

# Style

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**COURSE ONE:** Kohada with olives and citrus, paired with Jokigen “Happiness” Junmai Gingo-shu sake, from Jokigen Shuzo, Japan.

Reddick chose to pair slices of kohada, a type of shad related to the common mackerel, with a clean-tasting sake, or rice wine, so as not to overwhelm the fish’s mouth-filling intensity, known as *umami*, the elusive fifth component of taste. Reddick referred to the course as an “amuse.”

## SENSORY OVERLOAD

A food-and-wine pairing at **Restaurant Charlie** is an extraordinary exploration of taste. *By Max Jacobson*

**I**n short order, Restaurant Charlie at The Palazzo has established itself as one of the best restaurants in this country, winning a coveted Michelin star in only its first year. It’s also a favorite with local chefs and cognoscenti, who come for toque Charlie Trotter’s complex, cerebral aesthetic.

The restaurant’s sommelier and general manager, Conrad Reddick, recently guided me through a perfect afternoon meal of almost symphonic complexity, carefully choosing wines to complement dishes, and explaining his choices along the way.

Reddick, 31, came dressed for the occasion, in a tie matching his light

purple shirt and black suit, colors offset by the sea-green granite counter of Bar Charlie’s sushi bar, where many guests begin their Restaurant Charlie dining experience.

Bar Charlie’s sushi master, Hiro Nagahara, prepared many of the courses, while others came via the main kitchen from chefs Michael Rotondo and Van Luu. But no matter whom the creator, food at this restaurant is visually stunning, each dish a color-splashed palette. Every component of a Trotter dish has a purpose, and is not used casually. The menu, which has a seafood focus, starts light and slowly graduates to more robust flavors—the same way, incidentally, the restaurant hopes you’ll select your courses when dining there.

# Dining Guide

The extensive wine list has been carefully selected, with more than 400 French and American wines to choose from.

**Located inside The Palazzo lobby, 702-607-6333.**

## NOODLE ASIA

A symbol of long life in Asian culture, noodles are the main component of Kevin Wu's pan-Asian menu. Hong Kong-style wonton noodle soup is filling and comforting, and wok-tossed noodles come in all shapes and sizes, with toppings such as black pepper beef and black bean and chili paste. Roasted duck and barbecued pork are perfect atop a bed of steamed rice.

**Located next to the Race and Sports Book at The Venetian, 702-414-1444.**

## PINOT BRASSERIE

Chef Joachim Splichal's penchant for authenticity has led to Pinot Brasserie's decidedly European décor. Compiled during a trip through Europe, there's the floor from a French chateau, a 150-year-old ceiling from Provence, the façade from a hotel in Lyon, and railings from Monte Carlo's Hôtel Hermitage. Splichal specializes in French-California cuisine, and creates a dazzling array of desserts.

**Located on Restaurant Row between The Venetian and The Palazzo, 702-414-8888.**

## POSTRIO

Wolfgang Puck's outpost in The Grand Canal Shoppes at The Venetian offers smart California-inspired fare and small plates, perfect for sharing among friends. Classic Puck dishes such as roasted baby beets with Humboldt Fog cheese are met with new creations like littleneck clams with Spanish chorizo and grilled bread.

**Located in St. Mark's Square at The Venetian, 702-796-1110.**



TAO Beach.

## RESTAURANT CHARLIE

Culinary legend Charlie Trotter's restaurant is rather like three experiences in one. Upon entering the restaurant, to the right is Bar Charlie, an intimate, serene room offering libations as well as a Japanese *kaiseki* dining experience—eight or 14 courses of some of the finest and freshest sushi and sashimi, chosen by what's perfect that day. Then there's the main, formal dining room, which features soaring 20-foot-high ceilings, stellar service, and Trotter's elegant seafood-based cuisine.

**Located in The Palazzo, 702-607-6336.**

## RIVA

Located poolside at The Venetian, RIVA isn't just for simple snacks. Wolfgang Puck's menu includes trademarked items such as smoked salmon pizza and the Postrio lobster club sandwich. Sit back and relax with refreshing cocktails—the Watermelon Crush and Passionfruit Cosmopolitan are standouts.

**Located on The Venetian pool deck, 702-414-7482.**

## SOLARO

Puck's other poolside eatery offers delectable noshes like tuna tartare

and prime-beef carpaccio, as well as wood-oven baked pizzas and grilled fish.

