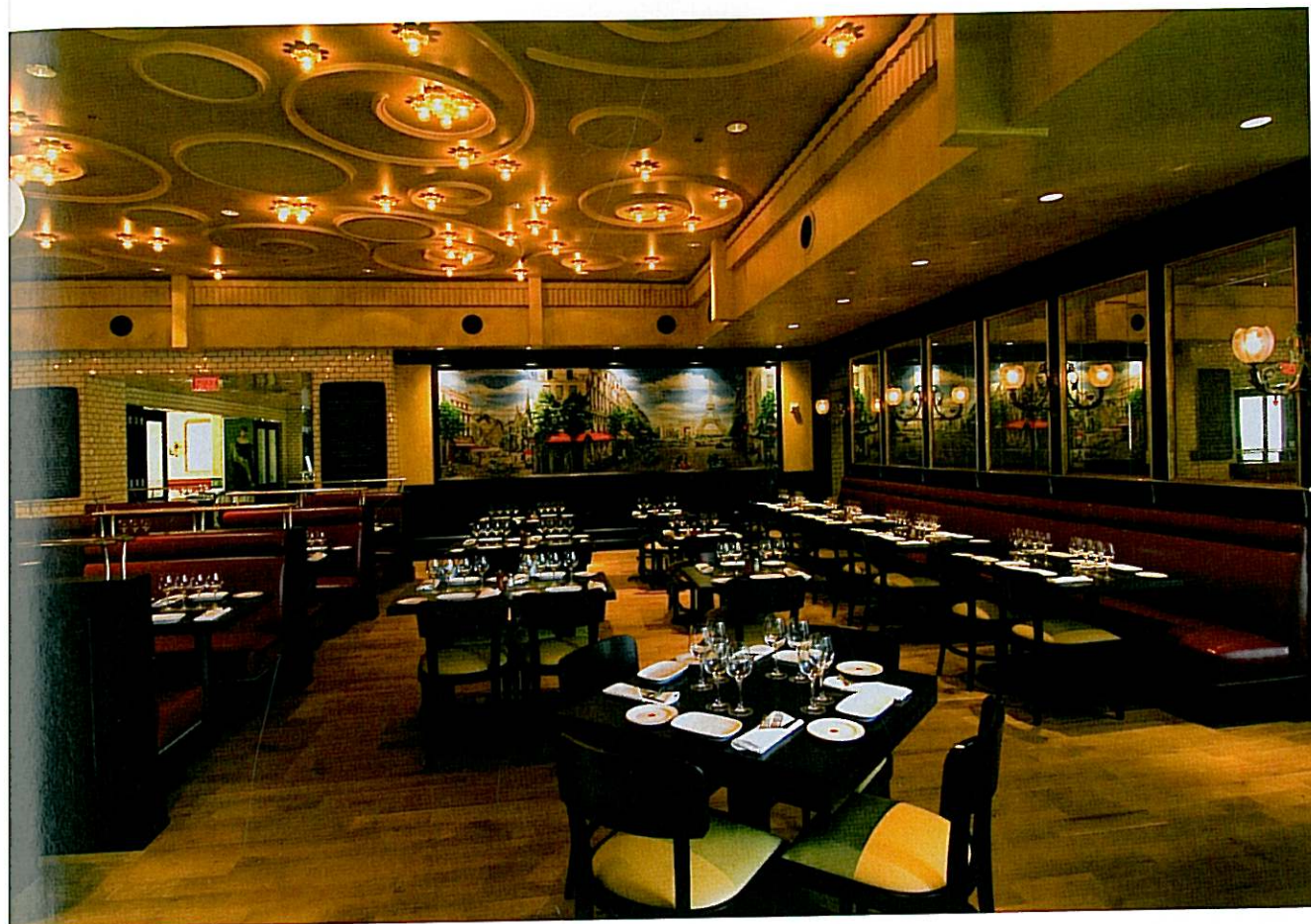


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## Bistro Niko

3344 Peachtree Road, Buckhead  
404.875.8424, buckheadrestaurants.com

French, \$17-\$28, Reservations recommended, Patio, Brunch  
Owner: Pano Karatassos Executive Chef: Gary Donlick

Bistro Niko, Buckhead Life Restaurant Group's first new Atlanta restaurant in eight years, opened with a bang last November. And this time restaurateur and owner Pano Karatassos, who's already covered American, Greek, Southwestern and Italian cuisines, plus steak and seafood, set his sights on what many consider the ultimate in haute cuisine: French. Therefore, Karatassos and his culinary staff didn't take this venture lightly. He spent more than a year researching in France, Chicago, New York and Washington, D.C., with his son, BLRG Corporate Executive Chef Pano I. Karatassos, and Bistro Niko Executive Chef Gary Donlick, before the concept came to life.

