



THERE IS A STORY, WHICH MAY EVEN BE TRUE, THAT A PENNILESS YOUNG PICASSO WOULD SOMETIMES PAY FOR MEALS WITH QUICK SKETCHES ON NAPKINS. But even if that's apocryphal, it can't be denied that there has long been a strong connection between modern art and restaurants. Note the controversy in 2014 when, in New York, Seagram Building owner Aby Rosen planned to remove a Picasso curtain from the Four Seasons restaurant—where it had hung for more than half a century—and you clearly see how passionately the two blend. The curtain, which Picasso had originally created for the Ballets Russes ballet *Le Tricorne* in 1919, had hung between the Grill Room and the Pool Room since the restaurant opened, but Rosen had claimed that steam from the kitchen was weakening its supports.

An increasing number of forward-thinking new restaurants here and abroad are making the case that modern art and contemporary dining enjoy a symbiotic relationship. The thinking is that, as chef's demonstrate their craft in the kitchen, artists can echo those creative themes in the dining room. And with short-term exhibits to artist-in-residence installations that are tucked into the architecture of the room curated to enhance the culinary experience and pull in patrons, what's served in the space can become as important as what's delivered on the plate.

In the UK, London's sketch touts an artist-conceived restaurant in the Gallery, where trends from the kitchen are translated to interiors and artists are invited to take over a space in its entirety every couple of years. Its current incarnation features British artist David

Shrigley's collection of 239 drawings lining the walls of a powder pink room designed by architect India Mahdavi. An extension of the collection tells its story further on the table, with crisp ceramic tableware carrying the artist's playful cynicism.

In Toronto, Mia Nielsen heads cultural programming at all three locations of the Drake, where the union of art and food has been part of their ethos since opening. "I want to take people out of themselves," says Nielsen, "and present them with something that furthers their own curiosity about the space."

It's Nielsen's goal to find works that are genuinely significant to contemporary culture, but also engaging for a general audience, from toddlers to octogenarians. "Lighting conditions are very different in a restaurant than they are in a gallery," she says, "so I'm looking for works that are going to stand up visually in that environment and that will be arresting." Nielsen sees a lot of large-scale works and wall-based structures, noting the days of restrained interiors in restaurants are behind us.

Long-term installations at the flagship hotel are typically in place for two to five years—the Drake 150 currently features American artist Gary Baseman in an annual exhibition while the restaurant at the Devonshire showcases permanent works commissioned from artists like Birdo and Team Macho. Beyond the standard requirements of what is acceptable within the public space, artists are given free reign to follow their vision, infusing the space with a sense of theatricality and performance that intends to catch customers off guard.



A new Chardonnay Winery from an unexpected place

Climate change is altering the wine world faster than anyone imagined. It's become too hot to make complex Chardonnays in some previously celebrated regions like Napa where the grape's natural acidity is being crippled by heat.

But a daring initiative has taken place over the past four years in British Columbia's Okanagan Valley. The goal: To make new world Chardonnay with old world elegance in North America. The result is a collection of five remarkable Chardonnays from Anthony von Mandl's family-owned CheckMate Artisanal Winery. These wines launched recently in spectacular fashion at an invitation-only event at Vaucluse Restaurant, a stylish new brasserie located on the upper east side of New York.

Australian born winemaker Philip McGahan left Williams Selyem in the Russian River Valley in Sonoma, to take up the challenge at CheckMate Artisanal Winery. He crafts sophisticated Chardonnays with production ranging from just one cask to 17 barrels of each of the five Chardonnays.

The inaugural CheckMate release is available now. Visit checkmatewinery.com to sign up for an allocation.