

Best Restaurants 2010

Boston

WHERE TO EAT NOW

50 Great Restaurants for 50 Occasions

*plus The Top Tables in Town
and Dining Deals for Any Budget*

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2010

**IS BARBARA LYNCH
BOSTON'S BRAVEST CHEF
—OR ITS CRAZIEST?**

BY BENJAMIN WALLACE

**WHY ARE HUB
MOMS SO MOUTHY?**

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**THE DOWNFALL OF THE
CITY'S SNOOTIEST CLUB**

BY FRANCIS STORRS

**THIS TIME, IT'S PERSONAL:
INSIDE BOSTON'S
NASTIEST FEUDS, SQUABBLES,
AND DONNYBROOKS**

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Post 390
in the Back Bay

HOT SEATS

Food always tastes better when you've got the table everyone else wants.
Here are five of the best in town.

Eastern Standard

In a room blessed with an abundance of plush red banquettes and cozy club chairs, table 51 wins the prize for comfort and positioning. Located in a back corner by the private dining room, it takes in the full sweep of noshing couples, fashionable cocktailers, bar-bound sports fans, and all the other chitchatting groups that make this such a must-see scene. 528 Commonwealth Ave., Boston, 617-532-9100, easternstandardboston.com.

Grill 23

At this house of prime beef, the prime real estate can be found in two key spots. The first, table 608, sits at the top of the central staircase, offering a plum view of the milling plebes below while affording a bit of privacy and quiet.

The second, table 402, is a cozy two-top on the first-floor balcony. You often can reserve these seats simply by asking for them, but for peak weekend hours, it doesn't hurt to be on a first-name basis with GM Jason McKinley-Babb. 161 Berkeley St., Boston, 617-542-2255, grill23.com.

No. 9 Park

Oh, to snag the window-side four-tops in the front dining room. You know the ones: generously spaced, with stunning floor-to-ceiling views of the Common. They're so exclusive that even the table numbers are a secret and an 8 o'clock Friday reservation is a prize possessed by only a lucky few (and likely passed down via last will and testament). For the rest of us, there's always 5 p.m. on a Wednesday. 9 Park St., Boston, 617-742-9991, no9park.com.

Rialto

The literati and MacArthur "genius grant" types who frequent this Harvard Square mainstay prefer a certain level of discretion and elegance in their surroundings. The brilliance of Rialto's 2007 redesign was its creation of intimate spaces defined by high-walled round banquettes and gauzy curtains. It's really hard to go wrong in this room, but table 51 wins for its superb view of the square. It's a vantage point so high and well positioned that you'll feel like a master of the universe. Well, even *more* like one. One Bennett St., Cambridge, 617-661-5050, rialto-restaurant.com.

UpStairs on the Square

In the most fabulous Klimt-inspired, pink-paneled, gilded aerie in town, table 19 dominates the room. Tucked into the corner, surrounded by beautiful round windows, and anchored by plush purple ultrasuede banquettes, it's equal parts whimsy and luxury. Need an excuse to try it out? Valentine's Day is right around the corner. 91 Winthrop St., Cambridge, 617-864-1933, upstairsonthesquare.com. —Amy Traverso



Table 608 at Back Bay steakhouse Grill 23.