left The interiors, designed by Square Feet Studio, take an ecclectic approach. *below* Blue crab beau monde with grit bread.

SOUTHERN SECRETS

At the Plaza on Ponce, chef Joey Ward's SOUTHERN BELLE and GEORGIA BOY play to contemporary culture

Written by LAUREN IVERSON

Photographed by DAVID CHRISTENSEN

above Crispy chicharrones from the farm. The firelit Golden Child cocktail with mezcal.

BLESS YOUR HEART. The luminosity of the neon letters radiates almost as intensely as the Southern slang's coded meaning upon entering chef Joey Ward's new restaurant, Southern Belle. "If you don't know what it means then you're not in on the secret," Ward chuckles.

Keep your eyes peeled for more messages that Ward communicates through his interiors. Imagery of famous and nonfamous women who inspire Ward covers the walls—including his grandmother and his home economics teacher, along with Scarlett O'Hara and Ruth Bader Ginsburg. The restaurant's name, Southern Belle, nods to Ward's wife, a former Miss Georgia-turned-attorney and he says, "the strongest woman I know."

Like the decor, guests are in for a surprise once they dive into the menu. Don't be shocked when you find Southern ingredients, like the root beer-braised short rib, served with Asian-inspired dishes, like Szechuan sweet potatoes. But that's not the only surprise: Limited to 16 guests at a time and accessed through a secret bookcase entrance, the reservation-only, Georgia Boy, provides a more intimate dining experience, serving an ever-changing, 10-course tasting menu.

Whatever your culinary preference, it's clear guests should expect the unexpected when dining at either concept. "I wanted to have the conversation from the beginning that this is Southern food because I'm a Southern chef," explains Ward. "I'm from Atlanta, and I'm celebrating modern Atlanta culture." *southernbelleatl.com*

THE SCOOP

get your greens: CSA BOXES

AT THE FARM: Farm-to-table is fresher than ever with SERENBE FARMS' CSA program. With options to enroll in a 15- or 30-week program, members choose seven organic produce items from each week's harvest and pick them up on the farm. Because they're harvested within 24 hours of pick-up day, the farm guarantees vegetables will be at their peak for both freshness and nutritional value. *serenbefarms.com*

AT YOUR DOOR: Unlike many other CSA boxes, FRESH HARVEST, a hub of Georgia farmers working together to create customizable baskets of produce, meats and eggs, delivers your order directly to your door. To reduce their carbon footprint, nearly all produce is sourced from farms within 70 miles of Atlanta, and all packaging—from ice packs to insulating foil—is reusable. Just return to your delivery person, no need for cleanup. *freshharvestga.com*

AT THE MARKET: A well-known vendor at local farmer's markets, RIVERVIEW FARMS' CSA box provides much more than organic nutrition. With various subscription plans to fit your needs, the farm updates their website weekly with ingredient lists, recipe ideas, storage tips and more. Going on vacation? Vacation holds freeze deliveries until you arrive back home so nothing goes to waste. *grassfedcow.com*

SERENBE FARMS BY J ASHLEY PHOTOGRAPHY