



## 6 promising new restaurants offer casually upscale dining

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The shaky economy didn't encourage large numbers of restaurant openings last year.

But several bright, new contenders with casually upscale menus bucked the trend and debuted to positive reviews.

In alphabetical order, here's a glance back at metro Detroit's six most promising new venues of 2006:

- **City Kitchen:** The most ambitious newcomer in the Grosse Pointes in six years, City Kitchen looks polished and conservative with its white tablecloths, leather-clad booths and rich woodwork, but the scene, especially around the bar, is casual and convivial. Seafood dominates the upscale American menu, but if fish isn't your dish, there are steaks, chicken, burgers and pizzas from the wood-fired oven. Lunch and dinner Monday-Saturday. 16844 Kercheval, Grosse Pointe; 313-882-6667.
- **Crush:** The name refers to the crushing of grapes, a nod to the wine and food that together make up what California chef Stephen Patrick calls "vineyard-style cuisine." The menu offers eclectic plated entrées as well as numerous smaller dishes designed for sharing. The starkly simple, wide-open room in black and white with red accents is a dramatic change from the dark, traditional, chopped-up spaces of the former Deep Blue. Dinner daily. 30855 Southfield Road, Southfield; 248-220-1140.
- **Crust Pizza & Wine Bar:** The handmade, Neopolitan-style thin-crust pizzas with creative toppings are excellent, baked in 900-degree ovens in less than three minutes; salads, sandwiches, soups and appetizers round out the menu. Adorable desserts are served in layers in small glass tumblers. Wines are offered by the bottle, glass and flight, and the spare, industrial-chic interiors have a youthful urban vibe. 2595 Rochester Road, Rochester Hills, 248-844-8899; and 6622 Telegraph, Bloomfield Township, 248-855-5855.
- **Kruse & Muer on Wilshire:** Part of restaurateur Bill Kruse's popular Kruse & Muer group, this new Troy restaurant is his first location south of his home base of Rochester. The big menu of steaks, fish and seafood, salads, sandwiches, pastas and pizzas offers a little something for everyone, and architect Ron Rea's makeover gave the former T.G.I. Friday's a sharp new personality. Prices compare favorably to those of the glitzy chains on Big Beaver; lunch is a bargain. Lunch and dinner Monday-Saturday; dinner Sunday. 911 Wilshire, Troy; 248-362-2700.
- **Grape Expectations Wine Bar & Merchant:** What a fun, unpretentious place to come with friends, try a bunch of wines and enjoy chef Nina Scott's terrific and inexpensive tapas, cheeses, paninis and individual pizzas. Some 80 wines are available by the bottle; 25 can be ordered by the glass or taste. The spare, attractive room is deep and narrow, with small tables and a dramatically long bar on the main floor and a small mezzanine level for parties or additional seating. Lunch and dinner, Monday-Saturday. 555 Forest, Plymouth; 734-455-9463.
- **Vinology:** This ambitious sibling of Royal Oak's Vinoteca wine bar offers more of everything: 50 by-the-glass selections from a 100-bottle wine list; sophisticated menus of small plates, cheeses, salads, sandwiches and main plates, and an atmospheric interior of exposed brick and contemporary materials. It's a creation of the food- and wine-savvy Jonna

family. Lunch and dinner daily. 110 S. Main, Ann Arbor; 734-222-9841.

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