



HEART OF GLASS The gleaming dining room. Right: Pimento cheese appetizer with peppadews and toast points

Afternoon Delights

Olmsted's sleek, glass-filled space serves its neighbors well.

| By Karina Timmel | Photography by Caroline Petters |

You tap your foot as, *ticktock*, your precious lunch-hour minutes pass by. "I'll actually take it to go," you end up telling the waiter, so you can make it back to the office just in time to get down a few bites before your next meeting.

This is the anti-Olmsted scenario.

It's smooth serving at the new executive lunch spot, sitting at the intersection of 14th and Peachtree streets. You might recognize the address—formerly that of Trois restaurant. Legacy Restaurant Partners, which scooped up the airy space in its first foray into the Midtown area, has learned from its predecessor's demise. For starters, taking serious note of its proximity—700 yards, to be exact—to about 2,200 attorneys and hundreds of other nearby businesses, impeccable service is of utmost importance. Need to be in and out in less than an hour? The rapid-fire kitchen, with six line cooks flipping and plating under the watchful eye of Executive Chef Bernie McDonough, has got your back. Long business

meeting with clients? Your server won't hound you to order until you give the signal. Your corporate card's never been so well-charged.

Olmsted's open seating plan is so perfectly unfussy that it invokes a sense of calm—the kind of "aah" that comes after decluttering a closet. The floor-to-ceiling windows and a garden view do all the talking, beyond white walls and flooring left over from its Trois days. The decor of the 140-seat room is organic-meets-architectural, with a contemporary edge. Standout additions include a textured, leaf-like fabric wrap around its massive concrete columns, and Alan Avery Art Company's Ellen Jantzen's three-dimensional, digitally manipulated photographs of trees are mounted on steel easels in the center of the room. The look is unpretentious, but comes with deeper meaning—as does everything at Olmsted.

Take its name, for instance, which pays homage to Frederick Law Olmsted, whose landscape designs influenced the layout of Atlanta CONTINUED...

Olmsted

1180 Peachtree St., Suite A
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Lunch: Mon.-Fri., 11AM-3PM
Brunch: Sat.-Sun., 11AM-3PM
Events: Mon.-Sun., 4PM-2AM

Appetizers and sides: \$5-\$14
Entrees: \$9-\$22

Brunch, Anyone?

On weekends, Olmsted transforms into a neighborhood hangout, with a delish array of brunch items, including aggressive Bloody Marys, brioche French toast, McDonough's "secret" recipe fried chicken and in-house cured and smoked Canadian bacon. Loosen up while you loosen your belt.

Host With the Most

When Olmsted's not brunching and lunching, it's all about playing hosts: It boasts a dual-level 9,500-square-foot event space.



Park It Here

Valet is complimentary for diners. Or, there's a self-park option with validation for up to two hours.

Dress the Part

Sport smart attire for a business lunch; save the relaxed-casual duds for weekend brunch.

Sipping Notes

Your boozy lunch is supported only by wine and beer. Liquor is not in the lineup on weekdays.

...CONTINUED neighborhoods like Inman Park (the city's first suburb) and Druid Hills. The designer's goal was often to preserve areas of natural beauty for public enjoyment amid urban development, much like his name's current incarnation.

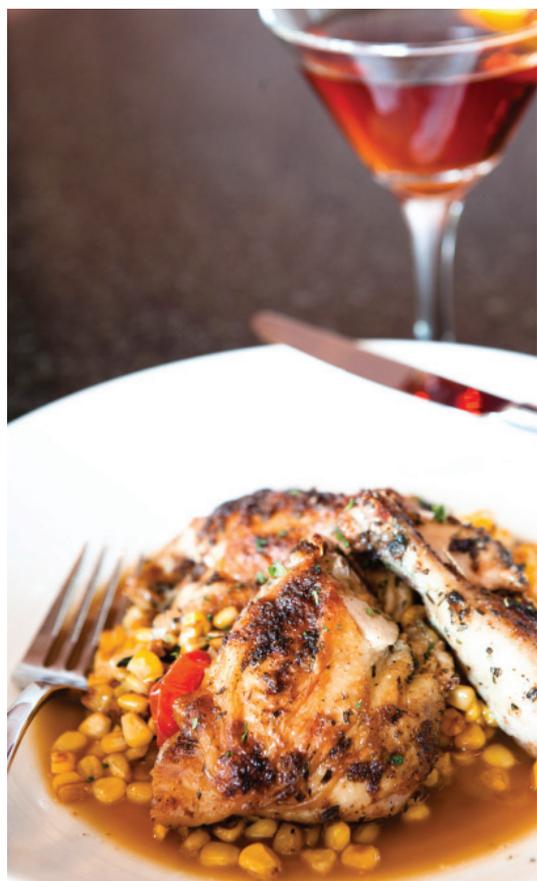
Unlike its streamlined surroundings, however, at first glance, Olmsted's menu seems a bit confused. But look closer, and you'll see two distinct directions emerge: New England influences and Southern inspiration, with a heavy emphasis on fresh, seasonal produce and seafood. The pairing stems from McDonough's Bostonian roots and 12-plus years spent in coastal Savannah and the Low Country.

"The focus is on keeping the food simple and approachable," says McDonough. "I'm into sustainable fisheries and agriculture wherever possible, too." He also sources the best locally—goat cheese from Decimal Place Farm and tomatoes from Dan the Tomato Man appear on the menu.

You won't crave a post-lunch nap, thanks to the restaurant's culinary idealism of "less is more." Start with one of the daily soups: Pureed roasted tomato and herb, with a beautiful smoky aftertaste, is just the thing for a fall day; and New England



...the test of a good restaurant is always the chicken dish... and this one is no slouch. It's no wonder after what the juicy bird has been through—brined, dried and rubbed down with olive oil blended with garlic-caramelized shallots and fresh herbs, all before being doused with a signature chicken spice and then slow-roasted to perfection.



clam chowder—McDonough's favorite—made with freshly shucked quahogs (large surf clams), is creamy, without being weighed down with a typical thick rye. Or, feast your taste buds on the steak tartare, artfully presented with a quail egg yolk on top of the sirloin mound. Just prepare your palate for a strong taste of capers and cornichon.

For an entree, the absolute can't-miss item on the menu is the lobster roll: a griddled, lightly buttered split-top bun filled to the hilt with succulent cold meat, pulled from live, hard-shell North Atlantic lobster that's cooked fresh each morning. And, let's face it—the test of a good restaurant is always the chicken dish... and this one is no slouch. It's no wonder after what the juicy bird has been through—brined, dried and rubbed down with olive oil blended with garlic-caramelized shallots and fresh herbs, all before being doused with a signature chicken spice and then slow-roasted to perfection.

If you can swing a dessert course, it won't disappoint. It's a toss-up between the triple-fudge brownie and the trifle. Compactly served in a Mason jar, the trifle sports layers upon layers of delicate vanilla-bean custard, bourbon caramel, almond sponge cake, seasonal fruits and candied almonds for a nice crunch. Simple perhaps, but deeply layered in thought and execution.

It seems that's the norm at this luxury lunch spot. ■

THE BITE TRACK
Clockwise from above: The Chairman's steak tartare; Tanglewood Farms roasted half chicken; triple-fudge brownie with vanilla ice cream

