

La Nicolasa

Chef Enrique Olvera at La Nicolasa, a grocery next to Nicos, one of his favorite places in Mexico City.

FOUR CHEFS, FOUR CITIES

YOU CAN READ A KINDLE'S WORTH OF GUIDEBOOKS, YELP YOUR WAY AROUND THE WORLD, AND PUT YOUR CONCIERGE ON SPEED DIAL, BUT YOU'LL NEVER GET BETTER EATING ADVICE THAN FROM A CHEF. WE ASKED THESE PROFESSIONAL FOODIES FOR THEIR FAVORITE LOCAL SPOTS. **BY HOWIE KAHN**



Olvera tucking into a hearty breakfast at Nicos.

MEXICO CITY ENRIQUE OLVERA

FOR THE SCOOP ON WHERE TO EAT IN THE DISTRITO FEDERAL, T+L CAUGHT UP WITH ONE OF THE CITY'S TOP CHEFS.

Renowned for modernizing Mexican cuisine with his signature restaurant, **Pujol** (254 Francisco Petrarca; 52-55/5545-4111; dinner for two \$145), Olvera is executive chef at the **Distrto Capital** (37 Avda. Juan Salvador Agraz; 52-55/5257-1300; dinner for two \$70) hotel. "I have enough fine dining at my restaurants," Olvera says, "so I head to more casual places when I go out." He suggests starting the day at **Nicos** (3102 Avda. Cuitlahuac; 52-55/5396-6510; breakfast for two \$50). "They use free-range eggs for their *huevos a la Mexicana* and *huevos montuleño*, plus all the most flavorful chiles: jalapeños, serranos, anchos." Lunch at **Azul y Oro** (3000 Insurgentes; 52-55/5622-7135; lunch for two \$60) is the next mandatory stop. "Ricardo Muñoz Zurita is perhaps the most important food scholar in Mexico. His duck empanadas with *mole negro* are amazing." For something more upscale, **Merotoro** (204 Amsterdam; 52-55/5564-7799; dinner for two \$50) serves Baja-style seafood. Don't miss: "The braised abalone," Olvera says.



Percebes (gooseneck barnacles) with olive oil and salicornia greens at Merotoro. Above: Pastries at Nicos.

PLUS, HIS OTHER FAVORITES...

MARKET Olvera loves to eat in the city's many outdoor markets like **La Merced** (180 Rosario; no phone; snacks for two \$3). "I go on Saturdays for quesadillas with zucchini blossoms, Oaxacan cheese, and epazote in a blue-corn tortilla."



La Merced. Below: Zucchini blossoms.



Zapote negro ice cream at Roxy, left. Right: El Cardenal.

SWEET TREAT

When Olvera craves ice cream, he heads to **Roxy** (161 Tamaulipas; 52-55/5256-1854; dessert for two \$4) for his favorite flavor: *zapote negro* (made from native black persimmon).

55/5521-8815; pastries for two \$7) makes some of the best traditional sweet pastries (*conchas*, *cuernos*) and cinnamon-laced hot chocolate.

HOUSEWARES

Maggie Galton (346 Hegel; 52-55/5255-2230, by appointment) sells beautiful ceramic *molcajetes* (mortar and pestle) and *guajes* (gourd pots) that incorporate elements of indigenous and modern design.

BAKED GOODS

Italian restaurant and bakery **Rosetta** (166 Colima; 52-55/5533-7804; bread for two \$4) has an excellent foccacia with raisins, while **El Cardenal** (23 Palma; 52-

NEW YORK APRIL BLOOMFIELD

FROM SPICE SHOPS TO DIM SUM JOINTS, THIS BRITISH TRANSPLANT KNOWS HER WAY AROUND THE BIG APPLE.

Chef April Bloomfield of the Ace Hotel's Breslin and John Dory Oyster Bar.



