

THE **50** BEST
AMERICAN RESTAURANTS

OCTOBER 2001

Gourmet

THE MAGAZINE OF GOOD LIVING

**CHEFS'
SECRETS**

207 tips,
tools, and
recipes

**THE
restaurant
ISSUE**

INTRODUCING
THE FIRST
MAJOR
COOKING
ADVANCE
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fire

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CHEF CINDY HUTSON
ORTANIQUE ON THE MILE*
MIAMI, FL

RANKED #3 IN MIAMI

PORTS OF CALL: ROME; PORTOFINO, ITALY; CANNES; BARCELONA; MÁLAGA, SPAIN; CÁDIZ, SPAIN; CASABLANCA, MOROCCO; MADEIRA, PORTUGAL

*Restaurant noted in October 2000 Restaurant Issue
Chefs' participation is subject to change; some restrictions may apply

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**RADISSON SEVEN SEAS
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5 A shoebox-shaped restaurant with instantaneous service and addictive hot dogs, the original **Nu-Way** of Macon was established in 1916 by James Mallis and is now run by his descendants. Vivid red links are grilled and bedded in soft buns and are best topped with mustard, onions, and a fine-grained chili with a barbecue-sauce zing. To go whole hog, creamy-sweet coleslaw can be ladled on to complete the package. Or you can order a Scrambled Dog, which is a splayed-open bun crowned with a hot dog and smothered with chili and beans. Also notable: extra-chocolate chocolate milk and soft drinks served over "flaky ice." **428 Cotton Avenue, Macon, Georgia (478-743-6593).**

6 **Rutt's** hot dogs are known as rippers because their skin tears and crinkles when they are deep-fried. The oil bath turns the pork and beef links rugged, dark, and chewy on the outside, while the interior remains soft and juicy. (Wienie wimps can order an In and Outer, which spends less time in the fat and stays thoroughly pink and plump.) Most people get their rippers with Rutt's spicy relish, made from onions and finely chopped carrots and cabbage. Dine in a wide-open mess hall with high counters at the windows that provide a view of the parking lot. Stand and eat, and for entertainment, enjoy the calls of the countermen as they sing out, "Twins, all the way," meaning a pair of rippers with mustard and relish. **417 River Road, Clifton, New Jersey (973-779-8615).**

7 "THE LANGUAGE YOU USE IN CHURCH IS GOOD ENOUGH FOR IN HERE" says a sign on the wall of **Skin Thrasher's**, where the entrée menu consists of one item—hot dogs—and side dishes are limited to a bag of chips. The dogs are small and beautiful, made especially for the 1946-vintage luncheonette (a former pool hall), and they are served on steaming buns with an option of chili on top. You will eat them perched on a stool at the Formica counter or on a rickety folding chair at one of a few random tables, which you'll share with strangers at lunchtime. Coke is the preferred beverage, but beer is also available—no more than two per customer. The restaurant's name, by the way, comes from founder Lloyd T. Thrasher, who once got a haircut so short he acquired the nickname Skin. **203 Hudgens Street, Anderson, South Carolina (864-225-9229).**

8 The excellence of **Ted's** is in the cooking method: Sahlen's brand frankfurters are sizzled to crispness on a grate over a charcoal fire. As they cook, the chef pokes them with a fork, slaps them, squishes them, and otherwise abuses them. This allows them to suck in maximum smoke flavor. Consult with countermen, known as dressers, to select garnishes and condiments. The hot sauce, a peppery concoction laced with bits of relish, is not to be missed. To accompany a foot-long and a basket of onion rings, the beverage of choice in western New York is loganberry juice, which is like a glamorous version of Kool-Aid. **2312 Sheridan Drive, Tonawanda, New York (716-834-6287).**

9 Not to slight its hot dog, which is a firm-fleshed beef and pork sausage, or the bun, which is bakery-fresh, but **Super Duper Weenie's** condiments are stupendous. The sauerkraut, chili, and onion sauce are all made from scratch, and the relish is made from cucumbers that chef Gary Zemola pickles himself. Super Duper Weenie, which started as a mobile truck but is now a minuscule diner, makes ordering easy by offering basic configurations. These include the New Englander—with kraut, bacon, mustard, relish, and onion—which Gary devised based on fond memories of the franks served at Savin Rock, in West Haven, Connecticut, and the kraut-topped New Yorker, inspired by Manhattan's street-corner carts. We say the latter is 500 percent better than any actual New York City street wiener. **306 Black Rock Turnpike, Fairfield, Connecticut (203-334-DOGS).**

10 A **Pink's** counterman snags an all-beef dog like a shortstop snaring a line drive (though with a bun for a glove); then come streaks of mustard, raw onion, and a spill of Day-Glo-orange no-bean chili. Although prep time is under a minute, expect to wait in line to place an order, and expect dining facilities that consist of the sidewalk. The chili is made from Paul Pink's original formula, and chili dogs have made Pink's an honored dive since 1939. Other breeds of pup are worth eating, too: the Polish pastrami and Swiss cheese dog; the Guadalajara Dog, piled with taco toppings; a Burrito Dog (that's two, wrapped in a tortilla); and the foot-long Jalapeño Dog. **709 North LaBrea Boulevard, Los Angeles (323-931-4223).**