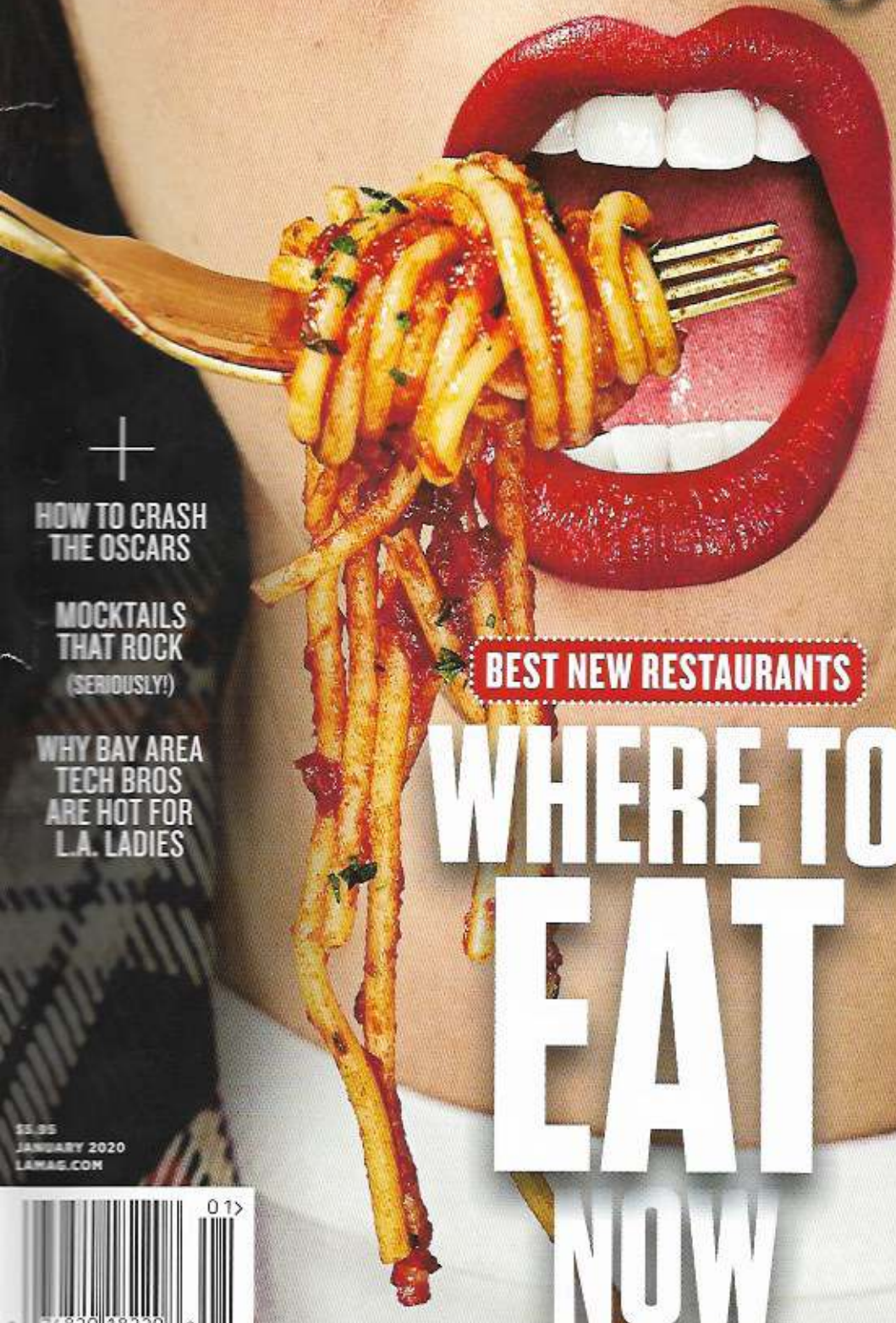


Los Angeles



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TECH BROS
ARE HOT FOR
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BEST NEW RESTAURANTS

