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knife & fork

The Insider's Guide to Atlanta Restaurants

Price	Recommended	Cheerful Considers	Cost	Beers Cabs
★★★★★	★★★★★	XXXXXX	\$\$\$\$	Chimney Sweep, Back Eight
★★★★	★★★★	XXXXXX	\$\$\$	The Missing Piece (Futures)
★★★	★★★	XXXXXX	\$	East Point
★	★	XXXXXX		Krog Bar
○	○	XXXXXX		Providence Co (F&M)
●	●	X		Price Transparency
				Sepp's Taverna

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Krog Bar ★★XX

112 Krog St.
Open Mon-Thu 4:30-midnight;
Fri & Sat 4:30 p.m.-2 a.m.
No reservations (404-524-1618)
Credit cards: AE, V, MC, DC \$ to \$\$

Restaurateurs love to play Monopoly and occupy the real estate closest to them before competitors get a foothold. This sometimes leads to terrible decisions, but in the case of Kevin Rathbun, establishing a tiny wine bar in the super-cute detached building overlooking his restaurant seems like a brilliant idea.

Just like Mario Batali's **Bar Japon** in New York, **Krog Bar** shouldn't be considered a dining spot. One could cram \$100 worth of delicious duck prosciutto *tramezzini* (crustless triangular Italian tea sandwiches), *crudi*, almonds, and olives into one's mouth and still crave a bowl of spaghetti at the end.

Krog Bar is that rarity in America, let alone Atlanta: a true tapas bar, a place to start or end the evening with a bit of inspired drinking and nibbling in a space designed for communal interaction rather than dating night tête-à-tête. You may have to share a counter-height table with perfect strangers or belly up to a slim ledge. The pocket-size patio will have you cheek-by-jowl with like-minded folks.

The Johnson Studio has done a marvelous job of transforming an industrial-chic former public relations office into a European bar of an uncertain vintage. Amber globe lights, panels of pecky cypress, a marble bar, and beautifully displayed bottles of wine lend glamour to a space that feels intimate but isn't experienced as corny or romantic.

The first thing you should turn to is the "el vino" side of the menu. Forty-five selections, most of them Spanish or French, come with all the information you need to make an educated choice. A witty column entitled "If You Like" advises those who love dirty martinis that they will probably be happy trying a manzanilla sherry. A Lorinon crianza

tempranillo is recommended to those who normally favor fruitier rich pinots noirs, and a Ribera del Duero Contado de Haza has an effect similar to a "bricklike cab." And for those who really like to get to know wines, the staff likes to pour little tastes before they introduce a particular glass.

All the food is served chilled or at room temperature. The nibbles include arbequina olives, marcona almonds, homemade mozzarella with chili oil and sea salt, fennel with sundried tomato, grilled artichokes with saffron aioli, and white anchovy filets with lemon and extra-virgin olive oil.

People who arrive famished may want to start with a little ramekin of nearly liquid chicken liver mousse with cava gelée and keep asking for more bread. A comparison of cured hams is a worthy exercise on an empty stomach: displayed lovingly on the bar and sliced by hand, the Spanish serrano and the Italian prosciutto di Parma assert their very different natures. Chorizo, lomo (paprika-cured pork loin), soppressata, salami calabrese, *bresaola*, and a wonderful sea salt-cured tuna called *mojama* can be ordered separately or combined into a *piccolo affetati*.

A small selection of *crudi* includes ahi tuna with sundried apricot vinegar and Tuscan olive oil and yellowtail with piquillo peppers, chile oil, and sherry vinaigrette, both popular next door.

Some people eat cheese at the beginning of a meal. We don't. The proper place for **Krog Bar's** Cabrales blue, Mahon, Idiazabal, toma, etc. is after we have come back from a cheeseless restaurant and want to hang out with a great glass of wine and a few of our favorite tastes in the world.

We don't know that people should be encouraged to eat desserts in a tapas bar, but for those who want a little something sweet, there is delicious homemade cherry gelato and a chocolate bruschetta sprinkled with flavor-enhancing salt ■