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TASTE RESTAURANTS: THE BEST OF 2003

The
best
of

In praise of the many fine restaurants that opened this year, we offer our first annual awards for culinary enterprise. Whatever your gustatory preference, there's something on the menu for everyone.

Honorable mention

FireLake Grill House & Cocktail Bar

Sophisticated and sleek, this hotel dining room shows that good looks count — and so does good food.

FireLake Grill House & Cocktail Bar debuted next to the hotel's nicely refurbished street-level lobby. The handsome dining room and bar (by Knauer Inc. of Chicago and Sue Firestone Associates of Santa Barbara, Calif.) has a welcoming, big-city aura and its early-morning to late-night hours and affordable prices cater to a broad spectrum.

The mass-market approach doesn't translate into predictable hotel food, though. Instead, chef Paul Lynch's eclectic, deftly executed menu focuses on hickory-fired rotisserie meats, first-rate chops and other appealingly updated grill fare, with an emphasis on locally procured ingredients. Curt Carlson, the late Radisson magnate, would have loved it.

FireLake Grill House & Cocktail Bar, 31 S. 7th St., Minneapolis, 612-216-3473