

LA REVIEW

RATINGS TAG



5.8

Girl & The Goat

FUSION ARTS DISTRICT

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KAT HONG JANUARY 13, 2022

Following in the footsteps of Walt Disney, Robin Williams, Chaka Khan, and that random Portillo's in Buena Park we go to whenever our body demands Italian beef, Girl & The Goat in the Arts District is a Chicago transplant. Since opening in 2010, the Asian fusion-ish restaurant's flagship location—a massive Capital-R restaurant in the West Loop run by Stephanie Izard—has become a Chicago institution, a place to take wide-eyed out-of-towners who worship competition cooking shows or coworkers cool enough to hang with. It's as famous as any other name that shows up when googling "people from Chicago," and so prolific, as our writer living there puts it, "your grandma who lives in Florida has probably heard of it."

TL;DR: This restaurant is a big deal.



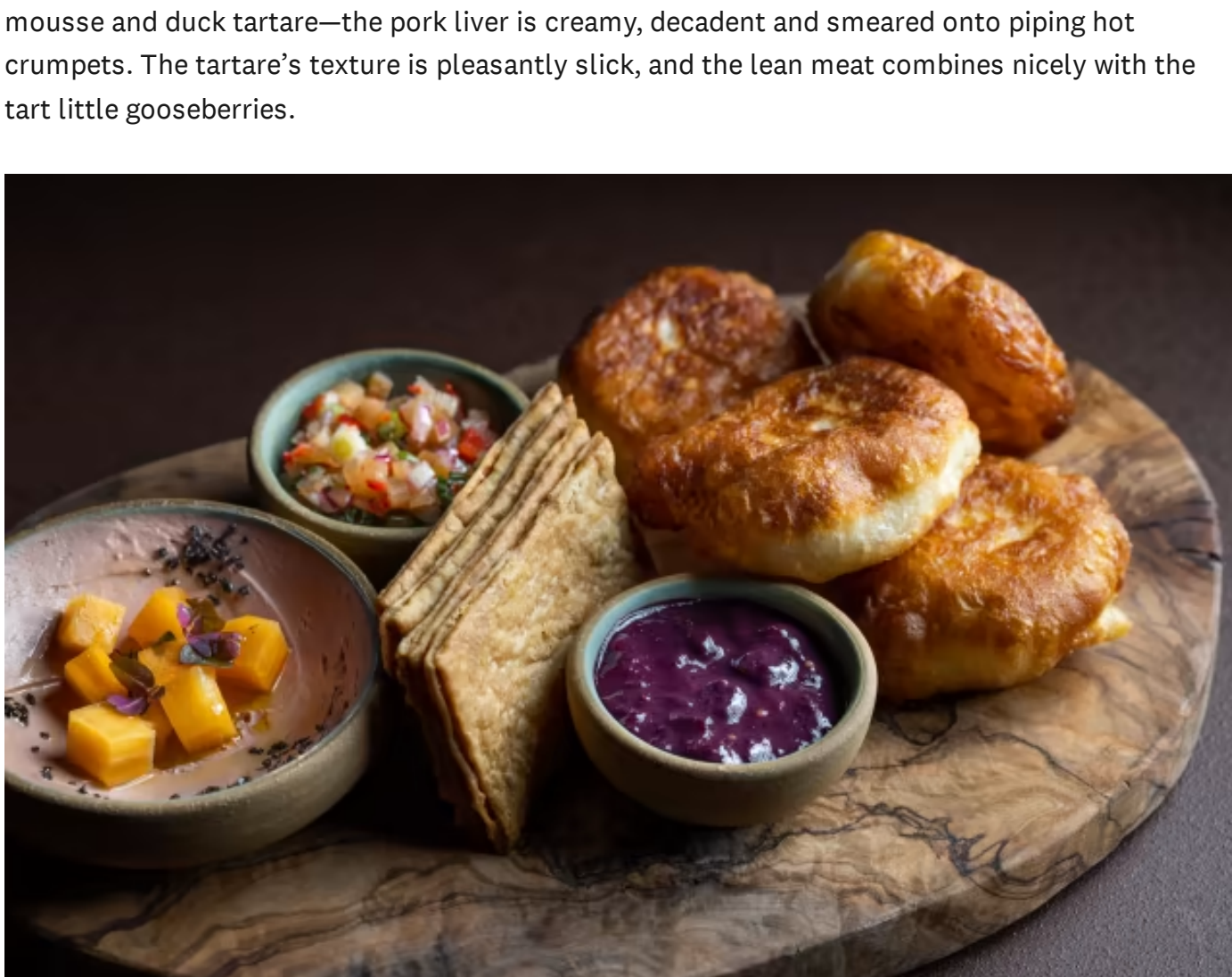
Photos by Jakob Layman

With floor-to-ceiling windows, a red brick exterior, and so many potted plants, you might mistake it for a nursery, Girl & The Goat LA looks just as impressive as its Midwestern counterpart. But when we eat here, we don't feel cool, or in-the-know, or the way we do after driving 30 miles for a big beef combo. Mostly, we felt stressed out. The menu reads like an Epcot directory, jumping between Korean and Mexican and Chinese and Indian and Greek and Italian and Thai flavors so quickly, it feels like a gimmick. According to their website, Girl & Goat LA specializes in "the global influences of its Midwestern flagship" while mixing in "California produce and local flavors." But what the hell is a local flavor anyway? Pacific sea salt? Smog?

Girl & The Goat wants everything at once, whether that's ten different cuisines on the same plate or filling a 200-person dining room with hordes of hungry people and not enough servers. Dinner here can feel claustrophobic—LED lights cascade over tables, palm trees loom overhead, and food runners dart around in the dark. The five