

EXTRAORDINARY LIVING FOR EXTRAORDINARY LIVES

# LUXURY

## VEGAS



*Crème  
de la Crème*

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comfortable aqua chairs, and leather booths, all in blues, greens, and browns. In Bar Charlie he incorporated wood paneling and ceramic tiles, a fabric panel ceiling, and slate countertop. His biggest challenge was the Chef's Skyloft, which is cantilevered out over the kitchen.

box and then over-pouring so sake flowed into the box. "This is a Japanese tradition," he explained, "to ensure prosperity."

After three exceptional "courses" combining rice, seafood (shime saba, bigeye tuna, needlefish, cuttlefish, Japanese snapper), dried elements, citrus, ponzu, sea weed, we moved to Restaurant Charlie where Matthias Merges is Executive Chef de Cuisine. Our marine exploration continued with terrine of Maine skate wing, braised octopus, and roasted wild Alaskan halibut. "We knew there were three steakhouses at Palazzo," Chef Trotter told me, "so we wanted to do something different and focused on seafood." Nevertheless, our last course before dessert was a rich, "true" Japanese Omi beef strip loin. Since Desmond had, again, paired wines with each dish, we had a marvelous wine quest with selections from Germany, France, Italy, Spain, and Hungary by the end of the evening.

The finale of our culinary tour de force was staged in the Chef's Skyloft. The two-story, white-tile walls are the canvas for tile seafood and citrus panels. A strawberry mint salad and sorbet and steamed cacao nib cake concluded our extraordinary dining experience.

### Welcome Back Trotter: Charlie Trotter's Restaurant Charlie/Bar Charlie

When Charlie Trotter introduced his famed Chicago cuisine to Las Vegas in 1994, he was a prophet without a country. "Dining" was an undiscovered art. Eating and getting back to the tables was the name of the game. Now the tables are turned, and Chef Trotter's triumphant return has launched Restaurant Charlie and Bar Charlie. Everything about them—decor, food, wine, cocktails, staff, service—is superlative.

Designer Joshua Zinder remarked that Chef Trotter didn't want a "themed" restaurant. "He wanted it to be timeless," he said, "and to reflect how he addresses his food—authentic, real materials, not a lot of glitz, simple, fresh, warm, and welcoming."

Zinder achieved this effect with Sapelle wood in a "turtle shell" pattern in the main dining room, geometric forms, warm lighting,

Connecting Bar Charlie and Restaurant Charlie is the cocktail bar. Seating is at tall, thin tables with bar stools. The "back bar" is shallow glass shelves that seem to float with very few bottles displayed. "The emphasis is on the drinks," Zinder explained, "and illuminated disks on the bar top illuminate them from below."

Bar Charlie offers a Japanese Kaiseki-style dining experience during which flavors progress from light to full. To watch the three chefs is to see art being created. There's an eight-course tasting menu, a 14-course "meal," and a la carte choices, both chilled and hot. It's impossible to describe all the exquisite textures and flavors and the elegance of the presentation. Since we asked sommelier Desmond Echavarria to pair sake and wines with what we were served, it was an amazing occasion. What was especially fascinating was his placing a sake "shot" glass in a lacquered

**Hours:** Sunday–Thursday, 5–10; Friday and Saturday, till 11 P.M. **Phone:** 607-6336, [www.charlietrotters.com](http://www.charlietrotters.com) □