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## Boston's Rising Stars

My taste buds are tickled pink.

Last night I was lucky enough to step out (in heels, no less) to taste, sip and mingle my way through the [StarChefs.com](#) Rising Stars Gala. StarChefs.com is a foodie magazine that recognizes up-and-coming chefs each year in a select few (usually four) cities around the country. This year Boston's own culinary scenesters drew the attention of the board.

The evening featured the usual - but delightful - cast of characters. Among the savory ranks: Jamie Bissonette of Toro, Chris Chung of Uni, Will Gilson of Garden at the Cellar, Chris Parsons of Catch. From the sweet section: Maura Kilpatrick of Sofra and Jiho Kim of L'Espalier. From the cocktail crew: Tom Schlesinger-Guidelli (who, incidentally, I know from my high school days).

The evening's festivities took place on the 33<sup>rd</sup> floor of 60 State Street and the view was incredible – a clear night and a city full of lights. Attendees – from chefs and foodies to local writers and guests – looked sharp – we even spotted a peacock-feather headpiece, well done!

But the stars of the night were the food and drink. We kicked things off the only way we possible could have – with a stop at Tommy's table. The Craigie on Main mixologist started my evening right – with a Northern Lights (a citrus-y whisky drink with St. Germain). I also sipped the Camino Cocktail (rye, vermouth and two kinds of bitters, below), which captured my heart at the get-go – it's garnished with a flaming orange twist.



Although not normally a fan of fois gras, Will Gilson's seared fois gras with homemade baked doughnuts and rhubarb was just perfect for an autumn evening. Rich, but not overwhelming, it was lovely to look at - I had to pause and admire before trying, even though the smells were tantalizing - and was the ultimate decadent comfort dish. We also enjoyed a Muscovy hen breast (pictured below) served by chef Mike Pagliarini of Via Matta with turnips, rhubarb (again! New fall trend, perhaps?), Swiss chard and spiced pistachios.



Richard Garcia of Tastings Wine Bar and Bistro served a white vanilla gazpacho that really could have passed as a dessert amuse-bouche. Calling it gazpacho was a stretch – the recipe calls for grapes and almonds, among other ingredients - but it was light and sweet nonetheless. We sampled wines here and there, including a lovely sparkling rose and a Pinot Nero.

Though my favorite of the evening was the pre-nibbling cocktail, the post-nibbling desserts did have me literally licking my fingers. I've never been to Sofra and have heard only good things, so I jumped at the chance to try pastry chef Kilpatrick's kunefe with champagne-cardamom syrup (pictured below). Holy moly. Not to be outdone, Jiho Kim of L'Espalier dished up a dainty and gorgeous dessert of Greek yogurt panna cotta capsules with cranberry gelee and yogurt sorbet. This was a dessert made for me, a girl who likes things on the tarter-side of sweet. The refreshing and tangy yogurt flavors, the bright colors of the cranberry and the sweet undertones of a honey foam made this my favorite dish of the night.



Many of the restaurants where these Boston top chefs work are on the pricier side. But deals can be found even at these hot-spot locations. Try [Myers + Chang](#) on a Monday or Tuesday for their date-night deal (\$40 a couple), kick back with a \$1 PBR tallboy at [Toro](#), eat dinner at home and head to [Craigie](#) for a cocktail treat (\$10-\$12), or head to [Garden at the Cellar](#) where small plates all run under \$10 and a bar menu boasts items like tomato-herb soup and grilled cheese (\$8), a Cuban sandwich with rosemary-truffle fries (\$9), or a Caesar salad (\$10).

Here's to Boston's Rising Stars! Cin cin!

(and a special thanks to Vicky Waskik for her photos)