senses are completely overwhelmed, everything is dialed up to an 11, and on our last visit, our server ghosted us halfway through the meal and plates weren't refreshed even once. Throughout the night, we collected a pile of congealed fish sauce, chicken liver, and something called "gochujang mayo." The whole thing reminded us of a college cafeteria, where sushi and shumai and glass noodles are carelessly thrown together and very little of it tastes good.



The goat curry tastes sickly sweet, almost candy-like, and in desperate need of rice (not the tortilla chips it was served with). Lamb skewers arrive skewer-less and shaped like logs, covered in pickled craisins, unnamed crunchy bits, and a thin yuzu cilantro sauce. And the pork shank, Girl & The Goat's supposed piece de resistance, is just messy—a dissonant assortment of braised meat, lettuce cups, honeynut squash, mustard, naan bread, shitake mushrooms, and hoisin mayo. Although the presentation, small plates gathered around a hunk of meat, looks "inspired" by Korean ssam, this dish completely misses the mark. Instead, concentrate on the pork liver mousse and duck tartare—the pork liver is creamy, decadent and smeared onto piping hot crumpets. The tartare's texture is pleasantly slick, and the lean meat combines nicely with the tart little gooseberries.



So, should you eat here? It depends. If you're looking for incredible food or top-notch curry, short ribs, or naan, you should probably look elsewhere. (Luckily, LA has no shortage of wonderful Asian restaurants.) For an impressive night out in the Arts District, we prefer [Damian](#); for private dining situations, check out [Bestia](#) or [Bavel](#), both located less than a mile away. Or, if you're really into having Asian fusion food baked by a big name, out-of-town chef, then why not try [Majordomo](#)? It's kind of the same thing, except ingredients aren't thrown together simply because they're "Asian." Although, you should probably just get some Italian beef instead—we hear Portillo's serve a mean strawberry shake.

