


AIR CANADA 

# onAir

The Air Canada e-zine for people on the go.

## Food & Drink

### Seattle's best new restaurants

By Cral S. Bower



CRUSH

In Seattle, there's no better time to indulge yourself than during the final (rainy) month of 2006. And there's no better antidote to the gathering chill than heading out to the hottest restaurants. Here are some new local hot spots that will brighten your December.

### Crush

Chef Jason Wilson, one of *Food and Wine Magazine's* 2006 Top New Chefs, deserves an honourable mention. Wilson conjures Northwest modern cuisine like roasted black cod in a syrah sauce and sumptuous seared Hudson Valley foie gras "steak" on a thyme buttermilk waffle with huckleberries. The setting – white Vernon Pantone chairs and tables set against black trim in a converted Tudor house – includes a recently added second floor: good news for those who've waited two months for a weekend reservation. Crush is the one essential pause if you're just laying over.



CRUSH

2319 E. Madison, 206-302-7874

### Sitka and Spruce

Situated inside a nondescript strip mall in the Eastlake neighbourhood, Sitka and Spruce seats only two dozen, including eight at the custom-made centre table. Chef Matthew Dillon's evening menu appears on the chalkboard (next to 10 wines by the glass) just a few minutes before the door is unlocked. The menu never repeats, but you'll wish it did once you taste morels seared in red wine and guinea fowl confit and breast. Dillon's fresh take on local cuisine is creating buzz among regional chefs, which is the best endorsement.

2238 Eastlake E., 206-324-0662

### Tilth



TILTH

1411 N. 45th, 206-633-0801

Even in the über-crunchy Northwest, we're wary of certified organic menus as fears of sprouts and soy-blanching culinary creativity have played out once too often. But chef Maria Hines' regional menu celebrates "anti-groovy" entrees like mini duck burgers with arugula, heirloom ketchup with fingerling chips (deep fried in duck fat) and crispy pork belly with cranberry bean, scallion pesto and onion cream. The modern farmhouse decor works as well. Oh, and did I mention that the menu's 98 percent organic? Who knew crunchy could be so cool?

## Veil

Veil proclaims the "new" Seattle – a city of downtown condos and young cocktail-swilling professionals – like no other. The modern interior – Philippe Starck chairs, lambent hues of pink and a cocktail lounge – is coupled with a progressive world menu featuring caramelized diver scallops, Arctic char with lobster couscous and couverture chocolate fondant with bramble fruit. Equal parts gourmet restaurant and social scene, Veil remains a revelation for those of us wishing to play in *au courant* Seattle.



VEIL

*555 Aloha, 206-216-0600*

## Boat Street Café

Regulars from years past have eagerly awaited the relaunch of this bistro in the loft-crazy Denny-Western triangle. Now they'll need to elbow out the new converts who are raving about the Southern French cuisine and classic feel of the room, with its whitewashed walls and concrete floor. Renee Erickson's ever-changing menu offers surprising twists like chanterelle flan and crab cakes served with a banana hot pepper confit as well as the trademark pickled peppers.

*3131 Western Ave., 206-632-4602*

*(Crai S. Bower explores contemporary culture for a variety of magazines including Blender, Elite Traveler and Endless Vacation. He lives and writes in Seattle.)*