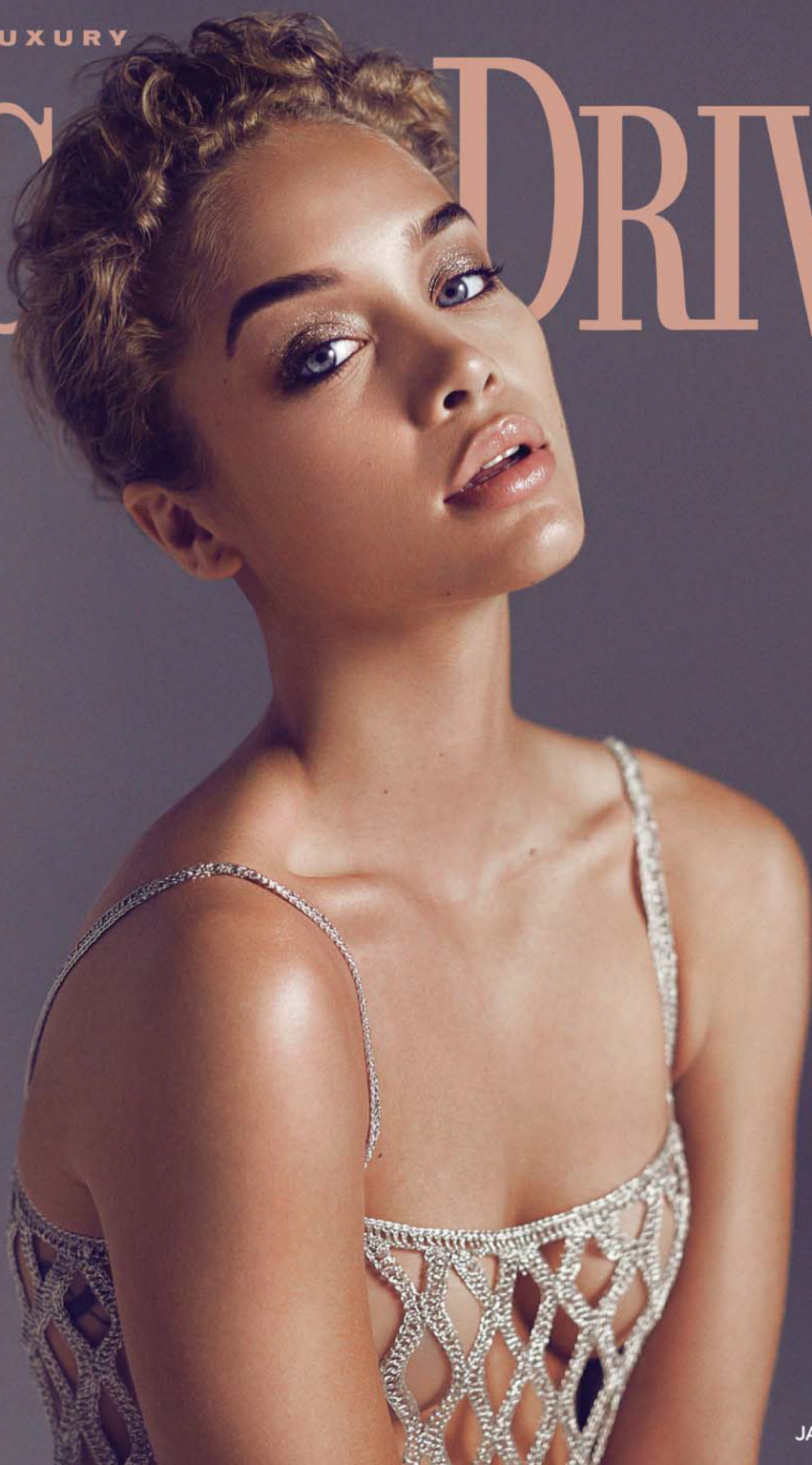


MODERN LUXURY

OCEAN DRIVE





CHASING THE STAR

MICHELIN STARS ARE THE MOST COVETED CULINARY ICONS ON EARTH. NEW YORK CITY HAS THEM. PARIS AND CHICAGO DO, TOO. MIAMI, WELL, THAT'S ANOTHER STORY. BUT WHY? ANA SOFÍA PELÁEZ WOOS THE GUIDE TO THE 305.

At Alter, every dish is a mini masterpiece.

Miami's restaurant scene may seem like an unlikely fit for the Michelin Guide. Excessive and exuberant where the famed guide is meticulous and reserved, our city has yet to work its magic on the secret society of Michelin inspectors, crisscrossing the globe to bestow stars on restaurants they deem "exceptional cuisine,

worth a special journey."

Despite this, we've long been a destination for Michelin-pedigreed chefs. Daniel Boulud is only the latest to bring his stars to Miami, with the opening of Boulud Sud last winter. But he's also an example of how hard they are to please, having lost a star for his eponymous New York City restaurant Daniel.

Michelin giveth and Michelin taketh away.

