Vermillion
108 W. Hubbard St.
Chicago, IL
312.527.4060

In Chicago's River North neighborhood, a young, hip crowd fills this stylish Indian-Latin fusion restaurant. The décor is sharp—Indian fashion photographs stand out against white walls and booths, and near the bar, a vermillion wall draws the eye. The food keeps the crowds coming back: among the tapas, don't miss the blackened tamarind ribs, seafood stew and pink tuna esatheebe with cilantro-lime marinade. The beverage menu includes refreshing classics like caipirinhas and frothy mango lassis. The late-night Latin and Indian club music blends with the restaurant as well as the two paired cuisines.

Restaurant of the Month

At Chicago's Hot New everything is accented with the namesake color (with which married Indian women dot their foreheads). That includes the food, an ambitious fusion of Indian and Latin. Sure, that sounds like an odd coupling, but everything manages to click together with feminine grace (thanks to gorgeous sambal-Rohini Dey and chef Maneet Chauhan). Grilled skirt steak in a cardoon marinade is served over sautéed spinach with fried plantains. Tamarind-glazed baby-back ribs come with yuca fries and corn salsa. There's even an Indo-Latin tapas menu (coconut-and-spice-flavored crab cakes with green mango slaw). Plus, the Indian and Latin American lounge music is a welcome change from reggas.

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—John Mariani