When Bloomfield isn't at Manhattan's Ace Hotel, where she runs the **Breslin Bar & Dining Room** (16 W. 29th St.; 646/214-5788; dinner for two \$66) and the **John Dory Oyster Bar** (1196 Broadway; 212/792-9000; dinner for two \$67), you may find her in Brooklyn at **Roberta's** (261 Moore St.; 718/417-1118; lunch for two \$25). "Order a growler [of beer] and a pizza from the

wood-burning oven," she says. Just as good are the small plates (sweetbreads with Taleggio and honey) and steaks, fish, and chops. Back in Manhattan, Bloomfield's go-to dim sum spot is **Jing Fong** (20 Elizabeth St.; 212/964-5256; lunch for two \$24). "Arrive early to beat the crowds, and eat dumplings pushed around on trolleys by sweet Chinese ladies." For brunch, she heads to Gabrielle Hamilton's

Prune (54 E. First St.; 212/677-6221; brunch for two \$30). "I've waited for a table for hours, but it's worth it for the house-made *merguez* sausage with oysters and the fantastic Bloody Marys." And for dinner? **Annisa** (13 Barrow St.; 212/741-6699; dinner for two \$95). "It's fine dining, but I like to eat at the bar: Start with a cocktail, then the soup dumplings with foie gras and the mixed roasted eggplant with yogurt water."



EMPIRE STATE OF MIND From left: Margherita pizza at Roberta's; Jing Fong's façade; the dining room at Annisa; Prune's oyster omelette.

AND SHE ALSO LOVES...



PUB GRUB
For bar fare, without table linens or tasting menus, Bloomfield favors **Waterfront Ale House** (540 Second Ave.; 212/696-4104; dinner for two \$55). "They have an extensive list of beers. More important, they do the best chicken wings, with house-made hot sauce aged in whisky barrels."

SPICES
As long as she's out shopping for her restaurants, Bloomfield will stop at **Kalustyan's** (123 Lexington Ave.; 212/685-3451) for their selection of more than 4,000 spices.



MARKET
According to Bloomfield, **Chelsea Market** (75 Ninth Ave.; 212/645-0298) is a great place to go with the family because there's so much to eat, from lobster rolls and Italian sandwiches to Aussie pies and ice cream. Don't miss Bowery Kitchen, the kitchen-supply shop, and Amy's Bread, where you can watch the loaves being made.

COOKBOOKS
Bloomfield collects vintage cookbooks, and the best vintage volumes are at **Bonnie Slotnick Cookbooks** (163 W. 10th St.; 212/989-8962). "Bonnie opens around 1 p.m. and sometimes has a special where she sells one genre at a lower price."



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: MELISSA HOW; LAUREN KLAIN; JULIE DENTITIES/COURTESY OF ANNISA; MELANIE DUNEA (BLOOMFIELD); MELISSA HOW; TREVOR TONDRO; STEPHEN LOVERIN/GETTY; ALEX SEGREL/ALAMY; MICHAEL ROSENFELD/GETTY; BRAND X/GETTY



PARIS THIERRY MARX

THE AVANT-GARDE CHEF LEADS THE WAY TO HIS HOMETOWN'S INSIDER FOODIE HAUNTS.



Thierry Marx, chef of the new **Sur Mesure** restaurant in the Mandarin Oriental, Paris.



PETITE NIBBLES
From top: **Bistrot Paul Bert**; **Paul Bert's façade**; **dessert at Restaurant Pierre Gagnaire**; **Gagnaire's grilled sea bass.**



After 10 years of cooking his high-minded cuisine at the Château Cordeillan-Bages, near Bordeaux, Marx returns to the City of Light this summer to open **Sur Mesure par Thierry Marx** (251 Rue St.-Honoré, First Arr.; 33-1/70-98-78-88), in the new Mandarin Oriental, Paris (the hotel group seems to be collecting capital-C chefs lately, having recently installed Heston Blumenthal and Daniel Boulud in London and Carme Ruscalleda in Barcelona). Now that Marx is back home, he plans to make up for lost time at two of his favorite bistros,

