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Red Hot Milwaukee!?

Bright lights, beer city? Not so fast. Miller titan Milwaukee has been cleaning its closet of dive bars and dark warehouses to make room for several more flattering picks. Read this before your next road trip.

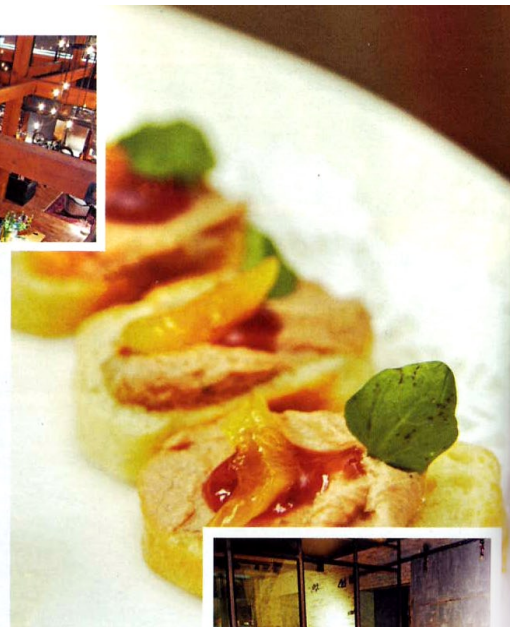
THE HOTEL Owner Tim Dixon has turned a 1907 warehouse into the **Iron Horse Hotel**, a spot run by boutique hotel group Desires and chic enough to draw an international crowd. ("Last week, we had a group from France, Italy and the UK," says Dixon. "They were amazing people to have hang out at your bar.") The lobby shows off its history with a 100-year-old pool table and 1920s Toledo drafting chairs, but in-room spa services are very 2009. This month, American restaurant Smyth opens; in fall, expect the Boiler Room, where you can sip cocktails in a giant hot tub. 500 W. Florida St., Milwaukee, 414.374.4766, theironhorsehotel.com.

THE RESTAURANT At the helm of classic French spot **Bartolotta's Lake Park Bistro**, Highland Park native, Kendall College grad and Spiaggia alum Adam Siegel won last year's James Beard award for Best Chef in the Midwest, putting Milwaukee dining on the map. On his current menu, try the

egg mollet salad, frisée with a soft-cooked egg and black truffle vinaigrette. 3133 E. Newberry Blvd., Milwaukee, 414.962.6300, lakeparkbistro.com.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD South of downtown and bordering Lake Michigan, the **Third Ward** gets hotter every day with new bars, boutiques and galleries. Our favorite add: **Cuvée**, a no-smoking Champagne bar where the bubbly's bucket drops into the custom-designed tables. 177 N. Broadway St., Milwaukee, 414.225.9800, cuveemke.com.

THE CONDO BOOM Looking to buy a weekend place? Ground breaks this fall on the **Moderne**, a 30-story downtown condo where prime units boast a sliding wall to create your own layout. The **Point on the River** revamped itself in February, adding amenities including a movie theater. And buyers are snapping up spots in the **Residences on Water**, 31 luxury units on Water Street. —M.C.



Clockwise from top left: The Iron Horse Hotel kept the Berger Bedding and Furniture Factory's original timber beams; paté at Bartolotta's Lake Park Bistro; the lobby at the Iron Horse Hotel.