

BUILD A BETTER SANDWICH 38

Restaurant HOSPITALITY

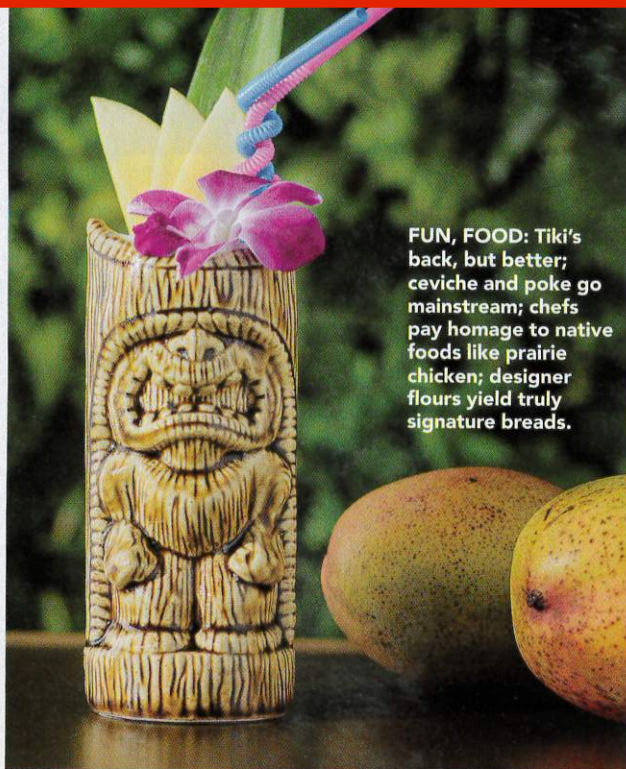
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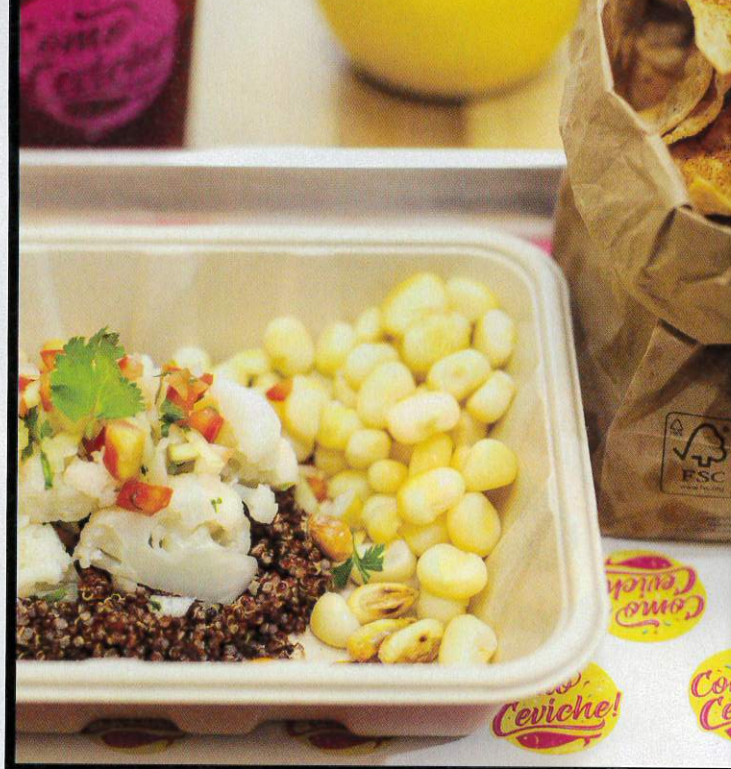
Talkin' Tiki

+8 MORE TRENDS SHAPING
RESTAURANTS IN 2017

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FUN, FOOD: Tiki's back, but better; ceviche and poke go mainstream; chefs pay homage to native foods like prairie chicken; designer flours yield truly signature breads.



9 Trends That Will Set the Table in 2017

We hear about so many trends, especially as we wind up the year and prepare to dive into the next. From the latest ingredients to new applications and choices in technology to changing vibes, here's what you'll want to have on your radar.

BY TARA FITZPATRICK



UPPER LEFT: ANDREW JORGENSEN; LOWER LEFT: COURTESY HEWN

TUNE IN TO TIKI:
The Grass Skirt
sways to a fun
tiki rhythm with
creative food and
beverage beat.