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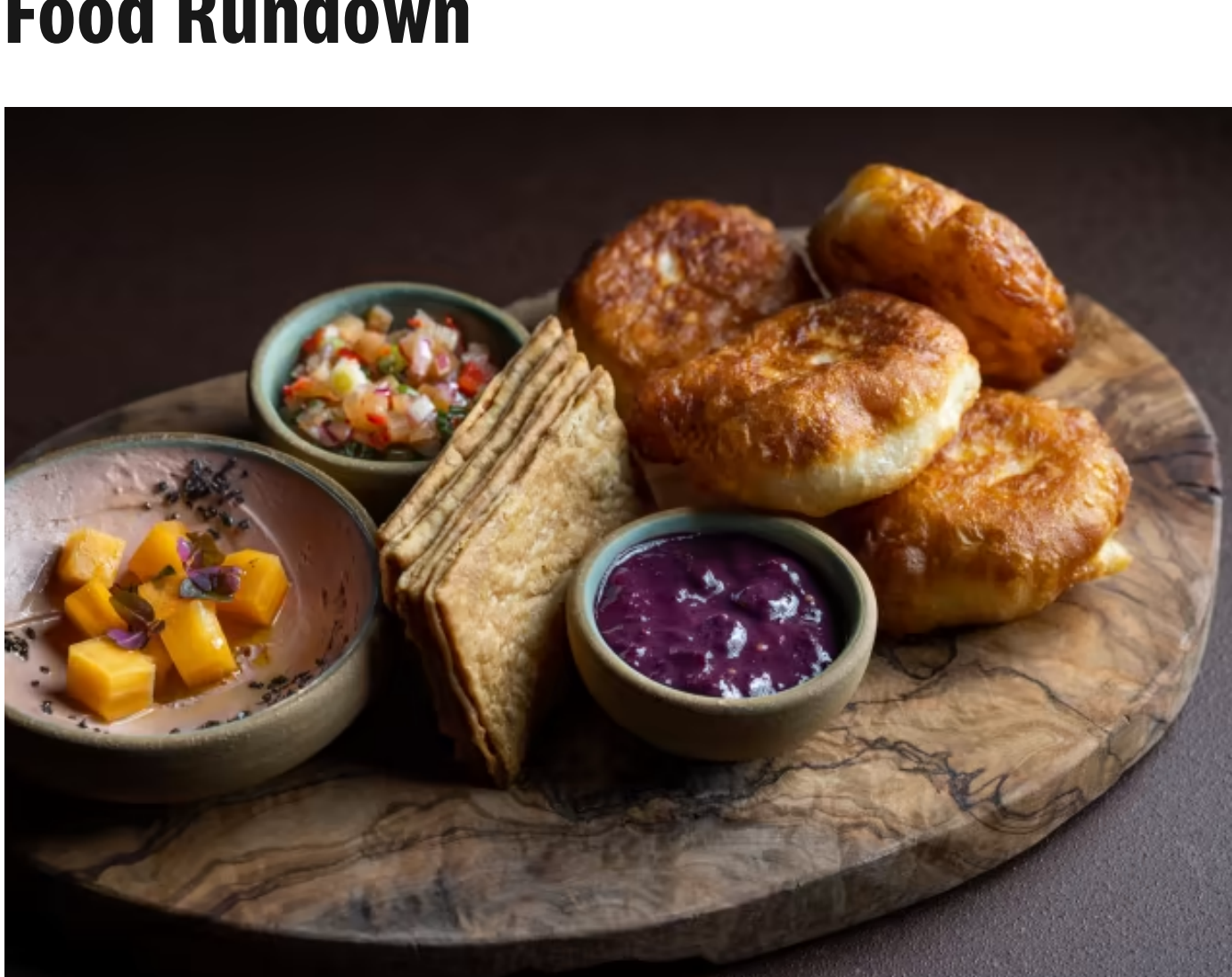
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