



PASS THE TAPAS

The small plates trend continues to sprout in savoury succession in the city, much like a meal of the little bites themselves (a great option for the lighter appetites that come with the hot weather). Often, the "tapas" served are Spanish snacks in name only, but two new restaurants retain Latin roots in what's *on* those small plates, too.

In May, sedate midtown got a spicy infusion with the opening of **Cava** (1560 Yonge St., 416-979-9918) by one of the city's best chefs. Chris McDonald (formerly of Avalon) emphasizes simplicity in his "rustic modern dining." The menu of two dozen small plates (\$3.50 to \$24) begins the culinary tour in Spain, but passes through Italy, France and Mexico. Pinchos of rapini, white bean and manchego are a garlicky addiction, while wild mushroom socca arrives as an earthy, rich crepe. Cava is open for dinner nightly and Sunday brunch.

A spot that's been as warmly received as the welcome it gives its guests is **Torito Tapas Bar** (276 Augusta Ave., 647-436-5874). The haunt makes its home in Kensington Market, a neighbourhood with a boho blend of many ethnicities, where it opened a quiet back patio in June. Torito imports from Spain a new era of refined, larger tapas (\$3 to \$11). The menu features such classics as Spanish tortilla (savory wedges of potato and egg) and shrimp al ajillo (with garlic), but updates options with flavours from Chile and Argentina. Torito is open Tuesday to Saturday for dinner.