Bistrot Paul Bert (18 Rue Paul Bert, 11th Arr.; 33-1/43-72-24-01; dinner for two \$100) and **Le Petit Verdot** (75 Rue du Cherche-Midi, Sixth Arr.; 33-1/42-22-38-27; dinner for two \$200). "I go to Paul Bert for the thirty-five-euro prix fixe menu," says Marx, surely thinking of fried eggs with truffles and a proper *steak frites*. "Le Petit Verdot," he says, "feels like an authentic countryside dining room—wood tables; exposed ceiling beams. It has a peaceful quality I crave." Plus: melt-in-your-mouth escargot and foie gras. For fine dining, Marx goes to

Restaurant Pierre Gagnaire (6 Rue Balzac; 33-1/58-36-12-50; dinner for two \$860). "I have huge respect for Pierre for his surprising juxtaposition of ingredients and his attention to detail," he says. But sometimes a chef with a two-Michelin-starred restaurant on his résumé just wants a big bowl of spaghetti, and for that Marx recommends the house-made pasta at **Le Monteverdi** (5-7 Rue Guisarde, Sixth Arr.; 33-1/42-34-55-90; dinner for two \$80), owned by Claudio Monteverdi (yes: he's a direct descendant of the Italian composer).

HE ALSO RECOMMENDS...

OVEN-BAKED SNACKS

One of Marx's most beloved Parisian bakeries is **Du Pain et des Idées** (34 Rue Yves Toudic, 10th Arr.; 33-1/42-40-44-52; bread for two \$7). "The owner, Christophe Vasseur, has delicious rolls, brioches, *viennoiseries*, and *pain*

des amis—a flat bread with thick crust and a nutty taste." A new favorite: **La Pâtisserie des Rêves** (93 Rue du Bac, Seventh Arr.; 33-1/42-84-00-82; pastries for two \$17). Located on a residential street on the Left Bank, the shop displays pastries



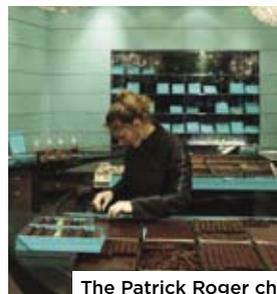
SWEET TALKER From left: **Lemon meringue tart** at **La Pâtisserie des Rêves**; **the patisserie's interior**; **a seasonal raspberry pastry.**

under beautiful glass bells. "The Paris-Brest is divine, but I particularly like the *éclair au chocolat*, topped with a bittersweet glaze. Philippe Conticini, the chef of this shop, is a true pastry magician."

CHOCOLATE
Marx's most enthusiastic

recommendation of all? The decadent creations at **Patrick Roger** (12 Cité Berryer, Village Royal, Eighth Arr.; 33-1/40-06-99-16; chocolate for two \$18). There are seven locations in Paris, but Marx frequents the one closest to his office. "Patrick Roger always offers ex-

actly what I am looking for," he says. "Excellence, imagination, and creativity." Original bonbons include chocolate with thyme and lemon, caramel with vinegar and grape, and caramel with verbena and yuzu. "Anyone who knows me knows how much I love chocolate."



The **Patrick Roger** chocolate shop, left. Right: **Du Pain et des Idées.**

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: ED ALCOCK; COURTESY OF PÂTISSERIE DES RÊVES (3); JEAN-CHRISTOPHE MARMARA/FIGAROPHOTO/CONTOUR BY GETTY IMAGES; ENRICO FANTONI/HOLLANDE HOOGTE/REDUX; OWEN FRANKEN (2); JEAN-CHRISTOPHE MARMARA/FIGAROPHOTO/CONTOUR BY GETTY IMAGES; JEAN-JACQUES CECCARINI/GIGAROPHOTO/CONTOUR BY GETTY IMAGES

MELBOURNE DONOVAN COOKE

A PIONEERING CHEF CRAFTS THE ULTIMATE TOUR DOWN UNDER.