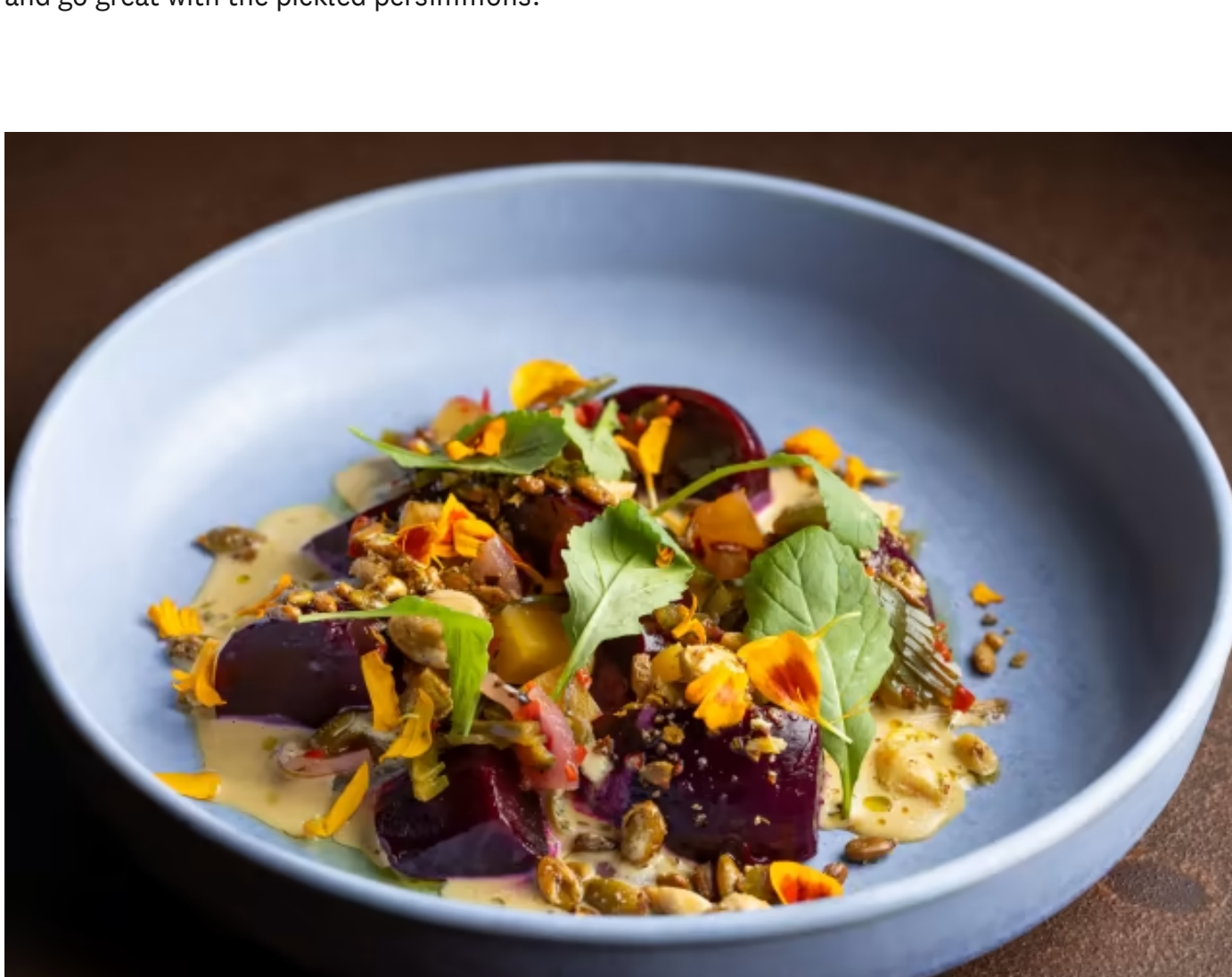
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Food Rundown



