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Top New Restaurants



Samar leads
Leslie Brenner's
picks for 2009

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MONA REEDER/Staff Photographer

At Samar, Stephan Pyles draws on flavors of the spice route to create truly inspired dishes.

BEST NEW RESTAURANT

Samar by Stephan Pyles

When he opened Samar in early October, Stephan Pyles brought a measure of exotic allure to the Arts District at exactly the right moment: just as the AT&T Performing Arts Center was opening. The restaurant feels so exactly right for this moment: Stylish but never pretentious, it offers seductive small plates to share at modest prices, and gracious service at a level you'd expect in a much pricier dining room. The menu, which draws from Spanish, Eastern Mediterranean and Indian influences, is truly inspired. Pyles uses those spice-route flavors as a jumping-off point, and his dishes, such as endive-orange salad with fennel, pecan labne and sumac, or tandoori quail with nine-jewels rice, or a foie gras brûlée parfait with sherry-glazed figs and crisp jamón serrano, are transporting enough that you might just feel you've been swooped up and carried away on a swift Arabian horse to some romantic, faraway, delicious land.

2100 Ross Ave. 214-922-9922.
www.samarrestaurant.com.