

Readers Poll

Five of our Critics Picks (page 84) are star performers on your Ten Best list (at right), but five aren't. It's not hard to explain the divergence. Critics are jaded. We eat for a living, on someone else's dime. We seek innovation, originality, ambition. We admire chefs who experiment and push the boundaries of what's possible. Those priorities guide our perspectives on a restaurant. Most of you have different priorities. You seek hospitality, consistency, predictability. You value, well, value—after all, it's your money. Some of you are jazzed by what's new and different, but more of you are loyal to what works. There are foodies out there who sneer at readers' polls such as this. Though it inevitably reflects a wide and divergent set of tastes and expectations, it also incorporates a more holistic and down to earth set of standards, because it reflects the tastes of real diners. Pazzaluna, The Capital Grille, and Chambers Kitchen—three wildly different restaurants—are newcomers to the Top Ten. They alone are a great indicator of the diversity of opinion that makes up this survey. Thanks to Sarah Howard and a marvelous crew of interns for shepherding this massive undertaking. Please dig in.

—ADAM PLATT, DINING EDITOR

10 Best Restaurants (and how they ranked in other categories)

1. 112 Eatery

1st late night dining, 3rd comfort food

2. Kincaid's

1st bar menu, 3rd (tie) service, 3rd (tie) special occasion, 5th (tie) happy hour deals, 5th (tie) power lunch, 5th seafood

3. St. Paul Grill

1st power lunch, 3rd (tie) Twin Cities institution, 3rd view, 4th brunch, 4th dessert, 4th service, 4th special occasion, 4th wine list, 5th (tie) romantic, 5th (tie) steak

4. The Oceanaire Seafood Room

1st seafood, 3rd (tie) service, 3rd (tie) special occasion

5. Manny's Steak House

1st steak, 4th Twin Cities institution, 5th (tie) wine list

6. La Belle Vie

1st service, 1st special occasion, 1st wine list, 2nd French, 2nd romantic, 2nd creative cocktails, 5th dessert

7. Jax Cafe

2nd brunch, 2nd outdoor dining, 2nd service, 2nd special occasion, 2nd Twin Cities institution, 3rd romantic, 5th (tie) neighborhood restaurant, 5th (tie) steak

8. Murray's (tie)

1st Twin Cities institution, 3rd steak

Pazzaluna Urban Italian (tie)

2nd after-work scene, 2nd happy hour deals, 2nd Italian, 3rd bar menu, 3rd wine list, 5th creative cocktails

9. The Capital Grille

5th (tie) power lunch, 5th (tie) steak, 5th (tie) wine list

10. Chambers Kitchen

1st stylish atmosphere