

Oct 16, 2009

A DAILY BITE FOR CHARLOTTE FOODIES

## Dine & Dish

04:46 PM

### Bistro Laurent Tourondel



BLT Steak

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You're probably aware by now that the BLT in BLT Steak doesn't actually stand for the beloved sandwich. It's Bistro Laurent Tourondel—as in the name of the dynamic French-trained chef and New York restaurateur whose latest venture can be found just off the lobby of the new Ritz-Carlton at the corner of College and Trade streets.

I caught up with Tourondel for a few quick questions just before Charlotte's BLT Steak opened. The day before he'd flown from Singapore to Hong Kong to New York (there are BLT restaurants all over the world and he's determined to keep an eye on all of them). His next one opens in Honolulu in December, so for a moment, most of Tourondel's attention is on Charlotte.

#### You've got restaurants in Hong Kong, LA, NYC, Miami...why Charlotte?

Charlotte is a great town. I think there are more and more chefs who are coming to Charlotte and I think for me to be here is amazing—especially being from New York. And I have to say we have a good crew here. I'm very pleased with this. It's not like that every place I go.

#### Any favorite Charlotte chefs you've tried?

I've just arrived so I haven't had a chance to go around, but I have many places I want to try here. I asked a lot about barbecue because I LOVE barbecue.

#### Your prices look a little higher than average in Charlotte. Can you tell me why that is?

Oh. That's not good I guess. I think we did a study. I don't think we were more expensive. If it is more expensive, it's because of the meat itself. I don't cut corners when it comes to meat, you know?

#### So what are some of your favorite things on the menu other than steak?

I like the tuna tartar, of course. And I like the jalapeno mashed potatoes.

#### Will the menu change seasonally?

We have the menu that won't change like most steakhouse menus. Then we have a few things that we will change weekly.

#### Have you spent much time in NC?

I've been in Raleigh once on a barbecue trip.

#### When you're in town, will you stay at the Ritz?

Yes! How can I stay anywhere else? Have you stayed at a Ritz-Carlton? They're amazing.

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Want to read about the city's latest dining hot spot, hear from a local chef about his favorite dish, or catch a glimpse of a menu's newest item? You've come to the right place. Here you'll find news and gossip from the city's dining scene as well as plenty of suggestions for your next meal out.

#### About Sarah

Sarah Crosland grew up in a small North Carolina town on sweet tea, barbecue, and garden grown veggies. A few trips around the world later she has a taste for Thai, a love for Latin dishes, and a slight fixation on French food. Here in Charlotte, Sarah enjoys cozy dives with character just as much as the city's see-and-be-seen steakhouses and sushi bars.

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