



A MOVABLE FEAST

What to do when you've savored the fare at the best restaurants in and around Boston one too many times? Set out, as many food lovers do each weekend, in search of something different. We got behind the wheel to find New England restaurants worth going out of your way for. By KIM ATKINSON. Photographs by CARL TREMBLAY



FOWL MOOD

Perfectly executed recipes like this roasted duck breast make New Hampshire's Bedford Village Inn worth the journey.



BEDFORD VILLAGE INN

BEDFORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE

When word spread that chef Joe Brenner, formerly culinary director at Todd English's Olive Group, had been tapped to take over the kitchen at this sprawling New Hampshire inn earlier this year, Olives fans made tracks north. How would Brenner fare in a new setting after all of those years of cooking rich, hearty, Mediterranean-inspired food at Olives in Charlestown and the company's many other restaurants? The answer is, just fine, thank you. Brenner's menu at this quaint inn is decidedly reminiscent of English's menu at Olives. An appetizer of braised short ribs was sweet and smoky in its full flavor, the meat perfectly cooked and rich, while roasted figs stuffed with Gorgonzola and wrapped in prosciutto recalled the earthy, hearty recipes of Brenner's former kitchen. Each menu item is seductive in its ingredients. Native lobster tempura is crisply fried and doused with sherry sauce and served with *fresh parsnips*, while *simple, slow-roasted chicken* comes with a lusty garlic custard. Both were rich in flavor and a delight to eat, but afterwards left us with the feeling that we'd overindulged—even though our plates were still half full.

Desserts, too, were rich. A small trio of desserts (coconut ice cream, orange-Grand Marnier crème brûlée, and toffee-crunch chocolate fudge cake) was enough for two. Add the heady selections of an extensive and reasonably priced wine and cordials list and what we really needed afterward was a soft, fluffy bed in the newly renovated inn to rest our filled-to-capacity stomachs. When the inn expands its spa next year, staying the weekend after gorging on Brenner's cooking will be easier—and more relaxing.

» **WHERE:** Bedford Village Inn, 2 Olde Bedford Way, Bedford, NH, 800-852-1166, www.bedfordvillageinn.com. » **THE DRIVE:** A maddening, commuter-clogged 55 miles up I-93 makes this short drive much longer than it ought to be. Still, this restaurant is a perfect stop before or after a flight from the Manchester airport, or on the way to or from a New Hampshire ski resort. » **IS IT WORTH IT?** Chef Brenner's rich, soul-warming food is perfect for a winter weekend, but be sure to plan an overnight stay.