

LAS VEGAS WEEKLY®



What should I do for **New Year's Eve**? Should I go to the Strip

and _____, or should I _____ at _____
VERB VERB PLACE IN VEGAS

with _____? Last year, my friends and I rented a/an
NAME OF FRIEND

_____, went to _____, drank excessive
ANIMAL CASINO

amounts of _____ and tried to recreate _____.
TYPE OF LIQUID NAME OF MOVIE

The year before that, I ran into _____ at _____.
LOCAL CELEBRITY LOCAL BAR

S/he was _____ with some stripper, as always.
VERB ENDING IN "ING"

Maybe I should just stay home this year and _____
VERB

the Weekly's **2011 critics' picks**. Or maybe I should turn to Page 16

and _____ the NYE Guide.
VERB



Wow, you're still reading? This type is really small. Since you've stuck with us this far, fill out the Mad Lib above and send a photo of it to backtalk@lasvegasweekly.com. You could win a fabulous prize (or just make us laugh). Happy New Year!





MARK THEIR WORDS

Three food-trend predictions for 2012

► We're going to see more of the same in 2012: quick-casual restaurants booming and fine dining finding success only on the Strip. Expect more talented chefs to sneak away from the tourist corridor and create affordable eats in the neighborhoods, especially Mexican and Asian cuisine concepts. **-BROCK RADKE**

► The Strip has become hopelessly moribund in its dining options (more steaks, anyone?) as the recession wears on. Spring Mountain Road is a different story. Bad times make for cheap rents, and great Japanese eats have proliferated there in the past couple of years, with more to come. Nakamura-Ya may soon become the Raku of Japanese pasta palaces, and a great bakery and traditional fish restaurant (both owned by Raku's Mitsuo Endo) are planned in the same shopping center. *Kanpai!* **-JOHN CURTAS**

► My bold 2012 trend predictions are twofold: Chef-driven events like the Saturday Night Truck Stop Back of House Brawl and Bread & Butter's pop up dinners will continue to propagate, and the food truck revolution is *not* dead, with the arrival of new trucks. I'm still hoping for *okonomiyaki* and gourmet PB&Js, but not on the same truck. **-JIM BEGLEY**



► **OFF-STRIP SKILLS** Brock Radke predicts more top chefs will find their way to the neighborhoods, as Bread & Butter's Chris Herrin did in 2011.

► **WHY DID THE CHICKEN CROSS THE ROAD?** To get into Rao's scarpariello, of course.

[BROCK RADKE]

1 ZOOZA BENNY (*Zoozacrackers, at Wynn Las Vegas*) Old-school deli gets decadent with chef Sammy Morse's house-made pastrami and corned beef stacked on crisp potato latkes with poached eggs, Swiss cheese and Russian dressing. I just drooled on my keyboard.

2 RICOTTA RAVIOLI WITH SMOKED SALMON (*Aureole, at Mandalay Bay*) This incredibly refined starting dish—a smoky, creamy masterpiece augmented with baby artichokes, sugar snap peas and a lemon-thyme sauce—packs enough flavor for an entire meal.

3 CHICKEN SCARPARELLO (*Rao's, at Caesars Palace*)

Perfect poultry and spicy-sweet Italian sausage swim in a sea of vinegary peppers and garlicky butter sauce. It's tough to pick a favorite dish at Rao's; it's even tougher not to order this one.

4 MAPLE GLAZED QUAIL (*Vic & Anthony's, at Golden Nugget*) The Nugget's steakhouse is Downtown's best restaurant overall because of inventive dishes like this, a beautifully caramelized bird that looks as good as it tastes.

5 CHIPS AND IRISH CURRY SAUCE (*Ri Rá, at Mandalay Place*) This is the guilty pleasure pick, full of simple savory goodness: crispy French fries (doesn't matter what they call them across the pond) are drizzled with a powerful curry-ish gravy. Consider it Irish poutine.