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Are Tickets to High-End Culinary Events the Latest Status Symbol of the Rich?

A reservation at the world's top restaurants is no longer enough. Now, diners are going behind the scenes with chefs as part of experiences that money can't buy.



BY [SAM DANGREMOND](#) PUBLISHED: AUG 30, 2022



TEDDY WOLFF

Ross Chestnut, a 30-something director of technology for a hedge fund, lives between the Brooklyn restaurants Misi and Lilia and visits them with his partner as often as possible. So when the couple saw that the chef, Missy Robbins, and her team at MP, were organizing picnic dinners on Governors Island this summer, they signed up—at a cost of \$525 per person, plus tax.

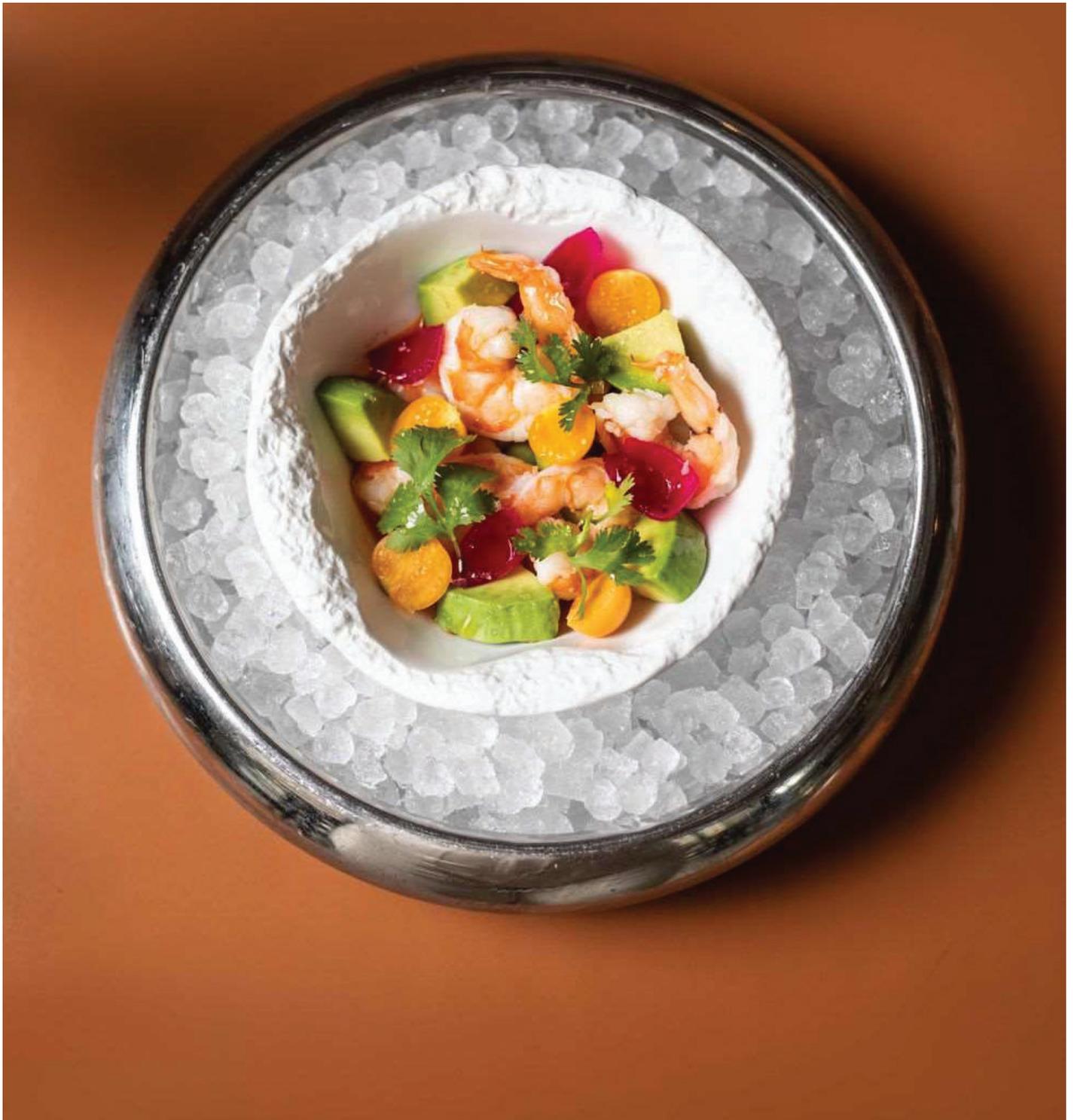


Sea urchin panna cotta with caviar and brown butter at Blackberry Farm.

BLACKBERRY FARM

It was Guidara and Tosi's third event at Blackberry Farm, where, he says, "everyone learns from one another—not only the guests, but also the chefs, sommeliers, and restaurateurs, and the team at Blackberry." Plus, he says, "to come together and connect and have a really, really fun, delicious experience and see everyone that excited to be together made the whole thing that much cooler."

Philadelphia chef Greg Vernick had a similar experience when he brought his team from [Vernick Fish](#), his seafood restaurant at the [Four Seasons Hotel Philadelphia at Comcast Center](#), to the Jersey Shore for a five-day culinary activation at Steve & Cookie's in Margate this August.



Vernick Fish is led by James Beard Award winner Greg Vernick.
FOUR SEASONS PHILADELPHIA

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"Seeing this idea turned into reality is, in a word, humbling," Vernick says. "My personal ties to Margate, a town where I was lucky to spend time during the summer months and landed my first kitchen job (shout-out to the beach grill at Lucy the Elephant), makes this a full-circle moment for me."

The week concluded with a [50-seat, \\$1,000-per-person dinner under the stars](#) on August 13 at Reed's Organic Farm & Animal Sanctuary. A portion of the ticket sales benefitted a [Meaningful Purpose](#) at Reed's Organic Farm.

Boston chefs Ken Oringer and Ming Tsai also had charitable intentions when they organized an April dinner in support of World Central Kitchen's efforts to feed Ukrainian refugees. With tickets priced at \$5,000 per person and 100 percent of the proceeds going to charity, the dinner raised more than \$1 million thanks to two additional \$250,000 gifts at the event. All 67 seats were filled, and Governor Charlie Baker and former Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter attended. The dinner included oysters with Ossetra caviar as hors d'oeuvres, a sampler of nigiri and sushi, tuna tataki with foie gras, lobster ravioli with short rib and smoked sea urchin, miso Chilean sea bass, crab butter fried rice, and blood orange crèmeux with chocolate and hazelnut praline for dessert.