



## [Chef Known for His Michelin-Starred Vegetarian Cooking Opens a Boston Steakhouse](#)

At the Vermilion Club, chef John Fraser riffs on steakhouse traditions with tomato tartare, a foie gras Boston cream pie, and more

By: [Erika Adams](#) | June 6, 2024

John Fraser, the decorated chef and restaurateur behind the recently opened food hall [the Lineup](#) inside the Winthrop Center, the [billion-dollar skyscraper](#) located at 115 Federal Street, is back for round two: This time, Fraser is riffing on Boston's steakhouse culture as a touchpoint for [the Vermilion Club](#), a 120-seat restaurant opening on June 11 also inside the Winthrop Center.

Where the Lineup is primarily geared towards office-goers at lunchtime, the upstairs Vermilion Club is a swankier dinner affair that Fraser hopes brings in customers looking for a weeknight spot for steak frites as well as special-occasion dinners. The menu runs the gamut from steakhouse classics like filet mignon, a dry-aged tomahawk, and a spice-crusted prime rib, to more playful twists on tradition, like a savory foie gras Boston cream pie and tartare done three ways with tuna, tomato, and a "Bourdain-style" sirloin [made with cognac](#) in a nod to the late culinary star Anthony Bourdain. Diners can choose their own scooping vehicle for the tartare; options include baguette croutons, lettuce leaves, Hawaiian rolls topped with pineapple butter, or stacked fries.

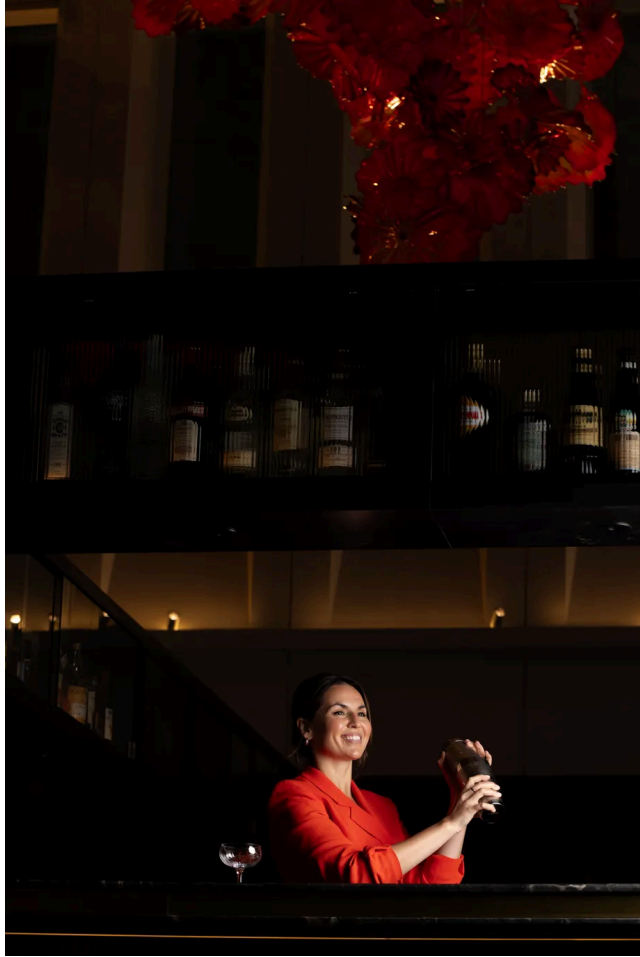


Fraser, who is perhaps best known for his [now-closed](#) Michelin-starred vegetarian restaurant Nix in New York City, shines a spotlight on vegetables here, too, with dishes like a mushroom carpaccio, French onion dumplings, and a decadent cauliflower tarte tatin. There's also the aforementioned tomato tartare, where semi-dried tomatoes are mixed with dried olives and capers and placed over a tomato aioli. "We're trying to deliver on the umami of a steak tartare," Fraser says, "but it shows up as light and bright and distinctly tomato."



Steakhouses are new territory for the vegetable-centric Fraser (aside from his French chophouse [La Marchande](#) in New York) but it's a challenge that he sees as well within his wheelhouse. "Our approach to vegetables and vegetarian cooking has always been that we try and win by way of giving people options and showing them how good it can be as opposed to, you know, with picket signs and red paint," Fraser says. "Our idea has always been, like, hey, what if you tried the tomato tartare rather than the steak tartare tonight? I found it to be just as delicious."

Plus, the space Fraser's team was tasked with filling really lent itself to something grand and luxurious, he says, like a steakhouse. The restaurant derives its name from a gigantic, 30-foot glass art sculpture by Dale Chihuly dubbed [the "Vermillion Fiori"](#) that hangs above the 35-seat bar. Speaking of the bar, it is home to an impressive cocktail program with nearly 70 drinks laid out in a menu "set up almost like a Betty Crocker cookbook," Fraser says, with sections marked by type of spirit.



As he prepares to open his version of a Boston steakhouse, Fraser acknowledges that there's a "fantastic community" of chophouses and steakhouses that has long existed in this city, and he sees the Vermilion Club as adding to the conversation. "Boston has a real style of dining and we wanted to contribute to that."

*The Vermilion Club is opening on June 11. It is located at 115 Federal Street, in downtown Boston, and its opening hours are Tuesday to Thursday, 5 to 10 p.m., and Friday to Saturday, 5 to 11 p.m.*