Pork Liver Mousse

A dish so fancy, you'll want to order tea and drink it pinkies up. Crumpets are hot and flaky, slathered in butter in the way that goes great with jam. The pork liver mousse is beyond creamy, and go great with the pickled persimmons.

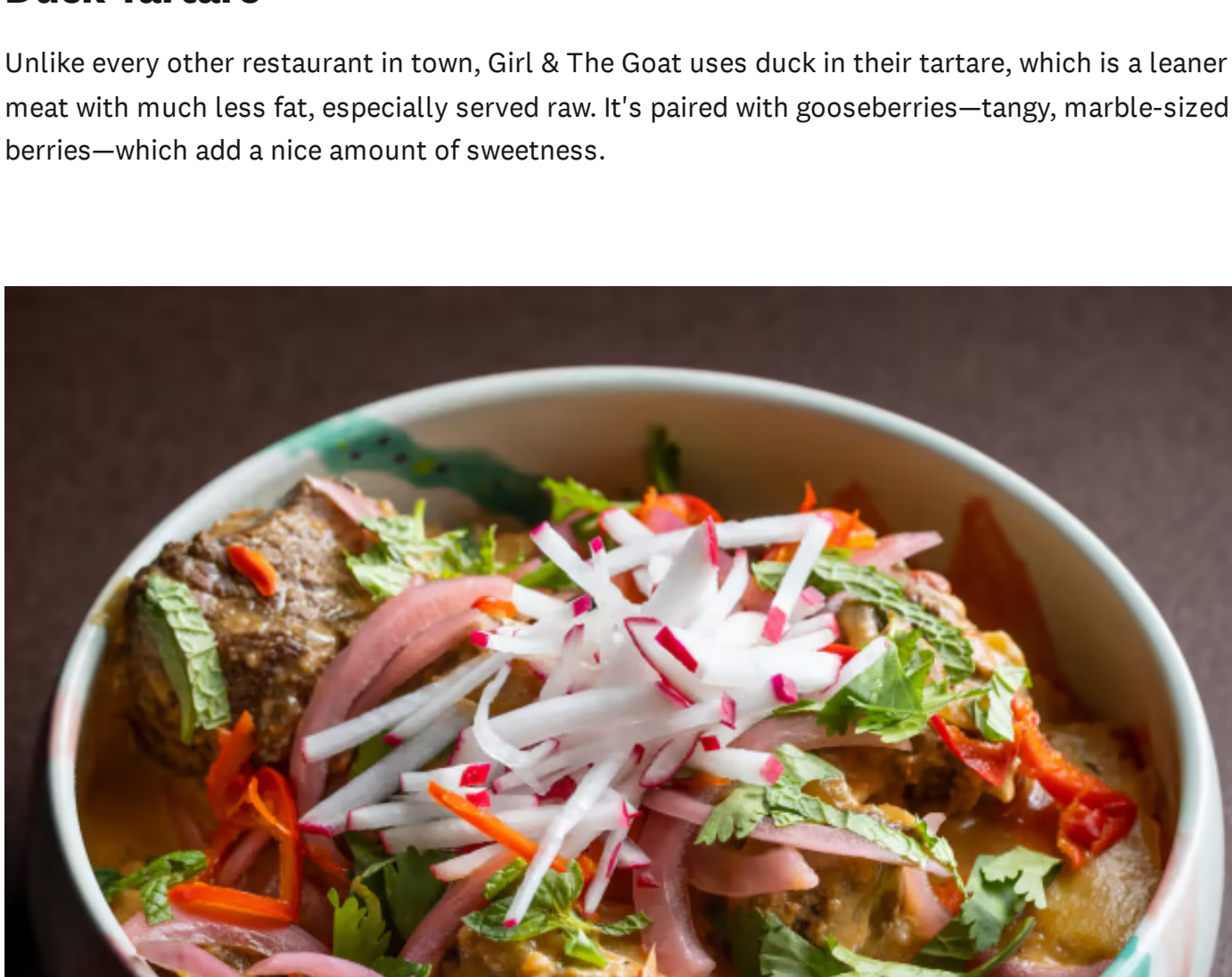


Roasted Beets

The beets are a slimy, off-putting texture and nothing really goes together. The yuzu koshu vinaigrette overpoweres the root vegetable, which clashes against the salty giardiniera and party nuts. Skip this.

