



As if there weren't enough to love about Union Market already, we've now got a whole new reason to swoon: Bidwell, John Mooney's full-service roof-to-table restaurant, opens its doors tonight.

There's more than just a sleek interior to this 150-seat restaurant; on the menu you'll find modern American dishes that skew southern, like the crispy deviled eggs with homemade ranch, the suckling pig, or the gin & tonic salmon.

"We're trying to showcase things we believe in. We're pretty straightforward," Mooney says. "We like to have a social, upbeat atmosphere, price points are friendly—we just want people to come and have a good time."

It's hard to imagine someone not having a good time in the space. Located in the corner of the market, adjacent to Salt & Sundry, Bidwell offers options for wide, comfortable private booth seating, as well as large windows for prime people watching. There's even an open kitchen, where diners can witness staff delicately rolling meatballs or garnishing their plate with with caramelized cauliflower. The restaurant's concept is engaging as well, focusing on seasonal ingredients, many sourced from a rooftop garden come March.

According to Mooney, when the 3,000-square-foot garden reaches peak bloom we can expect chili, mint, strawberries—if winter breaks early we can expect a great strawberry harvest, he excitedly tells



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me—along with sage, rosemary, and a wide variety of other fresh herbs.

The vertically-grown garden will be so large, in fact, Mooney plans to source roughly 60 percent of Bidwell's menu from it for both dishes and cocktails.

I sample bites throughout the evening, a smattering of classic southern cuisine and upscale American fare that won't break the bank; no entree is priced over \$30. There are succulent pork chops and smoky oysters topped with thick morsels of bacon. There are rare-seared patty melts, as well as a creamy bean dip with fresh tomato and goat cheese. The real star of the show, however, is the truffled grilled cheese. Do, above all else, order this on first visit.

For those who can't wait to get their hands on Mooney's new dishes, dinner service begins tonight while brunch service begins Sunday (with a possibility, I'm told, of a Saturday start). Lunch rolls out next week, where you can find us ordering truffled grilled cheese with an order of deep-fried deviled eggs. Farewell, healthy New Year's resolutions; we barely knew ye.



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