

# THE TASTING MAGAZINE

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## Good as Money

*Twenty Grand Forges a New Category*

Cocktail waitress A...  
Twenty Grand at Beamers Happy Hour  
& Nightclub in Dallas.

PHOTO: KIRK WEDDLE



# Beyond Beans and Cod

HISTORIC BOSTON MOVES INTO CUTTING-EDGE CULINARY WATERS

by Merrill Shindler



Tavern Road assorted dishes

PHOTO COURTESY OF TAVERN ROAD



The pizzas at Area Four.

PHOTO COURTESY OF AREA FOUR

Think of the cuisine of Boston and there's a good chance that what will come to mind is John Collins Bossidy's famous "Boston Toast":

*And this is good old Boston,  
The home of the bean and the cod,  
Where the Lowells talk only to Cabots  
And the Cabots talk only to God.*

It's also likely that the bar from *Cheers* will come to mind, along with the famously grouchy waitresses at Durgin-Park and the shellfish at the Old Union Oyster House, which dates back to 1826.

And yet, the cooking of Boston is far from preserved in amber. Boston and

adjacent Cambridge are major college towns. And college towns inspire restaurants with an edge; it's no coincidence that *Chez Panisse* opened just down the block from U.C. Berkeley. And it's no coincidence that the very edgy **Area Four** sits in Cambridge's techiest neighborhood, so close to MIT and various high-tech that it shares a common lawn with a world of heavy thinkers, deeply engrossed in their iPads.

The cooking at Area Four is built around a pair of wood-burning ovens that glow inside the open kitchen, out of which come an array of blackened



pizzas topped with Wellfleet cherrystone clams, and both fennel sausage and mozzarella made in-house. They smoke their bluefish in-house as well, which arrives on focaccia. They even make their own croissant crumbs for the mac 'n cheese. And the lively bar offers cocktails with names like Easy Street, Moonlight and Boulevardier—along with a selection of craft beers, from New England only.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TAVERN ROAD

**The Fishnets & Fangs cocktail at Tavern Road.**

You think of South Boston—“Southie”—and its red sauce Italian that comes to mind. Which can be found at the groovy Southie gastropub called

**Tavern Road.** Or at least, at the late-night takeout shop next door.

But Tavern Road is all about cocktails with names like Fishnets & Fangs, Cruella and Straight to Hell (scotch, Aperol, amaro and lemon bitter, in case you’re curious). And a menu that features an insert that tells us that, “Today’s Animal Is Rohan Duck.” The duck is turned into a mousse, a sautéed gizzard salad, grilled heart and fig brochettes, confit of neck and a grilled prep with honey and lavender. You want “Lil Snacks,” you’ll get whipped goat’s milk feta, fried chick-peas and pepper spiced nuts. There’s whole roasted sea bream with a kimchi made from ramps. A dish not known at the Old Union Oyster House.

Nor, for that matter, are any of the dishes found at **O Ya**—not just the edgiest Japanese restaurant in Boston, but one of the edgiest in sushi-obsessed America. In a space notable for minimalist elegance worthy of a shogun or a priest, there are scarlet sea scallops in white soy, bluefin maguro with micro greens, Peruvian style bluefin chutoro tataki and “tiny” Maine lobster legs with white sturgeon caviar and an aioli made from greenish tomalley. The saké list is extensive, the wine short but very select. Reservations are a near impossibility—even the Brahmins have to wait. ■■



PHOTO HIEN NGUYEN

**The scarlet sea scallop at O Ya.**