

WHERE TO EAT NOW

MAY 2008

Chicago

BEST NEW From hot spots to hidden treasures—
our critics name the year's top rookies

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WINNERS

RESTAURANTS

MIXING IT UP
AT OTOM

TOWERING
AMBITION:
THE SPIRE
SAGA

KATHY SAVIO'S
UNANSWERED
CRIES FOR HELP

8 GREAT CHICAGO
HAIRSTYLISTS
SPRING FASHION
RELIABLE PLUMBERS



OTOM

CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN

951 West Fulton Market Street,
312-491-5804 (\$\$\$)

Are the chemistry and physics experiments at Moto too precious for you? Then try its sibling Otom (clever name, pronounced "autumn") a few doors down, where the former Moto sous-chef Daryl Nash uses a bit of molecular gastronomy sensibility to good effect with comfort food. It's a cool space—bright stripes, exposed brick, and purse hooks on the tables. But the menu is equally cool, with stand-outs like a cast-iron pot of macaroni and cheese with truffled white Cheddar and double-smoked bacon or a cubed salmon seviche on won ton chips with citrus bubbles. Move on to seared quail with sesame puffs and maple-soy glaze. Not exactly comfort food, but who cares?

SHOWSTOPPER A "banana split" of pureed banana squares coated with chocolate and impaled on three sticks, each topped with roasted pineapple, house-made maraschino cherries, or peanut praline.

SURPRISE Orange plastic chairs turn out to be quite comfortable.

MEANWHILE The tables are too small.

ANOTHER FAVORITE Thai curry mussels topped with snap pea froth and toasted coconut.

BOTTOMS UP Stellar cocktails, especially the Trabucchi de Verona martini made with homemade huckleberry vodka, Valpolicella, and lemon juice with mulled huckleberries. —D. R. W. ■