

Raising a Little Girl Who Was Born a Boy *by Maximillian Potter*

5280

CELEBRATING 15 YEARS AS DENVER'S MAGAZINE



Denver's

Best Restaurants

The definitive guide to the city's delectable fine dining, savory bar menus, hottest cheap eats, and more.



March 2008 5280.com \$4.99



Fashion Special
THE SOFTER SIDE OF SPRING
page 82

After the Tornadoes
A HEARTBROKEN TOWN MOVES ON
by Julie Dugdale

The Lizard King
MOUNTAIN MAN OR MANIAC?
by Dougald MacDonald

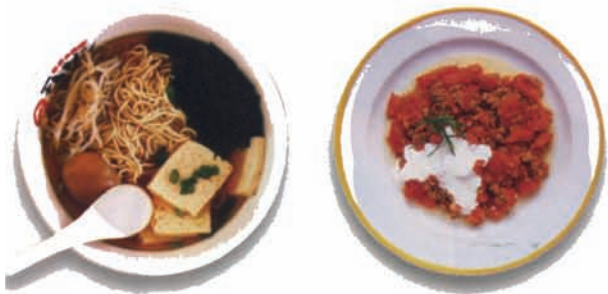
Green Made Simple
52 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR HOME
page 96

Best Restaurants

In the 365 days since 2007's dining roundup we've eaten about 1,100 meals—the vast majority of which were enjoyed in Denver restaurants. Needless to say, it's been quite a year: We've delighted in flapjacks soaked in maple syrup, sang the praises of house-cured meats, comforted ourselves with ravioli in brown butter sauce, indulged in cheeseburgers, waxed rhapsodic over fresh hamachi, and caved to sticky toffee pudding.

Along the way, we've eaten our way through the year's trends: the celebration of all things pig, the resurgence of the old-fashioned cocktail, the booming business of brunch, the allure of eating off the bar menu, and—the biggest and most important of all—the move toward sustainable eats.

Whether you're looking to break the bank or save a buck, eat and run or linger over a white tablecloth, you'll find that these 77 restaurants dish up a broad sampling of all that Denver has to offer.



By Amanda M. Faison, Gretchen Kurtz, & Carc
Photography by Laurie Smith

Rioja

1431 Larimer St., 303-820-2282

Chef Jennifer Jasinski's ambitious Mediterranean menu overflows with craveable dishes such as artichoke tortelloni and braised veal cheek. With friendly, professional servers, a trendy location in Larimer Square, excellent wine, and a welcoming vibe, Rioja satisfies every craving.

BEST BITES Lamb chorizo pizza with roasted poblano pesto, mozzarella and fontina, Roma tomatoes, and queso fresco

HOT SEAT Settle in at the chef's counter at the back of the main room for an up-close-and-personal view of chef Jasinski's talented team.

COOL COCKTAILS Check out the sidecars, Negronis, and pomeginger cocktails.