

VEGAS

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October 13-19, 2011

THIS WEEK IN YOUR CITY

BEST RESTAURANTS

Our annual awards celebrate everything from great dishes to game-changing fishes

The Restaurant Awards

Our second annual celebration of Las Vegas' best dining

By Max Jacobson, Xania Woodman and Grace Bascos

After four years of hard times, everyone is ready to sound the death knell for fine dining in Las Vegas. But rumors of its demise have been greatly exaggerated. In fact, we had so many excellent dining experiences to consider this year that it was quite a challenge to decide which ones to single out. After more than a few passionate discussions among *Vegas Seven's* food-and-beverage team, we've come up with a "best" list that shows that our restaurant scene is not only very much alive, but still evolving.

BEST BRUNCH

MOzen Bistro and Border Grill (tie)

If you're thinking bacon and eggs, think again. MOzen Bistro at the Mandarin Oriental caters to many Asian guests, and the restaurant has a team of chefs from India, China and Japan to complement chef Vivek Rawat. There is a distinctly Asian cast to this brunch, served noon-2:30 p.m. Sundays. You can make up a bento box composed of six dishes, order the restaurant's terrific Indian-style chicken, have XO fried rice, and even top-grade sushi, all for one set price (\$48). Still, who could ignore the deal at Border Grill at Mandalay Bay, an all-you-can-eat brunch served poolside for \$25? Mary Sue Milliken and Susan Feniger, a.k.a. the "Too Hot Tamales," serve dishes such as green corn tamales, Yucatan eggs Benedict topped with pork cooked in a banana leaf, and guava empanadas, plus a dozen more pan-Latino creations. Feel like free-flowing \$5 mimosas? We thought as much. *MOzen Bistro, in Mandarin Oriental, noon-2:30 p.m. Sunday, 590-8882; Border Grill, in Mandalay Bay, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. weekends, 632-7403.*