

Capitol Grille

Because they don't build places like this anymore, from the gargantuan oak banister that leads diners to The Hermitage Hotel's lower level, to the vaulted ceilings that crown the dining room, the Capitol Grille represents an end of the old-school era of fine dining.



Photo courtesy The Tennessean.

Thankfully, chef Tyler Brown brings diners forward with oysters on the half-shell, cut not with horseradish and lemon but by the tang of a yuzu mignonette. He'll add down-home favorites with delicious new twists, like luscious pork bellies with an apple napoleon and snapper with combread and succotash.

While he's no stranger to the strange chemistry of molecular gastronomy, chef Brown remains deeply rooted in comfort food, and pulls out those stops only when it makes sense. **The Hermitage Hotel, 231 6th Ave. N. (888) 888-9414**

—J.M.

Zola

Because even as Zola celebrates its 10th anniversary this year, and Deb Paquette her 30th as a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America, the restaurant remains fresh and exciting and Chef Paquette passionate and committed.

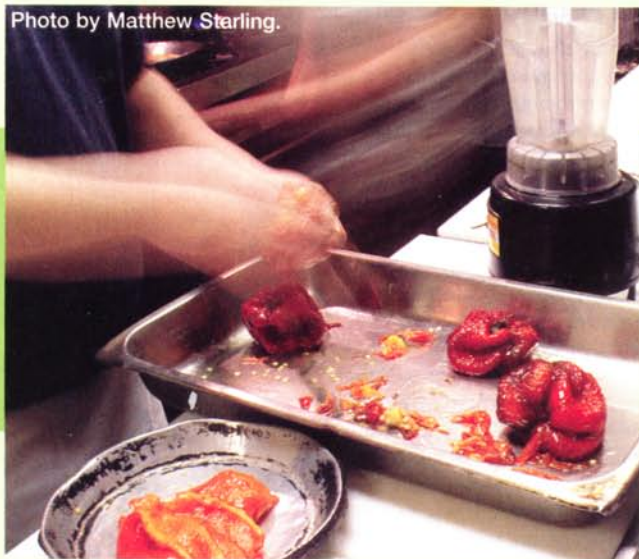


Photo by Matthew Sterling.

Few chefs capture the salty breadth of Mediterranean cuisine as well as Paquette, transporting diners to Morocco, Greece, Syria, Lebanon, Spain, France and Italy from her midtown kitchen. The dining rooms are washed in the rich hues of desert and sea, and adorned with sensuous fabrics and exotic accessories worthy of a troupe of belly dancers. Husband/partner/naturalist Ernie Paquette compiles an award-winning wine list, and when not leading a fishing expedition, guides diners

through vineyards of the world, with a particular focus on Spanish reds. Zola brings national recognition to Nashville's culinary credentials, thanks to write-ups in media heavyweights *Gourmet*, *Wine Spectator*, *Bon Appetit*, *The New York Times*, *City Magazine* and *Southern Living*. Because Deb and Ernie have traveled the globe, then brought it on home to share with us at Zola. **3001 West End Ave. (615) 320-7778**

—K.W.