It's Time for Tiki

It's tiki o'clock somewhere. More like everywhere! The tiki torch is burning brighter than ever, proving that the fun, kitschy trend may be a little retro but is also completely relevant.

A big part of tiki's allure is escapism. Funny how rum-tastic drinks like zombies, mai tais, beachcombers, siren songs and mind erasers can take the edge off. That's what Matt Spencer had in mind when he opened his new San Diego tiki place, The Grass Skirt.

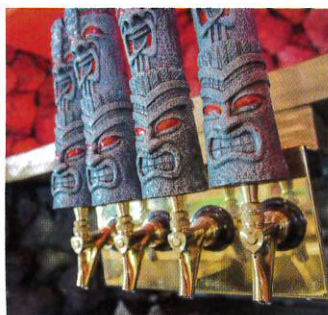
"Tiki is something we're pretty passionate about here," Spencer says. "The Grass Skirt will combine the fun, lighthearted, escapist nature of tiki culture with creativity and food and beverage quality."

That last part — food and beverage quality — is the key to tiki's viability. Craft tiki cocktails with artisanal rum and fresh-squeezed juice elevate the experience of sipping through an umbrella.

And the best new tiki menus are pupu platters gone to culinary school. Honey-soy marinated beef skewers with pineapple and ginger aioli, chicken "sidecars" on sweet Hawaiian rolls and regional treats like fried cheese curds and Minnesota potluck favorite pickle rollups star at Psycho Suzi's Motor Lounge in Minneapolis.

Meanwhile, some Cleveland restaurateurs are using tiki as inspiration. The future promises more tiki mashups like the one at Porco Lounge, where owner Stefan Was is pairing tiki with meatballs.

Was partnered with chefs Brian Okin and Adam Bostick of Cork and Cleaver, Graffiti Social Kitchen and Dinner in the Dark to create Polpetta at Porco Lounge, a tiki-meatball mashup. Okin got the idea while visiting New York City, where meatball concepts have shown staying power and buzz appeal.



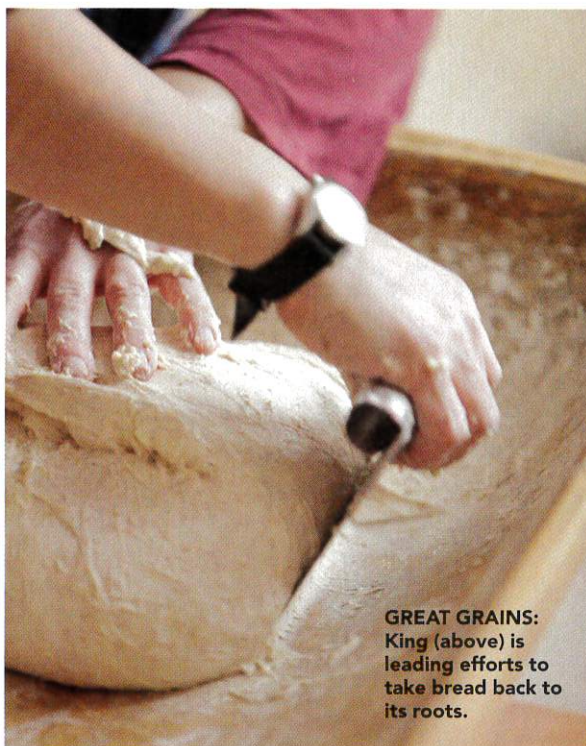
Housemade 2.0

Making your own sausage and charcuterie? Great! Pickling your own veggies? Pretty cool. But the true cutting-edge trend-of-the-moment is making your own flour. Bakers and chefs who do this swear it can exponentially change the quality of pastries, breads and any recipe calling for flour.

One such innovator is Ellen King, baker/historian and owner of Hewn Bakery in Evanston, Ill. Like other bakers, she sees the value in getting local grains and turning them into flour in-house.

She's taking it even further and going all-in attempting to preserve the truly ancient art of baking bread. King and the bakery are part of The Great Midwestern Bread Experiment, an ambitious, long-range project collaborating with a crop scientist from Washington State University and a fifth-generation farmer to produce authentically preindustrial loaves of bread.

"It will probably be three years until we're able to get a loaf that's really good," King predicts. Why? It's an exacting process. The bread experiment involves time travel back to the early 1900s, before—some would argue—all the goodness was stripped out of wheat. The group is combing through historical recipes that use grain varieties that were, to put it simply, not messed with.



GREAT GRAINS:
King (above) is
leading efforts to
take bread back to
its roots.