

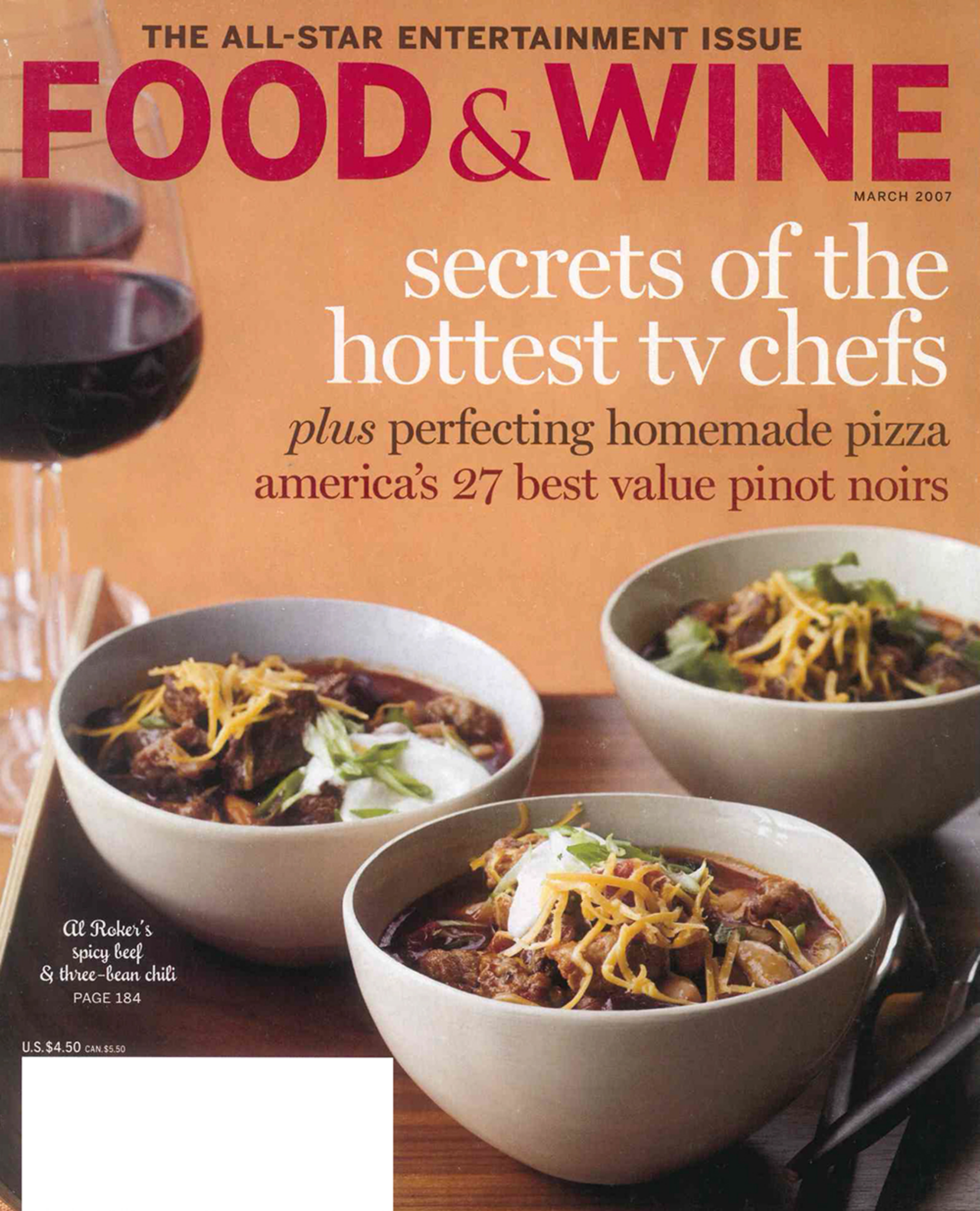
THE ALL-STAR ENTERTAINMENT ISSUE

FOOD & WINE

MARCH 2007

secrets of the hottest tv chefs

plus perfecting homemade pizza
america's 27 best value pinot noirs



Al Roker's
spicy beef
& three-bean chili

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U.S. \$4.50 CAN. \$5.50

At his Philippe Starck–designed restaurant, Katsuya, chef Katsuya Uechi (RIGHT) cooks on a 1,700° robata grill.



Where To Go Next

southern california

BY BRAD JOHNSON

LOS ANGELES

Cut California's most talented chef, Wolfgang Puck, and acclaimed architect-designer Richard Meier have created an airy dining room that looks more like a modern art gallery than the steak house in a grand hotel that it is. Nobody in America imports superior (or pricier) Japanese beef, and the dry-aged American steaks are perhaps even better. And who can resist the fried egg on top of the creamed spinach?

DETAILS The Beverly Wilshire Hotel, 9500 Wilshire Blvd.; 310-276-8500.

Katsuya For much of the past decade, Katsuya Uechi has been the San Fernando Valley's reigning sushi king. Now he's launched one of the most exciting restaurants to open in Los Angeles in years. Besides searing pristine yellowtail collar, wagyu tenderloin and tender rice balls over a 1,700° Japanese-style robata grill, Uechi's serving longtime signatures such as albacore sashimi with frizzled onions, and crispy rice topped with spicy

tuna—a dish that's been copied all over town. Designer Philippe Starck used bento boxes as inspiration for the white-on-white dining room, paneling the floors, walls and ceilings with lacquered wood; he's also designed a Hollywood outpost, which is set to open in early summer.

DETAILS 11777 San Vicente Blvd.; 310-207-8744.

Opus Restaurant

A mere \$30 buys one of the city's best three-course dinners. Chef Josef

Centeno (who cooked at Aubergine) prepares an internationally influenced menu, pairing items like octopus with crispy warm pork belly and turning Cream of Wheat into a divine polenta-like base for braised beef short ribs. Instead of white linen, tables are topped with chic black leather covers, and everyone wants to sit at one of the tables framed by oversize leather love seats. **DETAILS** 3760 Wilshire Blvd.; 213-738-1600.

Pizzeria Mozza

La Brea Bakery founder Nancy Silverton and star chef Mario Batali have opened the first of two restaurants here. The noise level is unfathomably loud, but the puffy-crust pizzas are very good—especially the one topped with house-made fennel sausage—and every one of the 50 wines on the all-Italian list is less than \$50 a bottle. The more serious Osteria Mozza, opening in the spring, will have a mozzarella bar and elegant pastas.

DETAILS 641 N. Highland Ave.; 323-297-0101.

The Polo Lounge

Chef Robert Allen has transformed the menu at this beloved haunt—for instance, the tortilla soup that is a staple of the

At Opus, a mere \$30 buys one of the best three-course dinners in Los Angeles.