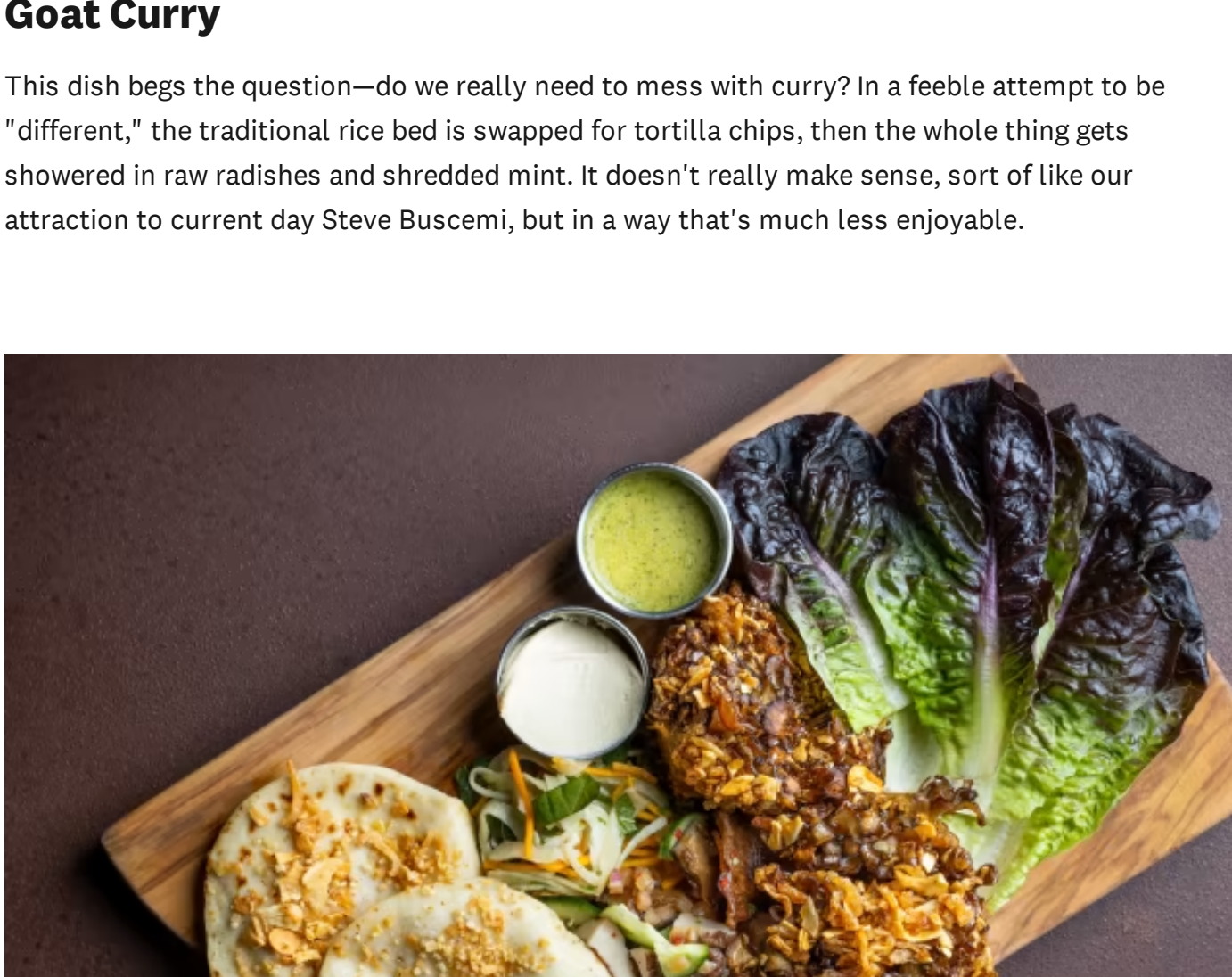
Duck Tartare

Unlike every other restaurant in town, Girl & The Goat uses duck in their tartare, which is a leaner meat with much less fat, especially served raw. It's paired with gooseberries—tangy, marbled-sized berries—which add a nice amount of sweetness.



