

## 8 off-the-radar restaurants we love

**Jason Q. Freed**

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We all know that some of the world's best restaurants are in New York, Chicago and San Francisco. The food scenes in these cities grab much of the spotlight, and deservedly so. They're churning out mega-talented chefs at lightning speed and providing culinary options that span the globe.

But what really impresses us are those of you who can compete on that level on a much smaller stage. To catch national attention, restaurants in these smaller, less-trafficked cities must really shine. Often these chefs are telling the story of their city through food, which makes dining at these restaurants a truly authentic experience.

So for the 2015 edition of RH's "Restaurants We Love," we salute chefs who have recently opened big-time restaurants in smaller markets. We avoided the bright lights—you won't find Wolfgang's newest steakhouse or Emeril's latest take on Creole. But we see Michelin stars in these folks' future. Most importantly, these restaurants are playing a major role in putting their hometowns on the culinary map.



## Galley & Garden

Birmingham, AL

**Opened:** October 2014

**Cuisine:** Modern American-French with southern influences

Check this place out: An absolutely beautiful Colonial building in Birmingham, AL, offering multifunction spaces with gardens in the front and back and a wide open kitchen. Hence the name.

Galley & Garden was the vision of Chef James Boyce and his wife, Suzan. James attended the Culinary Institute of America and worked under Daniel Boulud for six years at Le Cirque before winning a James Beard award for his cuisine at the Phoenician. The two brought in a world-class architect and a master craftsman to renovate the former Merritt House into a stunning partially open-air eatery.

The name Galley & Garden paved the way for the menu, for which Boyce tries to use every piece of produce from local farmers as well as much protein from the Gulf of Mexico. He serves Gulf Red Snapper four or five times a week, declaring it "such a pretty fish and beautiful to cook."

At Galley & Garden, Boyce and his team welcome diners looking for full meals, but also those looking for just drinks or appetizers. It was designed so those seated for dinner are secluded from private parties or happy hour patrons. You can sit inside or out on one of several patios, or congregate in the courtyard garden for an aperitif.

"We open at 11 a.m. and never close," Boyce says.

*Photo: Jeff Moore*

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