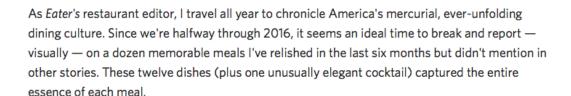


A dozen dazzling dishes from our national restaurant critic's travels across the country by Bill Addison, July 16, 2016
Photos by Bill Addison



es, I'm that guy in the restaurant – the one who first trots out an actual camera to take pictures of his dinner, and then follows up with a few smart phone snaps for good measure. I am the vampire's inverse; I crave natural light. I'll plead for a table by a window. This is my job (the best one in the world).





## Pizzeria Mercato, Carrboro, NC

Southern food lovers lost one of the region's rarest jewels when Ben and Karen Barker decided to close Durham's soul-satisfying Magnolia Grill in 2013 after 26 years in business. Their son, Gabe, followed his parents to the professional stoves, cooking for several years at San Francisco's beloved Pizzeria Delfina. He returned to North Carolina's Research Triangle last year and, with an assist from his folks, launched Mercato in February. Menu items stretch far beyond the excellent, puffy-edged pies, including gorgeous small vegetable dishes prompted by the exuberant Carrboro Farmers Market nearby on Saturdays. Honestly, though? I was most excited to once again swoon over desserts by Karen Barker, especially this lilting custard cake with strawberries and vanilla bean ice cream. 408 West Weaver St, Carrboro, NC, (919) 967-2277, pizzeriamercatonc.com