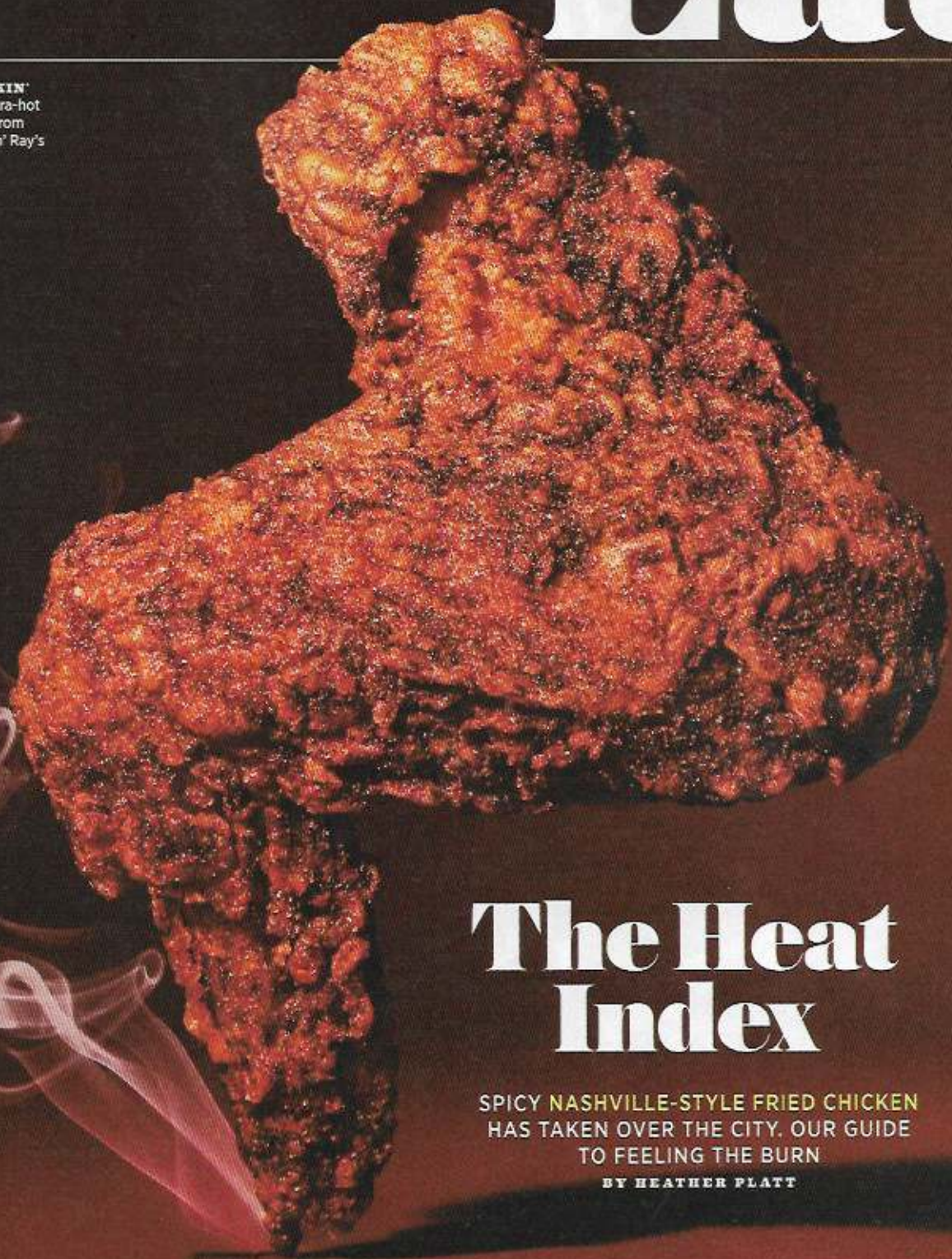
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The Heat Index

SPICY NASHVILLE-STYLE FRIED CHICKEN
HAS TAKEN OVER THE CITY. OUR GUIDE
TO FEELING THE BURN

BY HEATHER PLATT



4

3

2

▶ IN 2016, JOHNNY RAY AND AMANDA ZONE opened Howlin' Ray's in Chinatown, igniting L.A.'s love affair with hot chicken. In the years since, a myriad of pop-ups, restaurants, and food trucks serving the spicy Nashville-style chicken has sprung up, and more are on the way. Tennessee's cayenne-heavy fried bird is a genre all its own. The chicken is typically brined, covered in flour and salt, coated in a blend of cayenne, brown sugar, black pepper, paprika, and garlic powder, and then fried. The result is both mouth- and eye-watering, depending on the amount of heat. Here are some of our favorite spots, ranked:

1 HOTVILLE CHICKEN

> This three-year-old L.A. pop-up from Kim Prince—the niece of André Prince Jeffries, the owner of Nashville legend Prince's Hot Chicken Shack, where the style is said to have originated—serves one of our favorite spicy birds (\$11-\$13). "I'm using the techniques that I was taught in Nashville," Prince says. One of her tricks is adding spice at every step, producing a complex, layered flavor. The sides (\$5 and up), like spicy mac and cheese and kale coleslaw, are also winners. And, good news, Prince opened an 80-seater in the Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Plaza in December. "Nashville hot chicken is community," she says. "It's family. It's got soul and spice to it." 4070 Marlon Ave., Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Plaza, hotvillechicken.com.

1

2 DAVE'S HOT CHICKEN

> This popular East Hollywood parking-lot pop-up turned restaurant turned franchise got going in 2017. It has quickly grown to two locations in East and North Hollywood, with Fairfax District, Koreatown, and San Diego outposts to come. The expansion is not surprising given how delightfully juicy the bird is and the reasonable prices (\$10.99-\$12.99) and wait times. Plus, the french fries—a thick, perfectly seasoned crinkle-cut variety—are superb. Multiple locations, daveshotchicken.com

5

3 HOWLIN' RAY'S

> Johnny Ray and Amanda Zone launched L.A.'s hot-chicken craze

when they opened their downtown spot in 2016, and people still wait in line for an hour. The mouth-burning, sweat-inducing euphoria of Howlin' Ray's freshly fried wings (\$9) and tenders (\$12) is worth it. But if waiting that long is not your thing, stalk its Instagram (@howlinrays) for updates. Also, weekday waits are typically shorter. 727 N. Broadway, Ste. 128, Chinatown, howlinrays.com

4 HUCKLEBERRY

> Years ago this Santa Monica bakery and café hosted traditional fried-chicken dinners that were quite popular. In October it decided to bring back the pop-up, this time spicing things up. Huck Hot Chicken Nights feature tenders on Milo & Olive white bread with coleslaw and house-made pickles. Everything that goes into the chicken from start to finish is organic, including the spice mixture, making it higher quality and pricier than most (\$17). Wash it down with a beer from Santa Monica Brew Works and finish it all off with passionfruit meringue pie from pastry chef Laurel Almerinda. *Thursdays and Fridays, 5:30-9 p.m. (or until it sells out), 1014 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, huckleberrycafe.com*

5 THE RED CHICKZ

> If you don't have time to wait in line for Howlin' Ray's, the nearby Red Chickz is a solid plan B for similar fare—and even chicken tender tacos—without the line. There's colorful decor and blasting music, but the chicken isn't as juicy as competitors', and the vibes aren't quite as warm. 557 S. Spring St., downtown, theredchickz.com