

WHAT'S COOKING

BY SUZY BUCKLEY

Brave New Eateries



Fresh cool *choban*, above, and other Mediterranean delights at Pasha's, and a luscious 30-ounce bone-in ribeye at Prime One Twelve.



TOP: ERIC NANNAN; BOTTOM: ALISON PETERLIS

South Beach's next generation of eateries is a fresh backlash against the city's cornucopia of flash-in-the-pan, scene-cuisine haunts. While Nobu, Ago and Casa Tua remain this season's tough-reservation trifecta, newcomers from Ocean Drive to West Avenue are luring discriminating locals who dine out every night.

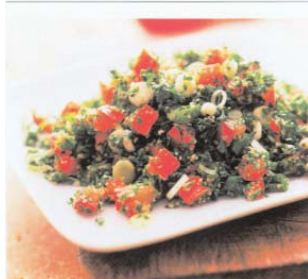
This month, Miami restaurateur Myles Chefetz (Nemo, Big Pink and Shoji Sushi) has made a bold move beyond Collins Avenue, debuting **Prime One Twelve** on Ocean Drive. According to Chefetz, the modern, new-American steakhouse—located within the reincarnated 9-room Browns Hotel—is a departure from “the standard frozen-creamed-spinach-in-a-bowl-and-smoking-meat-on-a-plate men’s club,” serving sides such as homemade tater tots and truffled macaroni and cheese as well as fresh seafood at the raw bar (112 Ocean Dr., 305-532-8112).

Oliver's, West Avenue's brand-new, bright and buzzing café, is what owner Hagen Taudt (former proprietor of Kaleidoscope in Coconut Grove and Charades in Coral Gables) calls “an unassuming corner bistro in a nice neighborhood.” The contemporary American menu includes raved-about dishes such as lamb shanks, wasabi-crusted salmon and Thai crusted curry at shockingly inexpensive prices: Most lunch items are under \$10, while dinner entrees run \$9-\$15. And don't let the block's copious construction scare you off. If you can't find a meter, \$1-an-hour parking is available at the garage next door (959 West Ave., 305-535-3050).

Parisian-born Privé VIP manager Freddy La-Grassa has ventured into entrepreneurship on Lincoln Road with his new **Mystic Café**, an African-inspired, candlelit “world tapas” bar and restaurant. Inspired by the size and style of those traditional Spanish delicacies, Mystic serves small plates of Japanese, French, Italian, Greek and South American favorites at \$4.50 a pop. In lieu of wine, consider ordering off the luscious 70-cocktail drink menu (639 Lincoln Rd., 305-695-9191).

A few blocks away, fast-food Mediterranean restaurant **Pasha's**—which started out as founder Antonio Ellek's class project at Harvard Business School—serves kebabs, salads and wraps healthy enough to satisfy even the strictest low-carb, low-fat and vegetarian diets. Among the *mezze* (pita bread appetizers) worth waiting in long lines for: spinach pies, *adje* (zucchini pancakes) and *lahmajin*, thin-crusted pizza with seasoned ground beef, finely chopped tomatoes, onions and bell peppers (900 Lincoln Rd., 305-673-3720; 3801 N. Miami Ave., 305-572-1150). 🍴

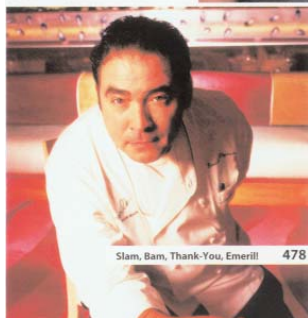
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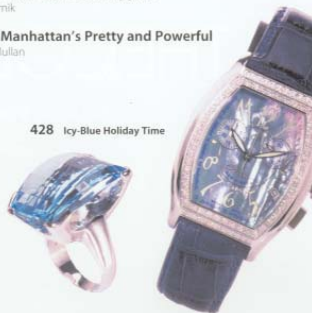
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