It should be simple. Restaurants are judged by five criteria: the quality, flavor and use of ingredients, and whether the chef's personality is expressed through their menu, value and consistency in both the food and service—goals most fine-dining restaurants diligently pursue. But the

degree to which they succeed, according to Michelin's standards, has been breaking hearts and derailing careers since the famed French tire company published its first guides in the early 1900s.

While the only stars Miami chefs can claim are in the sky, we believe there are a few that could satisfy even the most exacting inspector. >



Alter

To capture Michelin's attention, Miami must show it not only draws talent but nurtures it. Kansas City-born, Miami-based chef Brad Kilgore has been making that case since opening Alter in 2015, earning national accolades with his revolving roster of seasonal tasting menus that take locally sourced, Florida fare global. An unassuming trout paired with salsify, 'nduja floss, Indian lime pickle and puffed trout *furikake* is Kilgore's current favorite. It's not surprising that the guide chose his Wynwood restaurant for its Michelin on the Road series last summer, so we know they found it worth the trip.

Forte dei Marmi
Chef Antonio Mellino

knows what it takes to earn stars—and keep them. At his Quattro Passi on the Amalfi Coast, which earned its first star in 2000 and second in 2011, everything (bread, butter, you name it) is made from scratch, a feat that requires three separate kitchens to service every 45-person seating. At his new Ocean Drive eatery Forte dei Marmi, Miami's first two-star chef is looking to recreate that same success story with dishes that are brazenly innovative (tagliatelle "noodles" made of squid) and wildly simple (salt-baked branzino).

Naoe

There are few Miami restaurants that inspire the same hushed reverence as chef Kevin Cory's temple to *omakase* sushi. Trained by his uncle in traditional



From far left:
The trout at Alter;
Naoe chef Kevin
Cory plates with
the precision of
a surgeon; the
salt-baked
Mediterranean
branzino at Forte
dei Marmi is
deceptive in its
simplicity.



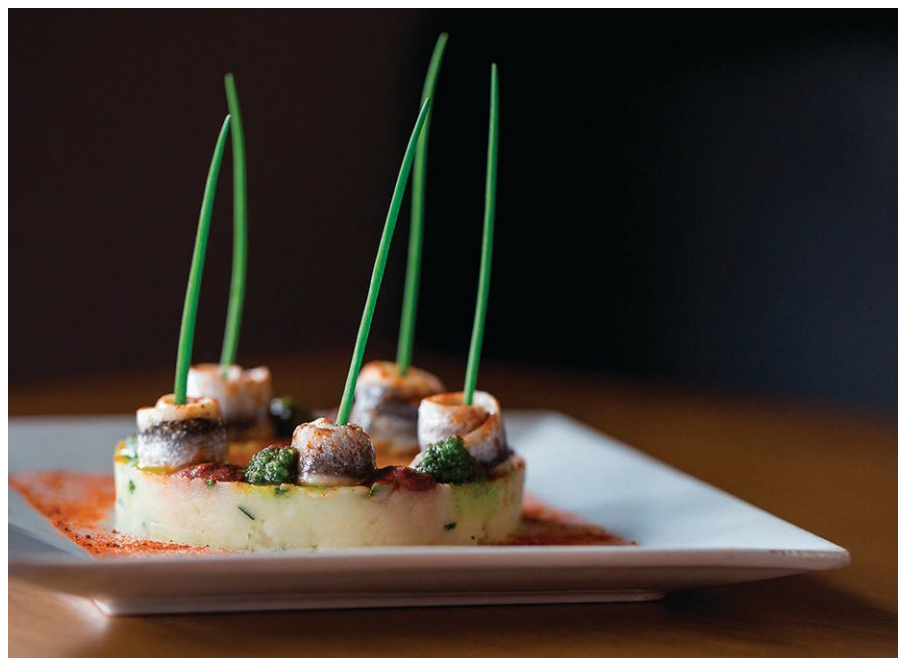


kaiseki cuisine, Cory choreographs a rigorously prepared and exquisitely presented multi-course experience for guests lucky enough to land a reservation at his 16-seat Brickell Key restaurant. Michelin likes lineage, and both Cory's sake and shoyu sauce come from his family's breweries, founded in the 1800s. Frequently cited by national publications as a destination restaurant, no one less than Ferran Adrià declared it one of the best Japanese restaurants outside of Japan.

Niu Kitchen

Located on a nondescript downtown street, you'll pass Niu Kitchen a

few times before spotting the wood-lined railroad restaurant where Catalan chef Deme Lomas has earned back-to-back James Beard nominations since opening in 2014. Versed in molecular gastronomy techniques that were in full bloom while he was training in Barcelona, Lomas serves poached eggs over a truffled potato foam topped with Ibérico ham and tops cold tomato soup with a sharp scoop of mustard sorbet. Inventive and playful without overwhelming the ingredients, he displays a restraint in execution that could win the heart of any Michelin purist. ■



From top left: Alter's Brad Kilgore; the *boquero* stands tall and proud at Niu Kitchen; the pan-seared foie at Niu.