

THE
HOT LIST10 PLACES EVERYONE'S
TALKING ABOUT
AND DINING AT IN
JANUARY
(in order of heat)

- **MASTRO'S STEAKHOUSE** Never have so many packed in so tightly to throw back clever cocktails and colossal steaks. 520 N. Dearborn St.; 312-521-5100
- **GIRL & THE GOAT** Girl & the Pig. Girl & the Lamb. Girl & the Chicken. If Stephanie Izard wants to expand, the possibilities are endless. 809 W. Randolph St.; 312-492-6262
- **DAVANTI ENOTECA** It's no coincidence that the most likable restaurant in Chicago right now also has the best wine bargains. 1359 W. Taylor St.; 312-226-5550
- **THE FLORENTINE** New York-based BLT group snags local boy Todd Stein. In Chicago, BLT may as well stand for Book Lunch Today. JW Marriott Hotel, 151 W. Adams St.; 312-660-8866
- **CHICAGO CUT STEAKHOUSE** File under: White guys in suits partying like it's 1999. 300 N. LaSalle St.; 312-329-1800
- **DEL SECONDO** Korean barbecue as tacos; Korean barbecue as banh mi. We thought pizza was the world's most versatile food. 2568 N. Clark St.; 773-248-4227
- **LILLIE'S Q** The constant crowds prove that good barbecue knows no season. 1856 W. North Ave.; 773-772-5500
- **THREE ACES** Seems like only yesterday that Taylor Street meant iconic Italian—a gastropub later and it's hipper than thou. 1321 W. Taylor St.; 312-243-1577
- **REAL URBAN BARBECUE** Another veteran of the competitive circuit puts down roots (i.e., his smoker). 610 Central Ave., Highland Park; 224-770-4227
- **OWEN & ENGINE** The magic is in the ampersand: fish & chips, bangers & mash, bubble & squeak. 2700 N. Western Ave.; 773-235-2930

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Togarashi-seared tuna
at Arami



SINGLED OUT

At Japanese restaurants, we know the drill: ginger, wasabi, a baby pitcher of soy sauce, and a little dish to mix your own concoction of same. But at **Arami**, there's a sizable pol-

ished stone in that little dish, and it takes up about half the real estate available for your dipping sauce. "It's the chefs' way of discouraging you from using a lot of soy," explains Arami's charming manager, "because they have prepared all the dishes with the proper amount of everything." The head chef is Shin Matsuda (Prairie Grass Café, NoMI), and when it comes to his togarashi-seared tuna over seaweed kelp, drizzled with Meyer lemon dressing, we quite agree with his kitchen dictum. 1829 W. Chicago Ave.; 312-243-1535. —PENNY POLLACK

—PENNY POLLACK AND JEFF RUBY