

DEPARTURES

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2012

THE
HOLIDAY
ISSUE

ONE
NIGHT
AT BERGDORF'S

OFF TO
ST. BARTHS
PATAGONIA
BERLIN

THE BEST
LITTLE
RESTAURANT IN
SWEDEN

FAST TIMES AT
PORSCHE
DRIVING
SCHOOL

winter thrills!



The rooms of the Inn of the Five Graces in Santa Fe feature intricately tiled bathrooms.

American Exotic

Waking up in the Firebird Suite at the **Inn of the Five Graces** [rooms, from \$360; 150 E. De Vargas St.; 505-992-0957; fivegraces.com] feels like Scheherazade on a jag during the height of Halston. The inn, in Santa Fe, brims with authentic Afghan and Tibetan artifacts carefully curated by the Seret family. Hundreds of luminarias cast an ethereal glow into the night sky from atop the inn's labyrinth of adobe walls. Inside, tile mosaics adorn the walls and centuries-old wood carvings conceal secret alcoves. This is the heady articulation of what one wants this corner of the world to be—a mesmerizing ocher jacquard landscape.

IDA BECKER
Charleston, SC

Now Serving in Napa

The small town of Yountville in California's Napa Valley has several incredible restaurants, not to mention French Laundry. Does it need more? Probably not, but nevertheless there's

been an excellent addition this year:

Redd Wood [6755 Washington St.; 707-299-5030; redd-wood.com], from Richard Reddington of Redd, has just opened to become the most casual place in town (not difficult, considering that it serves pizza).

Meanwhile, just north in St. Helena, there's a new restaurant called **French Blue** [1429 Main St.; 707-968-9200; frenchbluenapa.com]. The vibe is more East Hampton or even St.-Tropez than Napa. It calls its fare comfort food, but in Napa that means Delta sturgeon and English pea agnolotti. Add sea salt-crusted Parker House rolls for the perfect end to a day spent exploring wine country.

JEFF ATLAS
San Francisco, CA



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AT TABLE

TEN WAYS RESTAURANT SERVICE DRIVES ME MAD

Peter Shaindlin, COO of Halekulani Hotels and Resorts, sent us the following e-mail after a particularly annoying restaurant experience. Sound familiar?

1 INTERRUPTIONS

Constant verbal intrusions by servers who care little about food and not at all about your conversation.

2 FINGER-POINTING

Servers who silence the table when they arrive with the next course, pointing with their three middle fingers at every item on the plate and reciting its name, even though you already know because you read the menu and selected it—and because you have eyes.

3 NO SALT

Chefs too often feel that they can validate their skill by refusing to put salt on the table. Why should the server at SALT, in Honolulu, be so upset that you want salt when he's just offered you fresh pepper?

4 COMMENTARY

"That's one of my favorite dishes!" Fascinating.

5 THE THREE-WORD BOTTLE

American wines with maudlin names like My Sister's Tears, or The Lost Boy.

6 FUSION CONFUSION

Ubiquitous Asian ingredients that suddenly appear everywhere in ignorance of seasonality: yuzu ice cream, yuzu flan, yuzu foam, yuzu club sandwich....

7 TRUFFLE MANIA

American chefs just don't get truffles. They're everywhere, in everything, and applied with the touch of a mechanic changing your steering-column fluid. Better they don't use them if they can't understand their subtlety and power.

8 MENU SCREENS

After a day of incessant electronics at both work and home, the last thing I want to find at the dinner table is an iPad as a menu—to be shared, no less. There is no advantage to the diner.

9 GOOFY GREETINGS

Servers who start by asking, "Hi! Have you dined with us before?" Or, "Hey, guys..."

10 POURING PROBLEMS

Servers who, particularly when pouring a fine wine, top off your glass after each sip you take. Related variation: serving a bottled beer into a glass in front of you, filling the glass to the drop, then walking away with the empty bottle.

