"EXCEPTIONAL" IS A FUNNY CONCEPT IN THESE FRACTURED TIMES.

Nowadays, anyone with an Internet connection is a dining critic, and anyone with a smartphone is an instant sports columnist. So for a magazine to pronounce the "Best" of everything smacks not only of presumption, but of anti-democratic leanings—or even rank oligarchism. Allow us to go on the record to explain our methodology. We gathered several dozen prominent Bostonians—business leaders, philanthropists, celebrity chefs—for dinner, then asked them to vote on the categories. Tallying the results, our editorial team set to work on vetting and research, producing this year's roster. You won't agree with all the results, but you're guaranteed that these winners deserve their accolades. So debate, argue, but most of all enjoy the 2013 Boston's Best Awards.
FOOD + DRINK
Bar Food

Abe & Louie’s

Enough with the nachos—old reliable Abe & Louie’s takes bar bites to the next level with their jumbo lump-crab-meat cocktail. Enjoy meaty morsels of Chesapeake Bay’s finest with cocktail sauce, remoulade or a simple spritz of lemon. The classic steak-house interior, with its rich mahogany, chandeliers and oversized leather chairs, is the perfect place to call it a day with some of Boston’s saltiest bartenders.

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