**Located on The Palazzo pool deck, 702-607-2510.**

## SPORTSBOOK BAR & GRILL

There's no reason to go hungry when you're watching the big game. Sportsbook Bar & Grill serves up classic game-time staples like burgers and beer, served while you watch every play on any of their 70 big-screen TVs. And of course, it's easy to place your bets at any of the five betting stations located just across the way.

**Located in The Palazzo lower level, 702-607-2665.**

## SUSHISAMBA

Brilliant colors in the dining room evoke a fun atmosphere, perfect for a night filled with a fusion of Japanese, Brazilian, and Peruvian cuisines. Sashimi, sushi, and maki are treated with South American flavors and ingredients, and the caipirinhas are outstanding.

**Located inside The Shoppes at The Palazzo, 702-607-0700.**

## TABLE 10

Named for the iconic table at Emeril Lagasse's flagship New Orleans restaurant, Table 10 is

Lagasse's take on regional new-American cuisine. Lobster pot pie, Gulf oyster croquettes with Rockefeller dipping sauce, and barbecued kurobuta pork roll are big hits. Grab a seat at the grill bar, where you can watch the excitement inside Emeril's kitchen. **Located inside The Shoppes at The Palazzo, 702-607-6363.**

## TAO ASIAN BISTRO AND TAO BEACH

The 37,000-square-foot club, lounge, and restaurant is one of the hottest places to see and be seen in Las Vegas. The restaurant features pan-Asian cuisine—specifically fare from Hong Kong, Japan and Thailand—including succulent Peking duck and Kobe beef with wasabi dipping sauce. A nosh is ideal before hitting the nightclub, which features a hand-carved 20-foot Buddha floating above an infinity pond, as well as the Tub Girls, who dance and lounge the night away in a warm tub, covered in carefully placed flower petals and not much else. A hotbed of steamy excitement after hours, TAO Beach is also a go-to spot for daytime fun. **TAO Asian Bistro, located in The Grand Canal Shoppes at The Venetian, 702-388-8338; TAO Beach, located at The Venetian pool deck, 702-492-3960.**



**COURSE TWO: Peekytoe crab salad with sake and rice milk, paired with a Sauvignon Republic 2007 Sauvignon Blanc from Stellenbosch, South Africa.**

The wine was chosen to express *terroir*, or the wine's regional origins, because the sommelier felt that a citrus component present in the dish would help bring out the sweetness of the peekytoe crab. The combination was refreshing, a real palate wake-up.



**COURSE THREE: Spanish blue fin tuna with umeboshi and seawater, paired with a cocktail called Cat's Meow, composed of Herradura Blanco tequila, Spanish Cava (sparkling wine), and grapefruit juice, rimmed in black sea salt.**

Superb tuna, which indeed would make the most stoic cat purr in ecstasy, is here enhanced by the presence of umeboshi, a salty apricot often mistakenly called a plum. The pairing played with the bitter and the sweet.



**COURSE FOUR: Tasmanian ocean trout with miso and fennel, paired with a 2007 Carl von Schubert Riesling, the Maximin Grunhauser Abtsberg, from the Mosel, in Germany.**

Reddick chose an acidic wine to cut the salt and fat of this luxuriant fish. The Riesling was an austere wine that used stainless steel, not oak, in the fermentation process.



**COURSE FIVE: Tempura cuttlefish with Meyer lemon and kanzuri carrots, paired with Charles de Cazanove Brut Rose Champagne from the Champagne region of France.**

It wouldn't be exaggerating to call this the most intellectual pairing of the group. Salinity and minerality complemented the surprising heat from the carrots; the addition of the Meyer lemon offered ripe citrus notes; and the sweetness of the dosage in the Champagne brought it all together beautifully.



**COURSE SIX: Bobwhite quail with black winter truffles and hazelnut, paired with a 2004 Enzo Boglietti Barbera d'Alba from Piedmont, Italy.**

The only meat course needed a wine that would stand up to it, one with heady aromas and volatile acidity. The tannin and acid in the Enzo Boglietti Barbera d'Alba made it a gorgeous companion for roasted quail.

*Restaurant Charlie is located at The Palazzo, 702-607-6336.*