

# LOOK WHO'S TALKING

BY LISA MARTIN  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ADAM FISH



## TAPAS OF THE TOWN *The hottest bite in the city? Just follow Stephan Pyles*

Celebrity chef Stephan Pyles is taking center stage. Again. In creating his 15th restaurant, which he named Stephan Pyles, the man credited with raising Southwest Cuisine to haute status designed a kitchen smack in the center of the dining room. In doing so, he has elevated the dining experience to the realm of entertainment: Patrons can gaze upon the glass "jewel-box" kitchen as he and his crew sauté the night away.

The Ross Avenue restaurant's opening in November ended a five-year hiatus from daily culinary duties for Pyles, who is still remembered by Dallasites wistful for Star Canyon. But the fifth-generation Texan wasn't slumming before this latest venture caught fire. Rather, the James Beard award winner, cookbook author and former TV host was cooking up concept restaurants such as Dragonfly

at Hotel ZaZa. "Naming the restaurant Stephan Pyles felt like an exercise in self-discipline," he says. "With my name on the door, I'm going to make sure I'll be here."

So most nights, expect to see Pyles whipping up what he calls "New Millennium Southwestern Cuisine," dishes that capture the flavors of Spain and Latin America; the restaurant's ceviche and tapas bar is a direct result of his extensive travels. Arabic and Mediterranean influences likewise abound. Even a few Star Canyon favorites have made it onto the menu: look for Tamale Tart, and the killer Heaven and Hell cake.

"I love anything with big, bold flavors right now," Pyles says. "I think America has fallen in love with big spicy flavors. It's like, no more wimpy food. No more bland cuisine." ■

**HOTS:** Tapas and Meze, Pisco Sours, viognier, Peruvian cuisine, the Euro, organic fresh-baked bread, the Spanish Riviera, spirituality, coaching, Bikram yoga **NOTS:** Overly large portions, Cosmos, chardonnay, Tex-Mex, the dollar, low-carb diets, the French Riviera, materialism, preaching, treadmill cardio