

Gerry Klaskala's Atlas completes the courtyard

Gerry Klaskala is at it again—the founder of Aria and Canoe is set to open his third restaurant, Atlas, this winter. Backed by Tavistock Group, the \$5 million, dinner-only restaurant will take up residence on the second floor of The St. Regis Atlanta with a second entrance from the Buckhead courtyard other foodie heavyweights, like Umri, Chops and King + Duke, already call home. And with Bill Johnson (you've seen his work around town at KR Steakbar, Bistro Niko and Aria) taking the design reins, we know Atlas will quickly become a jewel in Buckhead's restaurant crown. Here, Chef Klaskala gives us the lowdown on all things Atlas:

SB: I have to admit, I'm a bit surprised you're opening a hotel restaurant. What gives?

GC: All respect to The St. Regis, but everything we do is separate. Tavistock wanted this space, and it's a great spot, but it's a totally different look and feel than the hotel. We're really trying to create an out-of-hotel experience within a hotel—it's a very special restaurant.

SB: And how do you do that?

GC: Our menu will be constantly changing—we'll receive local produce daily—as opposed to many hotel restaurants that get lulled into always serving the same thing. And when you look at Atlas, you'll see this super-slick, super-glossy glass separating it from the hotel—the idea is that you're transitioning into this members-only club, like the lounges at the airport.

SB: And once you're inside, what will you find?

GC: Every sightline is a visual feast: the arched Venetian plaster ceilings, the columns, the walnut and brass bar, and the floating glass case that showcases after-dinner drinks, like cognac, single-malt scotch and single-barrel bourbon, in the same way purses might be showcased

at Chanel. This is not your grandfather's favorite restaurant; it has a real hipness to it. There's an explosion of colors, from the lipstick glossy walls to the artwork we handpicked from the principal of Tavistock's impressive personal collection. It's this real eclectic, curated look.

SB: Looking around, I see so many different seating areas. What's the best seat in the house?

GC: There are five seats at the main bar, another high top bar and an outdoor terrace with fire pits that are great for grabbing cocktails. Or you can cozy up in one of the nooks with overstuffed settees or in the library lounge, where there's this huge marble fireplace and tons of little conversation areas. Look at the books and art in there, too—everything has something to say about Atlanta.

SB: Tell me more about this outdoor terrace.

GC: You've got the lushness of the gardens, more fireplaces and an outdoor dining room. Essentially, everything inside is mirrored outside, except the incredible exhibition kitchen.

SB: Oh, that sounds exciting!

GC: Yes. So in the indoor dining room,



you're looking back at a dream chef's kitchen with every doodad and gizmo you could ever imagine. There's a large table that has the best view of the exhibition kitchen, and there's also a private dining room with another marble fireplace, state of the art A/V, and you have to walk through the kitchen to get there.

SB: Very cool. You must have the dream team assembled to run this beautiful place?

GC: Oh yeah. We handpicked everyone, including our Chef de Cuisine Christopher Grossman, who comes from Napa Valley's The French Laundry.

SB: Sounds like Atlas is going to be a winner.

GC: I think so. It's all about trying to create these little niches.

▲ A rendering of the Venetian-inspired dining room at forthcoming Atlas.

▼ Chef Gerry Klaskala.



Atlas
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www.atlasrestaurant.com

Holiday Happenings

'Tis the season for holiday parties, festive feasts and decadent desserts galore!

If the idea of hosting Thanksgiving dinner conjures up images of your head in the oven, don't miss the Thanksgiving Day buffet at Southern Art (\$67 for adults and \$32 for children), where traditional favorites, like cornbread stuffing, aged cheddar mac and cheese and pumpkin tarts reign supreme. Southern Art also hosts a Christmas Day brunch (\$67 for adults and \$32 for children) chock-full of Holeman & Finch breads, crab legs, a baked turkey carving station with cranberry jam, an omelet station and apple cobbler. www.southernart.com.

103 West is also hosting their annual Thanksgiving Day Tradition (\$72 adults,



▲ 103 West's Thanksgiving dinner spread.

\$35 children 6 to 12 years old), filling each table with a whole-roasted turkey, delicious trimmings and pastries and even the chef's turkey leftovers recipe. www.buckheadrestaurants.com/103-west

Pasta lovers rejoice! Pricci's December Regional Menu will feature holiday dishes from Chef Piero Premoli's childhood in Milan, including panettone (naturally!) and risotto with saffron and housemade Marsala. www.buckheadrestaurants.com/pricci/

Last-minute holiday guests? Head to Corner Café and Buckhead Bread Company and pick up delectable holiday desserts to go—we're partial to the chocolate toffee crunch pie and tiramisù Yule logs. www.buckheadrestaurants.com/corner-cafe

Perhaps nowhere else in town are the halls more decked than The Ritz-Carlton Buckhead—from their lavish Thanksgiving Brunch (\$109 per adult, \$59 per child) with more than 100 menu items to choose

from to Tea with Santa (\$59 per adult, \$52 per child ages 5 to 12; contact the hotel for specific dates) in the lobby lounge complete with live carolers; an à la carte Christmas Eve dinner; Christmas Day brunch (\$109 per adult, \$59 per child); and a New Year's Eve party (\$25 cover charge, waived for those who have dinner in The Café)—merriment and cheer are sure to be found around every corner. The festive decorations are spectacular. Think Christmas trees, custom wreaths, a children's letter-to-Santa writing station and an alpine train scene, modeled after Bavaria's famed Neuschwanstein Castle. www.ritzcarlton.com/en/Properties/Buckhead



Photo: Tyler Oxford

FIRST LOOK: SOUTHBOUND

It's been nearly six months since Southbound opened in Chamblee's folksy antique-shopping neighborhood, which is adjacent to Brookhaven. Here, we look at what's happening now at the industrial hotspot:

THE PLAYERS: An eclectic cast of characters make up the team at farm-forward Southbound—owners Mike Plummer, a Midwesterner with an unexpected background in construction and winemaking, and Dennis Lange, who hails from 5 Seasons Brewing and Yakitori Den-Chan, costar alongside dinner chef Ryan Smith (you may recognize him from Watershed) and wine director Maggie Meroney, who founded Atlanta's own Nectar Wine Consulting.

THE LOOK: Buckhead tends to be all about the newest, shiniest restaurants, but there's something to be said for buildings with a story to tell. Southbound calls a former Masonic lodge from the 1800s home, and it's got the exposed brick, train track views, industrial lighting and sweeping floor-to-ceiling windows to prove it!

THE FOOD: It's no surprise Southbound's fare has a Southern lilt—traditional, heavy plates of shrimp and grits make an appearance, as does a Fred Flintstone-sized short rib. But it's the fresh, reimagined dishes that truly shine. Go for the smoky wood-grilled octopus with green tomatoes or the cherry-glazed duck served over a bed of farro (farro cooked risotto-style, read: earthier than its conventional counterpart). Equally impressive: the wine list, which features hard to find natural wines (made with minimal chemical and technological intervention), such as Sicilian Frappato and Spanish Godello, at a price you can actually swallow.



▲ Southbound's shrimp and grits with crispy smoked pork belly, tomatoes, leeks and herbs.

▲ Southbound's wine list features under-the-radar, natural wines.

THE VERDICT: Southbound is truly a diamond in the rough in the underserved neighborhood of Chamblee, yet one that can hold its own with other Buckhead bigwigs.

Southbound
3394 Peachtree Road
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