

# RESTAURANTS

most part, delicious. The just-mashed guacamole, popcorn with pumpkin seeds and chile essence, authentic Oaxacan cheese dip with fire-roasted chiles, and short ribs braised with mole on stone-ground corn grits are especially good. The dining room has a breezy, comfortable decor that hooks the right crowd. \$

**PURE TAQUERIA** 103 Roswell St., Alpharetta, 678-240-0023. Chris and Michele Sedgwick are on a roll. The owners of Van Gogh's and Theo's Bakery have had a lot of fun renovating an old Pure gas station and converting it into a groovy taqueria complete with garage doors and an adorable patio. Every night is a crush, with folks wolfing down authentic little tacos, fresh guac, and a downright fancy triple ceviche served in shot glasses with long plantain chips. Everyone from the kid servers to the bartender beams with goodwill. \$

**QUINONES AT BACCHANALIA** ★★ 1198 Howell Mill Road, 404-365-0410. There are only 38 seats in this restaurant, a small jewel of a room one floor below the famed Bacchanalia. The \$95 tasting menu features fine organic produce (some from the owners' family farm) and primo local ingredients. One can almost hear a pin drop in the intimate formal space, and the lights are kept purposefully low. In the kitchen, young Chef Drew Belline does everything he can to pay proper respect to the beautiful ingredients at his disposal. The menu changes on a weekly basis and reflects a delightfully unexpected Southern sensibility. \$\$\$

**REDFISH** 687 Memorial Drive, 404-475-1200. With this new Creole restaurant, the owner of the wildly successful Agave and his new partner are expanding their influence in the Grant Park/Cabbagetown area. Although both decor and menu conjure up some of the quintessential funkiness of New Orleans, Redfish has a long way to go before it can make a claim to authenticity. The deep, wildly flavored gumbo is possibly Chef Gregg Herndon's best dish, and his massive skillet-fried chicken with collard greens is great too. Concentrate on fresh seafood and Abita beer and you will enjoy yourself, but a better recipe for étouffée should be found before the Louisiana fans run out of patience. \$

**REPAST** ★★★ 620-C Glen Iris Drive, 404-870-8707. This young chef-run bistro embedded in the trendy world of lofts is almost certain to charm. The sensibility is more Sundance than Hollywood, and the tight, partially subterranean space looks jazzy and intimate. Macrobiotic specials, Euro-style small plates, and entrees such as muscovy duck breast with escargot confit and red wine risotto are appropriately fashion-forward, and the kitchen is run with passion. Flirty types will love hanging out in the pocket-sized outdoor lounge, and the design crowd will approve of the modern decor. \$\$

**ROSA MEXICANO** ★★ 245 18th St., 404-347-4090. Guacamole prepared tableside in a traditional stone mortar is the big thing at this suave,

## CUISINE OF THE MONTH

# JAMAICAN

**ALL ISLAND CAFE** [4761 Memorial Drive, Decatur, 404-292-0106] You know it's good because this place is always jam-packed with Caribbean transplants. And Thursday through Saturday, the jerk chicken is made the traditional way—grilled outdoors!

**CALYPSO CAFE & GRILL** [58 Walton St., 404-589-0024] At this downtown spot, the spicy jerk wings are a perfect starter, and you shouldn't miss the hearty brown stew chicken, dark meat steeped in thick brown gravy.

**CHEF ROB'S CARIBBEAN CAFE** [5920 Roswell Road, Suite 117, Sandy Springs, 404-250-3737] Great food and a savvy atmosphere reign supreme at this new eatery tucked into a corner of a bustling strip mall. The jerk chicken and oxtails are amazing, and if you're lucky you'll dine when the ultra-spicy Caribbean blue crab stew (a soupy concoction bubbling over with bits of corn on the cob, crawfish, and an entire blue crab) is on the specials list. Try the homemade sorrel drink or perhaps a Jamaican martini.

**COZY'S JAMAICAN GRILL** [2743 Lavista Road, Decatur, 404-636-6060] Ambience often takes a back seat to flavor at authentic Caribbean spots, but that's not the case at this comfy and kitschy cafe. Sure, there are the usual dishes, but don't miss out on the curry shrimp or the yucca fries paired with a creamy dipping sauce. The homemade honey lemonade is a must-have, and there's live reggae on Friday nights.

**GOLDEN KRUST** [Four metro area locations, including 231 Peachtree St. (inside The Mall at Peachtree Center), 404-588-3828] Who knew that you could grab jerk chicken and oxtails to go? This "Caribbean bakery and grill" has some of the best beef, chicken, and shrimp patties in town. Be sure to save room for the buttery rainbow-colored pound cake.

**ONE LOVE DINER** [2641 North Decatur Road (in Suburban Plaza), Decatur, 404-373-2010] Rasta pasta (penne with veggies in a creamy sauce), Caribbean salad sprinkled with chunks of jerk chicken, and the curry goat are all winning options. The \$4.99 lunch specials are an unbeatable bargain.

**TROPICAL CUISINE** [4899 Old National Highway, College Park, 404-767-7421] Variety is the draw at this eatery whose extensive menu runs the gamut from curried tofu to curried chicken roti (chicken wrapped in flatbread). The yummy Alfredo jerk chicken pasta is a tasty twist on a traditional dish. Wash it all down with some homemade ginger beer.

—CHANDRA R. THOMAS



Chef Rob's jerk chicken