

20 FOODS YOU MUST TRY NOW

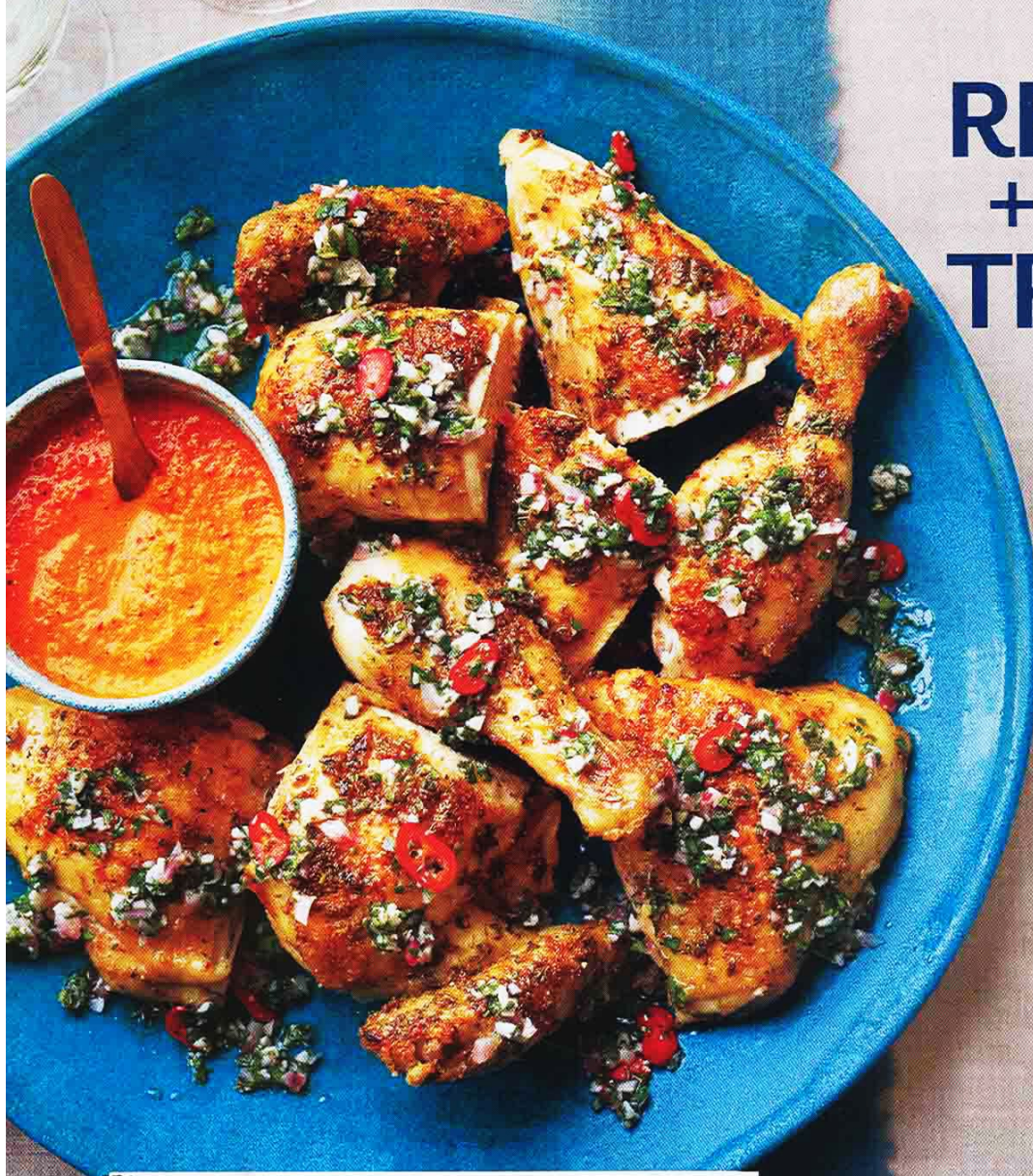
FOOD & WINE

JANUARY 2013

BEST RECIPES + FOOD TRENDS 2013

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JANUARY IS A TIME WHEN MANY OF US come up with resolutions for the year ahead—we promise to eat less, exercise more, create time for hobbies. After decades of making those lists, I have to admit I rarely stick to the plan for more than a couple of months. This year at F&W, we've developed a few ideas that are so good, they will make keeping resolutions easy. At least I hope so!

I'm going to start by overhauling my recipe repertoire at home.

