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Power Couples Behind Today's Hottest Restaurants

Forbes FTG Inspector, Contributor

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They say behind every great man is a great woman. But we've found that behind some great restaurants is a great man *and* a great woman. Some of the year's buzziest eateries come to us courtesy of coupledom—husband-and-wife teams run the kitchens together. Check out [Forbes Travel Guide's](#) list of five must-visit and new-to-the-scene restaurants and meet the power couples behind them. For more restaurant news, check out our [blog on Startle.com](#).

Fiola, Washington, D.C.

The couple: Chef/owner Fabio Trabocchi and Maria Trabocchi, director of special events

Maria and Fabio met nearly 17 years ago in the space that now houses Fiola—Maria was a young college student out to dinner and it was Fabio's first day as chef. After moving to Maria's native Spain to open a BiCE restaurant, they returned to the United States. "We fell in love, and two children, two dogs and a few countries later, we came back to D.C. to open Fiola in the same spot where we met," Maria says. Fiola debuted in April 2011—Fabio mans the kitchen, menu and back of the house, while Maria oversees the front of the house, private events and reservations.



Photo courtesy of Fiola.

The food: This upscale Italian hotspot serves seasonal dishes from a menu that changes daily. Buttery housemade rolls and burrata start most meals, which also include decadent pastas and meats, along with granitas and doughnuts to



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Forbes Travel Guide created America's original hospitality Star Rating system in 1958. Since then, its team of incognito inspectors have checked into thousands of hotels, dined at just as many restaurants, and experienced scores of spa

finish things off. Don't miss the craft cocktails and Italian-focused wine list.

Empellón Cocina: New York City

The couple: Chef Alex Stupak and pastry chef Lauren Resler

Resler and Stupak met when both chefs were working in the pastry departments at [Boston](#) restaurants—Resler at [No. 9 Park](#) and Stupak at [Clio](#), where visiting Resler was “blown away by the desserts” and asked to meet the chef (he called her three days later). The couple later collaborated at Clio and then moved to [Chicago](#), where Stupak became pastry chef at the Forbes Travel Guide Five-Star [Alinea](#). They opened the casual Empellón Taqueria in New York, followed by Empellón Cocina, which debuted last February. “We are both so busy with our work that even though we might be working in the same kitchen during the same hours, it’s like we hardly see each other,” says Resler, who confesses they “occasionally sneak a quick kiss or hug when we think no one is looking.”



Empellón Cocina. Photo courtesy of Takahiko Marumoto.

The food: Empellón Cocina serves reinvented Mexican dishes—such as roasted carrots with mole poblano, yogurt and watercress or mezcal-cured ocean trout. The East Village restaurant has a modern interior—think sleek white booths and colorful art.

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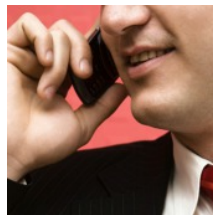
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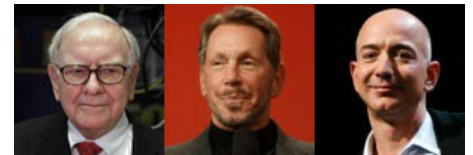
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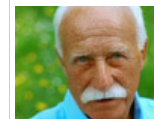


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