



JW Marriott
Houston
Downtown's new
executive chef, Josh
Mouzakes

CHEF CHAT

NEW KID ON THE BLOCK

With a résumé that includes French Laundry in Napa Valley, and the renowned Hotel del Coronado, San Diego, new exec chef **Josh Mouzakes** of the JW Marriott Houston Downtown (806 Main St., 713.237.1111, marriott.com) is set to impress. "I always knew I wanted to be a chef, and my goal was to become one of the greatest. I realized I would have to move around to work with the best chefs in order to learn everything," says Mouzakes, a Long Island, N.Y., native. His new dinner menu sports gorgeous plates of food—and they taste as good as they look. "My menu style is contemporary American, grounded in classic French cooking based on skills I've honed since I started cooking in restaurants at age 13." He was recruited by the Marriott last year and had never before stepped foot in Houston. "I thrive on challenges," says the 33-year-old. "I'm incorporating local flavors like barbecue and Tex-Mex into upscale dishes, including bacon-wrapped pork tenderloin with plum bourbon glaze and roasted duck breast with grilled corn, poblano succotash and espelette pepper popcorn." —RBS

to start, or savor the caramelized diver scallops with polenta and a sweet mango and pepper relish. Lunch Mon.-Fri., dinner Mon.-Sat. 1753 Post Oak Blvd., 713.355.1975, masraff.com \$\$\$

Mastro's Steakhouse 🍷 Tilman Ferritta's new Post Oak Hotel beckons with several eateries, and this temple to prime steaks is the showpiece. The formal dining room serves up tomahawk chops, Japanese wagyu, rack of lamb and lobster, of course. Dinner

Mon.-Sun. 1650 W. Loop S., 713.993.2500, mastrosrestaurants.com \$\$\$\$

McCormick & Schmick's Featuring the signature "Fresh List" highlighting an impressive number of fresh seafood varieties, aged steaks and poultry, this extensive menu changes every day based on the freshest, highest-quality seafood available. Lunch and dinner daily. 1151-01 Uptown Park Blvd., 713.840.7900, mccormickandschmicks.com \$\$\$

Nobu 🍷🍣 World-renowned chef Nobu Matsuhisa brings his iconic sushi empire to Houston at the Galleria. Order classic Nobu favorites like black cod with miso, as well as cherry blossom-smoked wagyu beef. Dinner daily, brunch Sat.-Sun. 5115 Westheimer Road, Ste. C-3515, 832.987.2599, noburestaurant.com \$\$\$

North Italia A bustling, noisy "in" crowd of next-gen Houston socialites and scenesters swarm this BLVD Place

eatery for its attractive servers, rustic versions of Italy's most well-known dishes and Italianate cocktails like the classic Negroni. Lunch and dinner daily. In BLVD Place, 281.605.4030, northitaliarestaurant.com \$\$

Oceanaire 🍷 Order savory standards like the mahimahi "black & bleu" or find a seat at the bar up front with a buzzy after-work crowd for bloody marys that could pass as appetizers. Lunch Mon.-Fri., dinner daily. 5601 Westheimer Road, 832.487.8862, theoceanaire.com \$\$\$

The Palm Cozy up in one of the tufted leather booths for a wedge salad and hearty steak or try the three-course power lunch. Lunch and dinner Mon.-Fri., dinner only Sat.-Sun. 6100 Westheimer Road, 713.977.2544, thepalm.com \$\$\$

Tango & Malbec Gregarious Gina Pagni-Ferreira's Argentine steakhouse, located near the Galleria, pays homage to her homeland with prime cuts of beef seared on a pecan and mesquite wood-burning grill. Empanadas, salads and pastas also make the menu, and the wine list boasts a large selection of South American vino. Don't miss the live tango show on Saturday nights. Lunch and dinner daily. 2800 Sage Road, 713.629.8646, tangomalbec.com \$\$

Tribute 🍷 Exec-chef Neal Cox crafts a menu of Southern classics like

charred ribeye, fresh Gulf Coast oysters, braised cabrito, smoked wagyu beef rib and more dishes that reflect strong influences of Texas, Louisiana and Mexico in a vibrant yet sophisticated environment. Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily. 111 North Post Oak Lane, 713.685.6713, houstonian.com \$\$\$

Truluck's The stone crabs at this upscale seafood chain are hard to pass up, but be sure to explore the entire menu. The shrimp cocktail is a lively way to start any meal, and both fish and steak are perfectly prepared by the kitchen. Lunch Mon.-Sat., dinner daily. 5350 Westheimer Road, 713.783.7270; The Woodlands, trulucks.com \$\$\$

Willie G's Seafood 🍷 This crown in The Post Oak Hotel is an all-new experience in not only the look and feel of the restaurant but its innovative and fresh menu items to complement classic favorites. Lunch and dinner daily. 1640 W. Loop S., 713.840.7190, willies.com \$\$

Yauatcha 🍷 After a much-anticipated wait, this Chinese dim sum teahouse has bowed in the Galleria. With a modern and open dining room with theatrical views of the kitchen, it's already become a crowd favorite. Expect delicately crafted steamed shumai and other pan-seared dumplings. Lunch and dinner daily. 5045 Westheimer