

travel

dc dining

by Jill Fergus

If you haven't been to Washington, DC, recently you might be surprised at how newly hip it's become. Stylish boutique hotels are springing up, contemporary art galleries are adding to the cultural landscape and, perhaps most surprisingly, the dining scene has evolved into one of the most dynamic on the East Coast. A major food revolution is under way with exciting new restaurants opening all across town.

Michelin-starred chef Eric Ripert of Le Bernardin fame is behind the highly anticipated **Westend Bistro** at the Ritz-Carlton. The informal yet fashionable spot focuses on seasonal ingredients from local farmers in Virginia and Maryland. Expect dishes such as Chesapeake Bay stew in saffron tomato broth and Pineland Farm beef tenderloin. A modern take on the classic steakhouse can be found at **BLT Steak** from French chef Laurent Tourondel, who has several BLT restaurants in New York. Choose from Kobe strip steak, porterhouse, and other mouthwatering cuts of beef with accompanying dipping sauces and sinfully rich sides.

At Newseum, an interactive museum located in Penn Quarter, celebrity chef Wolfgang Puck has opened **The Source**, overseen by executive chef Scott Drewno. The first-floor bar and lounge serves small plates of such fare as beef sliders and oven-fired gourmet pizzas, while a fine dining room upstairs offers Asian-inspired dishes such as steamed black bass with bok choy. Also located in Penn Quarter is



Proof restaurant

wine-centric restaurant **Proof**. Sommelier Sebastian Zutant's wine program features more than 1,000 bottles and 40 wines by the glass, all carefully chosen to complement the Mediterranean-inspired cuisine prepared by chef Haidar Karoum.

Across the Potomac in Alexandria, Virginia (easily reached via the Metro), Anthony Chittum is making waves at **Vermillion**, a charming neighborhood bistro in the historic Old Town. His cuisine—modern American with Italian influences—features such tempting dishes as roasted pork loin with a sweet potato risotto. And Dublin-born chef Cathal Armstrong, whose **Restaurant Eve** has achieved critical acclaim, is known for his seasonal five- and nine-course tasting menus with items like wild Scottish partridge with quince.

For more information, call the Washington, DC, Convention & Tourism Corporation at 202-789-7000 or visit washington.org