The Den, a bar in Melbourne. Above, from left: Donovan Cooke; a flat white, at the European. Below: Maze's beet-and-goat-cheese salad.

Donovan Cooke is a legend in Melbourne for his run at Est Est, a revolutionary French restaurant that closed nearly a decade ago. Now Cooke, a protégé of Michel Roux and Marco Pierre White, has opened the seafood-inspired **Atlantic** (8 Whiteman St.; 61-3/9698-8888; dinner for two \$210) at the Crown Entertainment Complex, which houses the new Crown Metropol hotel, Australia's largest. For breakfast, Cooke drops by the **European** (161 Spring St.; 61-3/9654-0811; breakfast for two \$40), where his son is an apprentice. "There's great people-watching, strong espresso, and perfect poached eggs." **Clamms Fast Fish** (141 Acland St.; 61-3/9534-1917; lunch for two \$20) provides the city's top restaurants with their seafood. "They also serve classic fish-and-chips," Cooke says. "Get yours to go and head to St. Kilda Beach to watch the waves roll in." **Maze by Gordon Ramsay** (Level 1, 8 Whiteman St.; 61-3/9292-8300; lunch for two \$90) is the chef's preferred sit-down lunch spot. "I enjoy the

small-plate grazing menu." What to order? "Yellowfin-tuna tartare with radish and a deconstructed beet salad with goat cheese and Cabernet Sauvignon vinaigrette."



OTHER MELBOURNE MUSTS...

MARKET

Weekend mornings are the best time to visit the **South Melbourne Market** (322 Coventry St., Fitzroy; 61-3/9209-6295), which opened in 1867. "There is so much under one roof," Cooke says. "I buy specialty cheeses from various delis." And he never leaves without stopping for *dim sim*, a cheeky play on the Chinese dumpling that's become a cult snack.

LATE-NIGHT FEAST

After his shift, Cooke drops by the **Woolshed Pub** (Shed 9, Central Pier, 161 Harbour Esplanade; 61-3/8623-9640; dinner for two \$50), in a converted cargo shed on the water. "Start with crisp-fried Berkshire pork belly with coriander-and-red-chili sauce, followed by grass-fed porterhouse steak and chips with horseradish sauce. And sticky date pudding. It's worth going there for that pudding alone." The **Den** (61-3/9698-8888; drinks for two \$38), the



SPICES

For spices, Cooke heads to **Simon Johnson, Purveyor of Quality Foods** (12 David St., Fitzroy; 61-3/9644-3630). "If he doesn't have it, it's not worth having. He sells everything from hand-harvested sea salts and smoked paprika to saffron tips and organic Manuka honey from New Zealand."

bar beneath Cooke's restaurant, is his pick for a nightcap. The Cohiba No. 23, with tobacco-infused añejo rum, pear eau-de-vie, fresh apple juice, and bitters, is served in a balloon glass and delivered in a humidor. "It's a great way to end the night."

BAKERY

Noisette (84 Bay St.; 61-3/9646-9555; pastries for two \$7) is the place to go for French-style cakes and pastries. "I buy the dense walnut bread to munch on when I'm out and about."



SAY CHEESE Clockwise from top right: A 300-pound wheel of Emmental cheese at Emerald Hill Deli, in South Melbourne Market; brioches at Noisette; paprika and olive oil at Simon Johnson; Simply Spanish restaurant, in the market.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: COURTESY OF SOUTH MELBOURNE MARKET (2); ALPHA LAU/AVLXZ (NOISETTE); COURTESY OF SIMON JOHNSON (2); MARCEL AUCAR/COURTESY OF MAZE; COURTESY OF ATLANTIC GROUP (2); ASHLEY GILBERTSON/VII NETWORKY/CORBIS (COFFEE)