Goat Curry

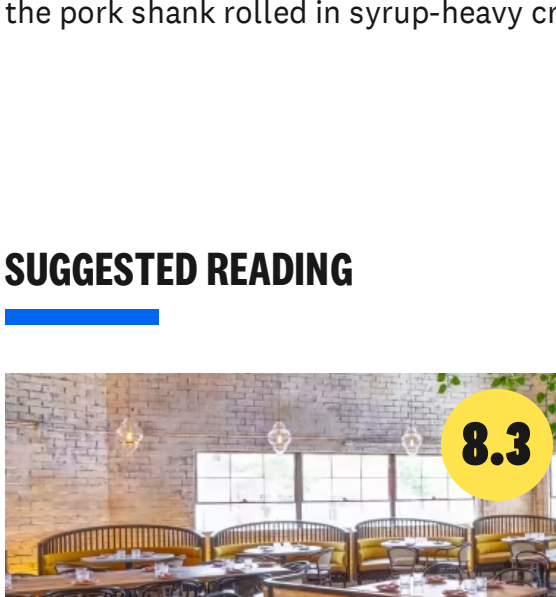
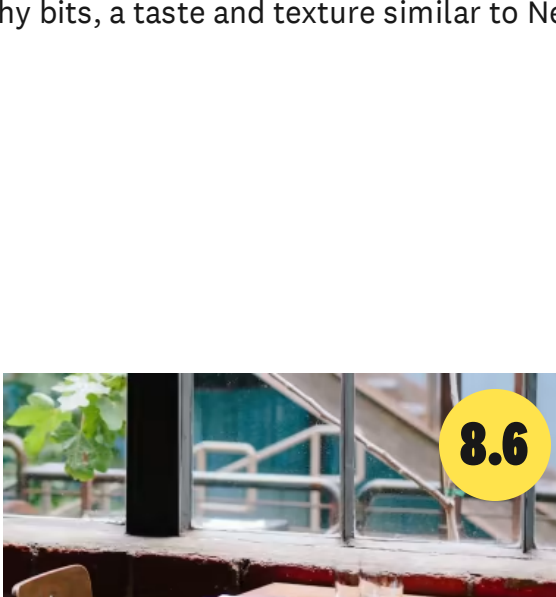
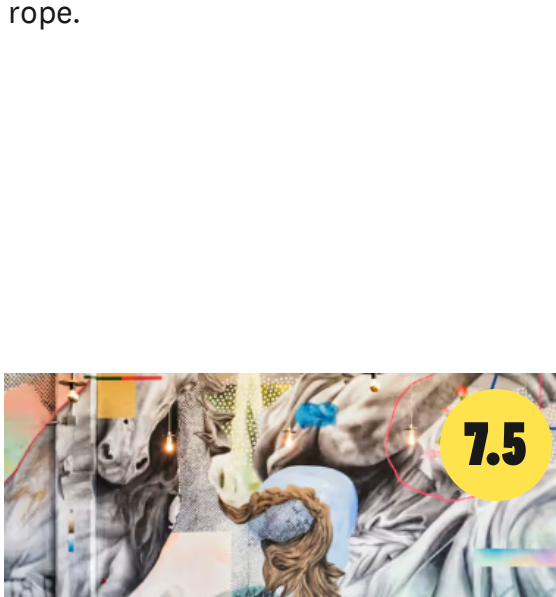
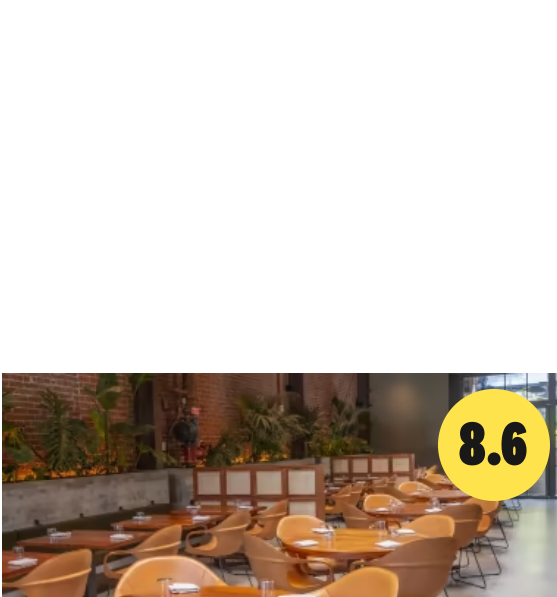
This dish begs the question—do we really need to mess with curry? In a feeble attempt to be "different," the traditional rice bed is swapped for tortilla chips, then the whole thing gets showered in raw radishes and shredded mint. It doesn't really make sense, sort of like our attraction to current day Steve Buscemi, but in a way that's much less enjoyable.



Sticky Glazed Pork Shank

Things we like: its massive size (big enough to share between two to four people) and the vegetable sides. Things we don't: the chaotic blend of flavors (lettuce cups and hoisin mayo?) and the pork shank rolled in syrup-heavy crunchy bits, a taste and texture similar to Nerds rope.

SUGGESTED READING

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|  <p>Bavel
MIDDLE EASTERN ARTS DISTRICT</p> <p>Bavel is one of LA's most exciting restaurants, and this Middle Eastern spot in the Arts District will have you planning a return visit immediately.</p> |  <p>Bestia
ITALIAN ARTS DISTRICT DOWNTOWN LA</p> <p>For Italian food in Los Angeles, it still doesn't get any better than Bestia in the Arts District.</p> |  <p>Rossoblu
ITALIAN DOWNTOWN LA</p> <p>Rossoblu is a fancy Italian restaurant in the Fashion District.</p> |  <p>Damian
MEXICAN ARTS DISTRICT</p> <p>Damian is a big, shiny restaurant in the Arts District that serves excellent Mexican food with an ambiance we wish was sold by the bottle.</p> |
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