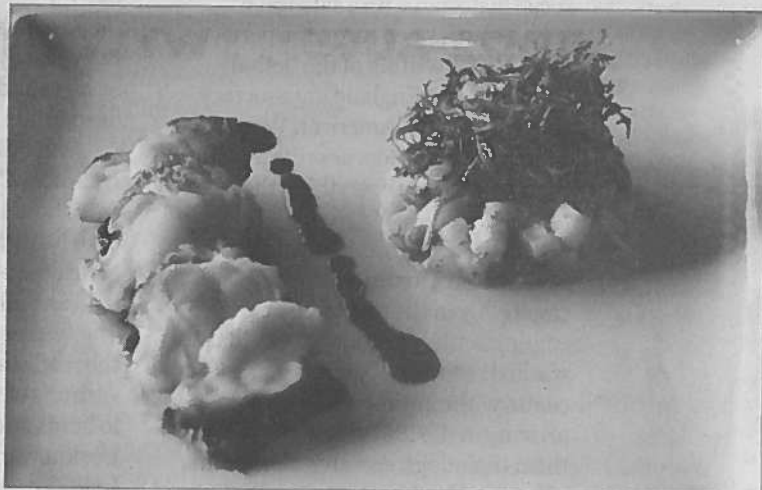
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Ben Torres/Special Contributor

Jonathan Rivera cooks with panache, imagination and skill.

Jonathan Rivera, 29

Chef de cuisine, Cafe on the Green at Four Seasons Dallas at Las Colinas

Puerto Rican-born Rivera was promoted to chef de cuisine in March, after spending the better part of three years cooking for the Four Seasons' smart dining room. Another CIA grad, Rivera spent five years in the kitchen at Four Seasons Hotel Houston before coming to Dallas. Rivera cooks with panache, imagination and skill. Dishes like "chicharrón shrimp" or seared ahi tuna topped with a warm salad of green beans, fennel, radish and orange recently garnered a four-star review for Cafe on the Green.

Cafe on the Green, Four Seasons Resort and Club Dallas at Las Colinas, 4150 N. MacArthur Blvd., Irving. 972-717-2420. fourseasons.com/dallas.

On Twitter: @lesbren