

# WHY SANDWICH CHEFS ARE OUR NEW FOOD HEROES

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Innovative chefs are channeling their creativity into the humble sandwich—  
as much a symbol of the new seriousness of casual cuisine as it is an  
endless opportunity to reinvent everything from the bread to the spread.

*by kate krader food photographs by jonny rabinov*

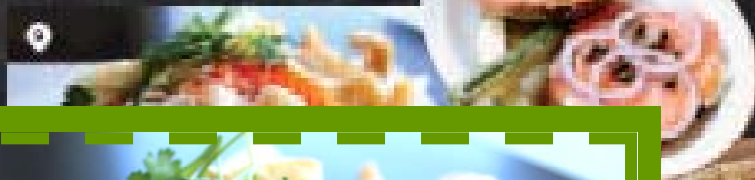
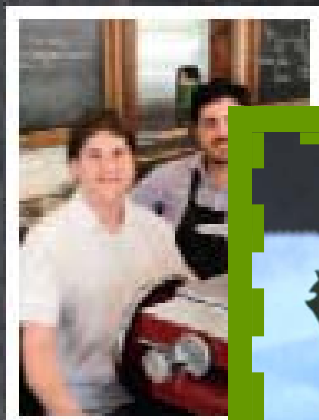
# CHEFS LOVE TO FIND A DECEPTIVELY SIMPLE DISH TO OBSESS OVER.

For the past decade, we've lived in an era of pumped-up burger cooks, who have done impossibly good—and not so good—things with ground beef and a bun. Now, finally, there's news for everyone who has had more than enough burgers. It's time to make way for the sandwich chefs and their incredible creations.

It's not as if elite cooks haven't made a sandwich before: Superchef Thomas Keller has launched some amazing ones at his nine-year-old Bouchon bakeries. But now, well-trained chefs are opening up dedicated sandwich places, where they make almost everything from scratch and redefine classic concepts. "I see a lot of chefs going to sandwiches," says Roy Choi, an F&W Best New Chef 2010. He knows more than a little about culinary trends, having helped launch the food-truck craze a few years back with his Los Angeles-based Kogi BBQ Korean tacos. "The new sandwiches are extremely well-composed," he says. "It's the 2.0 of casual food becoming more complex." After all, chefs have been curing their own meat for years; they just needed a place to put it besides a charcuterie plate.

Likewise, many of these chefs have been experimenting with bread. At Bäco Mercat in L.A., for instance, Josef Centeno bakes a special flatbread he's dubbed the "bäco," using it as a base for sandwiches like his crispy *panko*-crusted fried shrimp with spicy cardamom (recipe, p. 168). As a rule, chefs also like to play around with sauces, and sandwich experts are no exception. At the New York City-based No. 7 Sub shops, Tyler Kord makes an updated smoky French dressing that wouldn't be out of place at an elegant restaurant; instead, it tops his grilled-asparagus hero. And that sandwich is cheaper than anything you'd find at a fancy place: just \$9.

# SANDWICH CHEFS TO KNOW



**1. alex young, and zingerman's breadhouse** Young uses justly famed Zingerman's ingredients for sandwiches like the job-mimed Cornish hen. [zingermanbreadhouse.com](http://zingermanbreadhouse.com).

**2. atlanta**  
**ANNE QUAY HARRISON, 1** At their food-the-chef-offer bench m. r. r.

**3. brooklyn**  
**RACHEL AND CUTT'S** On specialties 7-rotent, mor-cornel-rotent.

**4. carrollton**  
**MATT REAL** On the juke-grilled-pork [realsandwich.com](http://realsandwich.com).

**5. charleston, sc**  
**STUART TRACY, BUTCHER & BEE** Hours are limited (9 a.m. to 3 p.m., 11 p.m. to 3 a.m.); sandwiches are unrestricted. [butcherandbee.com](http://butcherandbee.com).

**6. denver**  
**RICE RAYLESS, BOCO** The iconic chef uses his wood-burning oven to make sensational Mexican tortas. [ricelaplace.com](http://ricelaplace.com).

**7. houston**  
**BOB MOORE, THE WHOLE DE** McEwan's brother under Green.

**11. los angeles**  
**JOSEF CORTENO, SACO MERCAT** Corteno makes his own chewy version of focaccia and fillings such as beef tongue, short-rib. [becomeital.com](http://becomeital.com).

**12. los angeles**  
**MATTHEW RICEFORD AND MIKE**

**16. philadelphia**  
**CHRIS BIANCO, PANE BIANCO** The pizza genius takes on sandwiches; his bread is spectacular. [panebianco.com](http://panebianco.com).

**17. portland, or**  
**TOMMY HABETS AND NICK WOOD, SLINK** Habets cooked at NYC's Mow Grill; Wood, at Brennan's in New Orleans—inspiration for their maglietta. [slinksandwiches.com](http://slinksandwiches.com).

**18. portland, or**  
**THEO TAYLOR, EDIE'S ARTISAN BAKERY** Don't miss the 6-year-fused croque monsieur on the small, top-notch menu. [ediesartisan.com](http://ediesartisan.com).

**19. san francisco**  
**LEO BECKERMAN AND EVAN BLOOM, WISE SONS** A modern Jewish deli with house-cured pastrami. [www.wisecorner.com](http://www.wisecorner.com).

**20. st. louis**  
**MARK LUCAS, FODDIE'S SANDWICH EMPORIUM** Lucas uses his own homegrown vegetables for recipes like the black-bean burger with roasted peppers. [foddies.com](http://foddies.com).

## 9. los angeles

**MICHAEL VOLTAGGIO, INK.SACK**

The specialty here: flavor-packed 4-inch sandwiches. "I get bored eating a big sandwich," Voltaggio says. [mvink.com](http://mvink.com).

**10. los angeles**  
**BRANDON BAPTISTE, FUNDAMENTAL** Baptiste changes his menu frequently; look for the slow-cooked veal breast. [fundamental-la.com](http://fundamental-la.com).

**21. los angeles**  
**MARIO CASBONE AND RICH TORRES, PASM** Two of new Best New Chefs 2012 have created two of the city's best sandwiches: the meatball parm and the Sorrelito Club. [pasmnyc.com](http://pasmnyc.com).