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# Dean's New Digs

Dallas' star chef moves from the Mansion to the Ritz.

DEAN FEARING has left the Mansion, and he is preparing to open his own place. Fearing's Restaurant, housed in the new Ritz-Carlton, Dallas, is scheduled to debut with the hotel at the end of July.

Fearing spent two decades as the executive chef at the Mansion on Turtle Creek, establishing the Dallas hotel's restaurant as a veritable temple of modern Southwestern cuisine. Now that he has moved on, however, Fearing compares the Mansion to a less-hallowed edifice. "After being in the same fine-dining restaurant for 21 years, it's almost like being released from prison," he says. Then he quickly adds, "It was a wonderful prison. It was a country-club prison. But there's nothing sad about my leaving. It had to happen for me."

His new restaurant will include a fine-dining room similar to the Mansion's, but Fearing's also will have more casual spaces with limestone floors, rawhide-wrapped chandeliers, and Navajo rugs. Fearing will continue stirring a melting pot of Southern and Texas flavors—barbecue, grilled fish, chilies—but cuisine from other regions of the country and the world also will influence his dishes. The menu will feature whatever is fresh and available, including Asian ingredients, which, Fearing says, he especially enjoys working with. He says that he was not able to indulge in such spontaneity and diversity at the Mansion because his patrons expected Texas-style cuisine. "Now my energy has been reborn," says Fearing. "My creativity has been sharpened. Now I'm free to do any style of food, and that's a beautiful thing."

Fearing was recruited from the Mansion by Denny Alberts, the former president of Rosewood (the Dallas-based corporation that owns the Mansion) and current president and COO of Crescent Real Estate Equities,



which partnered with Ritz-Carlton to build the new Dallas property. When Alberts asked Fearing to be the hotel's executive chef, Fearing countered by offering Alberts a partnership in a restaurant that would lease space at the Ritz-Carlton. "When [Alberts] said to me 'You got a deal,' my next

thought was, 'Wow, I'm really going to do it,' says Fearing.

Meanwhile, the Mansion has replaced Fearing's Texas-centric menu with one that showcases contemporary American cuisine. "We recently celebrated the 25th anniversary of the hotel," says Rosewood COO Bob Boulogne. "The timing was right—on the heels of the much-loved Dean Fearing's deciding to open his own restaurant—to take our cuisine in a different direction."

The Mansion now has a New Yorker, John Tesar, serving as its executive chef. "At first I was very nervous that people would think that we were saying that Southwest cuisine is passé," says Tesar, who, prior to arriving in Dallas, was the executive chef at RM Seafood in Las Vegas and New York. "However, I had spent enough time here to sense that the city's appetite was turning a corner." Tesar's menu is seafood-heavy, but it also includes plenty of steaks, and it has retained the tortilla soup and lobster tacos that were among Fearing's most famous creations.

"I am releasing them from my menu," says Fearing of the soup and the lobster tacos. Then he adds, "That's not to say I won't have my own version of those particular flavorings where I am now." —ANTHONY HEAD

*Fearing's Restaurant (The Ritz-Carlton, Dallas), 214.922.0200, [www.ritzcarlton.com](http://www.ritzcarlton.com); The Mansion on Turtle Creek Restaurant, 214.559.2100, [www.mansiononturtlecreek.com](http://www.mansiononturtlecreek.com)*

*Shrimp tacos will be on Dean Fearing's menu at the Ritz-Carlton, Dallas, but lobster tacos, one of his signature dishes at the Mansion, will not.*