That should be simple if I follow our Pantry recommendations in the Handbook. The column will showcase one new ingredient each month, which will make my cooking healthier and more diverse; we're kicking off with almond milk, which is astonishingly excellent in dishes like rice pudding, creamed spinach and a warm almond-chocolate sauce. Equally important is sketching out a strategy for wine drinking in 2013—I'm following Executive Wine Editor Ray Isle's advice. He suggests first drinking all the bottles in your wine fridge—this will be a fantastic excuse to throw a party. Then I'll start fresh, with empty shelves, and restock more methodically, buying some Chianti to go with the Italian dishes I like to make and Riesling for my Chinese takeout.

On my New Year's list, there are always a few restaurants I must try in the coming months. There are so many big openings scheduled for 2013 that we've already seen significant trends emerge, like chicken replacing burgers as a chef obsession. Restaurant Editor Kate Krader's picks led to amazing recipes like the lemony roast chicken on the cover, from Atlanta chef Shaun Doty (recipe, p. 74).

As for the first stop on my eating tour, I'm ready to head to Puerto Rico for star chef José Andrés's first opening outside the continental US, at the Ritz-Carlton Reserve at Dorado Beach. I hope this issue inspires you to make a list of your own food and wine resolutions for the New Year—and that you can stick to the plan!



Where I'm Coming From

MY RECENT NYC EXPEDITIONS

Aquavit

Sophisticated, delicious and thoughtful; I loved Marcus Jernmark's reimagined Swedish dishes, including a Scandinavian bouillabaisse. 65 E. 55th St.; aquavit.org.

Sullivan Street Bakery

Perfectionist baker Jim Lahey's new outpost has genius panini, like one with soft-cooked eggs and crisp pancetta. 236 Ninth Ave.; sullivanstreetbakery.com.

Keens Steakhouse

An old-school favorite with chefs like Danny Bowien of Mission Chinese Food, the mutton chop here is extraordinary. 72 W. 36th St.; keens.com.

Dana Cowin

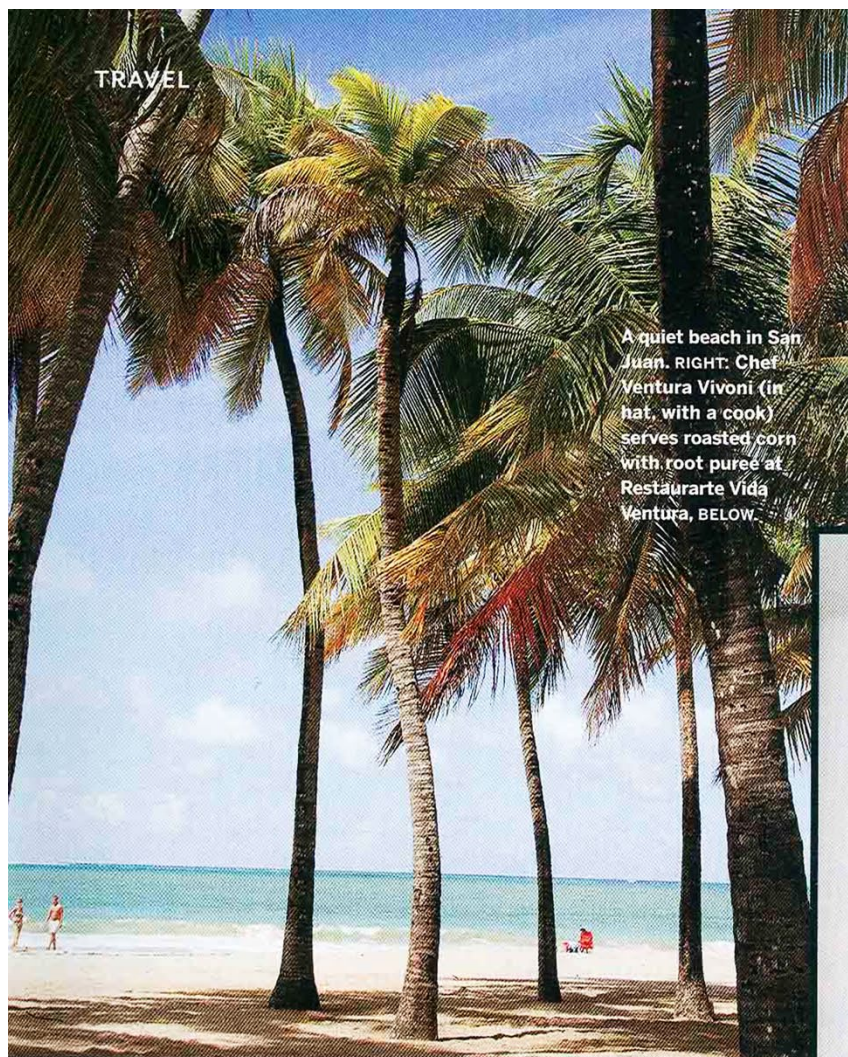
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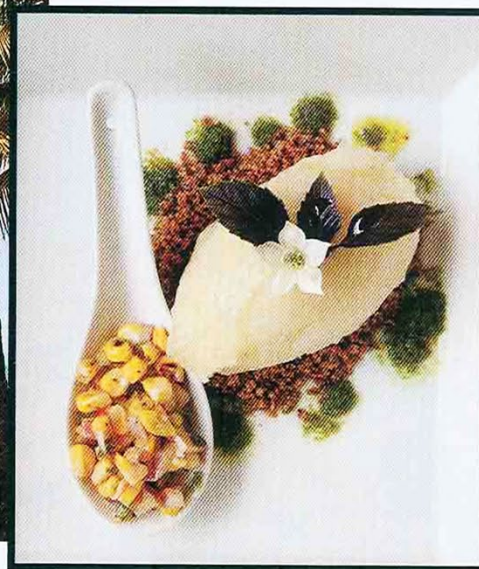
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A quiet beach in San Juan. RIGHT: Chef Ventura Vivoni (in hat, with a cook) serves roasted corn with root puree at Restaurarte Vida Ventura, BELOW.