And dare we say Bistro Niko could be the *pièce de résistance* to Buckhead Life's restaurant empire? Well, the food certainly lives up to the expectations; the menu is stacked with traditional French dishes, not like some other restaurant menus that seem to be more "French-inspired." The "faux" gras terrine (it's really a chicken liver mousse) is just one of Donlick's house-made pâtés that is sublime and a must-order, as is the *confit de canard* salad (duck confit salad). *Coq au vin* is prepared classically, with browned chicken, potatoes, bacon and pearl onions all in a rich red wine sauce, but Donlick puts his own twist on beef bourguignon, choosing to re-

place the traditionally braised meat with Kobe beef cheeks.

The ambiance here is vintage French bistro, and includes a hallway entry with white tiles and an exhibition kitchen, vintage sconces, Venetian glass mirrors and a large zinc bar as the main dining room's centerpiece. A smaller dining room, dubbed The Salon, features original period French posters, as well as 88 hand-painted tiles.

Of course, the service at Bistro Niko also makes it a stellar restaurant. Some staffers are originals from Pano's and Paul's, and all have a required reading list that includes some of the most influential culinary books ever written, including "Mastering the Art of French Cooking" by Julia Child, "*Larousse Gastronomique*" by Auguste Escoffier and Barron's "Food Lover's Companion."

**Signature Dishes:** *Gougeres* (light gruyere cheese puffs); *tarte au saumon* (traditional French pizza with salmon crème fraîche and chives); *coq au vin*; and citron tarte with meringue brûlée and orange sorbet.

**What We Love:** Bistro Niko's patio. It wraps around the outside of the glamorous Sovereign building and overlooks Peachtree Street, making it a hot spot for happy hour and people-watching.

# Best of



**Best New Restaurant**

◀ **1. Bistro Niko**  
3344 Peachtree Road  
404.261.6456  
buckheadrestaurants.com

**2. Miller Union**  
999 Brady Ave.  
678.733.8550  
millerunion.com

**3. Tuk Tuk Thai Food Loft**  
1745 Peachtree St.  
678.539.6181  
tuktukall.com



**Best Healthy Dining**

◀ **1. Seasons 52**  
3050 Peachtree Road  
404.846.1552  
Also located in Dunwoody at 90 Perimeter Center West, 770.671.0052  
seasons52.com

**2. R. Thomas Deluxe Grill**  
1812 Peachtree St.  
404.881.0246  
rthomasdeluxegrill.net

**3. Dynamic Dish**  
427 Edgewood Ave.  
404.688.4344  
dynamicdish.net

**Best Small Plates**

**1. Eclipse Di Luna**  
764 Miami Circle  
404.846.0449  
Also located in Dunwoody at 4505 Ashford Dunwoody Road, 678.205.5862  
eclipseditluna.com

**2. Tuk Tuk Thai Food Loft**  
1745 Peachtree Road  
678.539.6181  
tuktukall.com

**3. Pura Vida**  
656 N. Highland Ave.  
404.870.9797  
puravidatapas.com

**Best Outside Patio**

**1. Nava**  
3060 Peachtree Road  
404.240.1984  
buckheadrestaurants.com

**2. The Tavern at Phipps**  
3500 Peachtree Road  
404.814.9640  
centraarchy.com

**3. Einstein's**  
1077 Juniper St.  
404.876.7925  
einsteinsatlanta.com

**Best Power Lunch**

**1. Bone's**  
3130 Piedmont Road  
404.237.2663  
bonesrestaurant.com

**2. Bistro Niko**  
3344 Peachtree Road  
404.261.6456  
buckheadrestaurants.com

**3. Chops Lobster Bar**  
70 W. Paces Ferry Road  
404.262.2675  
buckheadrestaurants.com