

MODERN LUXURY

MICHIGAN AVENUE



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ZOIEY DEUTCH



Savoir Flair

WITH MARCHESA, A VETERAN DINING DUO BRINGS EUROPEAN ELEGANCE (AND A TOUCH OF WHIMSY) TO RIVER NORTH.

BY J.P. ANDERSON

If the walls of 535 N. Wells could talk, they'd have plenty of juicy stories of the past 100 years, from gin-soaked nights as a jazz club to 15 years as chef Suzy Crofton's Michelin-starred dining spot Crofton on Wells. Now, after a quiet few years, the space is back and buzzing as Marchesa, an art-filled restaurant and lounge on three lavishly decorated floors. It's the brainchild of dining and nightlife veterans Kathryn Sullivan Alvera and Jason Clark (Narcisse, Prosecco), and their sophisticated stamp is all over it, from the eclectic, fine art-filled decor inspired by the Peggy Guggenheim Museum to the menu, which envisions a "culinary tour through Europe" by 20th-century *bonne vivante* Marchesa Luisa Casati. It all adds up to an atmosphere that feels refreshingly grown-up for the neighborhood but also, like the Marchesa herself, decidedly unstuffy. "Like Jason always

says," Sullivan Alvera notes, "we're welcoming people into our home every night, for a simple glass of wine or a full three-course dinner. It's just good food, good service, good ambiance."

That ambiance extends to the downstairs Cave, a sexy, clubby space where DJs spin and cocktails flow, and the second-floor Apartment, whose refined surroundings welcome private events and the occasional opera performance. Come alfresco season, the scene will flow out to the sidewalk with four primo tables among lush greenery, and a tented back patio will beckon with vintage carpets, palms and billowing drapes, all but ensuring 535 N. Wells' return to must-visit status once more. "It's a little neighborhood historical institution," says Sullivan Alvera affectionately, "and now we get to be the caretakers of it. That's very exciting." 535 N. Wells St., 312.527.9535, marchesachicago.com

From left: Marchesa's culinary tour through Europe includes tempting fare like classic scallop dish coquilles St. Jacques; Eden chef Devon Quinn built his own greenhouse to source the restaurant's produce.

GROWING SEASON

FROM EXCLUSIVE FARM PARTNERSHIPS TO AN ON-SITE GREENHOUSE, THESE CHICAGO ESTABLISHMENTS ARE DOUBLING DOWN ON GOING GREEN. -NICOLE SCHNITZLER

1. EDEN Chef Devon Quinn grows more than 30 varieties of vegetables and herbs at this restaurant's on-site greenhouse, a 1,800-square-foot space that he built himself. Find them throughout the menu on dishes like recent offerings of suzuki crudo with sorrel granita and Little Gem Caesar salad with cured egg yolk and smoked tomato. 1748 W. Lake St., 312.366.2294, edeninchicago.com

2. X The team at this new Caribbean-inspired bar grow all of their own microgreens, herbs and edible flowers in-house, from sorrel and nasturtium to lavender and lemongrass. Spot some of them

on the living wall, a new kind of back bar used for a variety of cocktail infusions, cordials and garnishes. 3433 W. Fullerton Ave., drinkatx.com

3. SMYTH AND THE LOYALIST When John Shields and Karen Urie Shields teamed up with a local, 20-acre farm for an exclusive partnership, its yield was great—more than 100 ingredients inspire their plates year-round, from sea lettuce ice cream with rhubarb and rose to asparagus with lilac and pine. 177 N. Ada St., 773.913.3774, smythandtheloyalist.com



MARCHESA PHOTO BY ANTHONY TAHIER; FARM PHOTO BY ELLIOTT PAPINEAU