Puerto Rico's New Promise

There's still plenty of sun and sand on the island, but now there are also luxury eco-resorts, a José Andrés restaurant and boutique hotels with rustic-chic style.

BY JOSH EELLS PHOTOGRAPHS BY CEDRIC ANGELES

A PUERTO RICAN VACATION used to be as predictable as the sunny weather. Visitors would stay at one of San Juan's big hotels, hit the slots and sip a piña colada (a Puerto Rican invention) while getting a tan at Isla Verde beach. I should know—I've taken this same trip three times myself. The food felt just as inevitable: mountains of rice and beans and countless variations of pork, which locals eat as frequently as Romans down cups of espresso. But a hotel boom has brought Portland style and the pointillist plates of modernist cuisine to the island. And Ritz-Carlton just opened an ultra-luxury resort here, with a restaurant by cutting-edge chef José Andrés. I hopped the quick flight from New York to see if Puerto Rico could accomplish something new: surprise me.

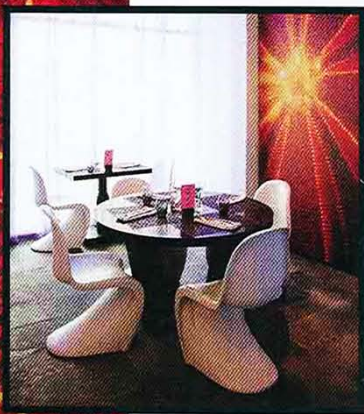
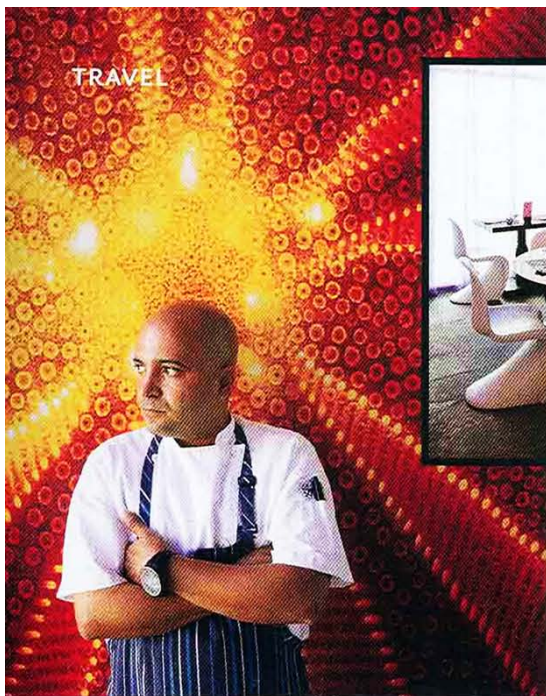
In Town

The first taxi driver I approached at the San Juan airport had never heard of **O:live Boutique Hotel**, which worried me. But when I eventually found the place, the reason was clear: The hotel is both new and tucked away, a 15-room inn on a quiet street near the Condado Lagoon.

