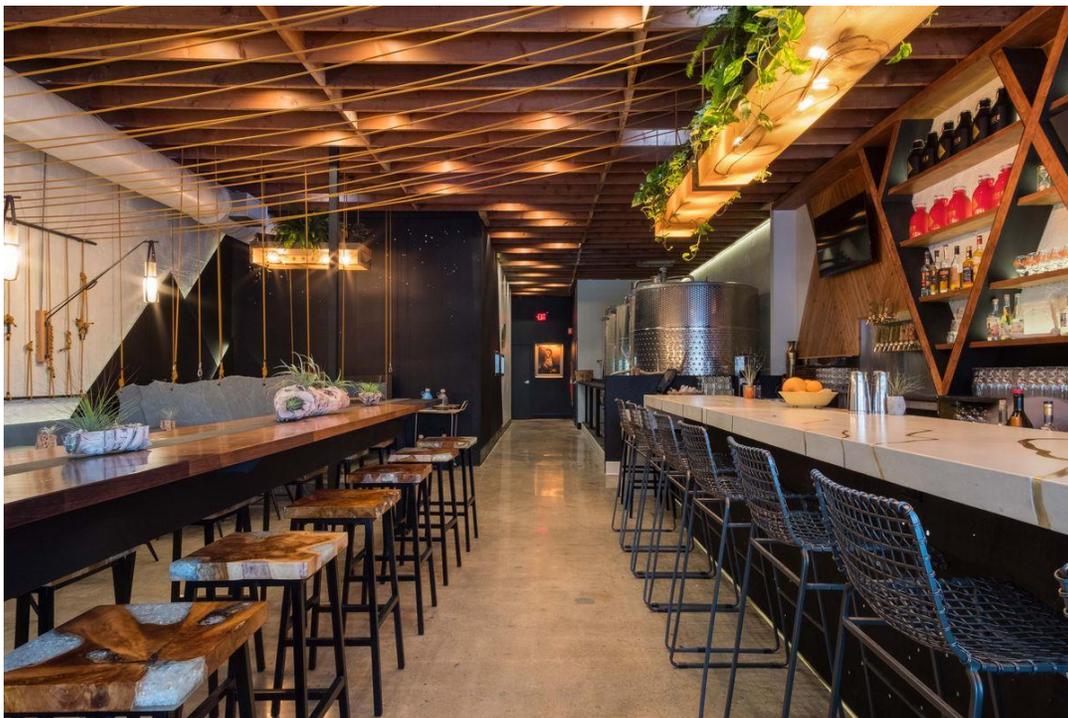




# Food Pros Share Their Best Restaurant Meals of 2018

Where did our panelists eat their top meals?

by [Candice Woo](#) Dec 28, 2018, 8:41am PST



As is Eater's annual tradition, we're closing out 2018 by surveying local food writers (including our own staff and contributors) on various restaurant-related topics, and we're publishing their responses in these final days of the year. Readers, please feel free to chime in with your own thoughts in the comment section below.

Today's question: **What was your best restaurant meal of 2018?**

*Caron Golden, [San Diego Foodstuff](#)*: I have to say, my favorite meal was probably the Friendsgiving dinner created by DJ Tangelin at Bivouac Ciderworks. The food was a Filipino twist on traditional Thanksgiving dishes and prepared beautifully. Plus, it was served as a family-style

buffet which could have gone very wrong, but didn't. No steam table pans, just platters we would put out in our homes. It felt like a big warm delicious gathering with friends.

*Michele Parente, [San Diego Union-Tribune](#)*: Born & Raised. Two friends were celebrating monumental birthdays and the staff treated them like they were royalty (and not because I was with them; note a celebration on your OpenTable reservation and you'll see what I mean). Every dish and cocktail was spot-on exceptional. That gorgeous dining room was electric. It made for a truly memorable meal. Especially because 3 of us are probably all still paying off our credit card bills.

*Candice Woo, [Eater](#)*: It took me much too long to make the trek to Dija Mara in Oceanside, but I was rewarded with a pretty much perfect neighborhood restaurant.

*Ann Wycoff, [San Diego Magazine](#)*: Chef Ryan Costanza's ceviche followed by lamb skewers and nasi goreng at Dija Mara.

*Pam Kragen, [San Diego Union-Tribune](#)*: Death by Tequila, prepared by executive chef Angelo Sosa. Every dish was a revelation.

*Jackie Bryant, [Eater](#)*: It was probably something at Biga. I think it's one of the most criminally underrated and overlooked spots in town.

*Frank Sabatini, [San Diego Uptown News](#)*: There are two outstanding meals vying for my top spot: Route 29's house-made papparedelle pasta with beef short rib, porcini mushrooms, vanilla oil and black truffle essence—not as pedestrian a dish as Bolognese. And I loved Cloak & Petal's "hamachi jalapeno," which preceded an entree of killer duck breast glazed in yuzu marmalade and set in edamame puree.

*Michael Gardiner, [San Diego CityBeat](#)*: My most memorable local meal was, without a doubt, at Toshi-Toshi in Tijuana. A big part of it was how totally unexpected it was to find high-end sushi in Tijuana. Over time Tijuana has carved a reputation for good food ranging from gritty streets to refined establishments. But pristine sushi? And yet that's exactly what Toshiaki Tsutsada (ex-Sushi Ota) and Pedro Velarde (ex-Hane Sushi) have created. Their omakase is, in many ways classic, but also points the way to a Mexican version of Peru's *Nikkei* cuisine.

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