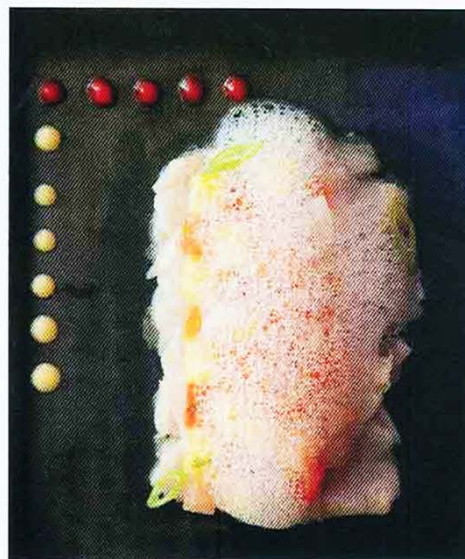
The owners, Loisse Herger and Fernando Davila, are a cute young couple who got into the hotel business by accident. Three years ago, Herger's aunt gifted them a rather large wedding present—a hotel, the Hosteria Del Mar. They built their

Brooklyn-based writer Josh Eells is a contributing editor at Rolling Stone. This is his first piece for Food & Wine.

TRAVEL



At Zest in the Water Beach Club Hotel, ABOVE, chef Raul Correa Soto, LEFT, creates striking dishes like yellowtail ceviche, RIGHT.



second business, O:live, which opened last May, from the ground up. Davila, a contractor, gutted a former office building, and Herger, who worked in marketing, branded it as a low-key alternative to the party hotels on the beach. "Puerto Rico is just starting to get concepts like local, organic, mixology," she explained as the sun set over the rooftop deck. The hotel reminded me more of Portland, Oregon, than the San Juan I remembered. There's reclaimed wood on the walls and in the furniture; even the elevator is lined with weathered planks, which makes going down to the lobby feel like traveling in a wine crate. The restaurant, O:liva, has a similarly rustic look and a pan-Mediterranean menu. I loved the lamb tagine with sweet Sicilian caponata and the Europa 23 cocktail, with rum, passion fruit and strawberry.

At the Beach

San Juan Water Beach Club Hotel is only five miles from O:live, but it feels more like a thousand—the exact distance to Miami's South Beach. When I arrived, there were dance beats booming from the roof bar and bikini-clad women drifting through the lobby. I half expected to see rapper Rick Ross and his entourage walking by. The interior is best described as aquatic-chic, and they take it all the way, piping bubble noises into the hallways and painting the rooms in various shades of blue. The hotel feels like checking into a very hip aquarium.

The Water Club, as the hotel is known, recently underwent a \$2.5 million face-lift. Much of that money went into Zest, a new restaurant where chef Raul Correa Soto serves modernist Puerto Rican food, making arroz con pollo with Israeli couscous and confit chicken, and flavoring *mofongo* (a mash of plantains and pork rinds) with a chorizo-saffron broth. My favorite dish had no Latin connection at all: an amuse-bouche in a miniature mason jar, which, after being popped open, revealed a soup that tasted like the pure essence of movie-theater popcorn.

Out of Town

Of all of Puerto Rico's recent openings, the **Dorado Beach, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve** that opened in December is by far the splashiest. The Reserve is a new Ritz-Carlton offshoot, designed to attract understated-luxury travelers who want hotels that are smaller, more green, more casual and more in touch with local culture than their grand old cousins. They're also more expensive than a typical Ritz-Carlton, as rooms in high season start at \$1,500.

A 35-minute drive west of San Juan, the resort (which hadn't yet opened when I toured it) is a 1,400-acre coconut plantation that used to belong to Laurance Rockefeller. The rooms—think Spanish colonial villas as outfitted by Giorgio Armani—are stunning, but the greening of the LEED-certified resort is impressive, too. Walkways are built to curve around trees; no cars are allowed anywhere on the property; when guests slide open the glass doors to their private ocean-facing patios (most with private plunge pools), the air conditioning switches off automatically.

PUERTO RICO BLACK BOOK

O:LIVE BOUTIQUE HOTEL

A casual, 15-room inn inspired by the owners' travels through Amalfi, Andalusia, Morocco and Provence. Doubles from \$180; oliveboutiquehotel.com.

DORADO BEACH, A RITZ-CARLTON RESERVE

Only the second Reserve property in the world (the first is in Thailand), the Dorado Beach mixes ultra-luxury service with an eco-friendly aesthetic. Doubles from \$800; dorado-beachreserve.com.

SAN JUAN WATER BEACH CLUB HOTEL

San Juan relaxation with a South Beach party vibe. Doubles from \$180; waterbeachhotel.com.

ROYAL ISABELA

Twenty casitas on the island's quiet northwest coast. Doubles from \$610; royalisabela.com.

RESTAURANTE VIDA VENTURA AT THE HACIENDA LUZ DE LUNA

Puerto Rican cuisine served in a 19th-century plantation house. restaurantevidadventura.com.

