

# Atlanta

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By Elisa Mala

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## Talking With Chris "Ludacris" Bridges and Straits Chef Chris Yeo

"IT'S NOT THE HAND you're dealt, but how you handle the cards," says College Park resident Chris Bridges, who is more commonly known as Grammy-winning hip-hop artist and actor Ludacris. After a chance encounter with hairstylist-turned-culinarian Chris Yeo at a Ludacris Foundation event, Bridges decided to go all-in. He teamed up with the Singaporean chef, who owns three Straits restaurants in California, and opened Straits Atlanta in April. "I never planned on getting into the restaurant business," says Bridges, who owns the Juniper Street building formerly occupied by Spice. "I planned to be the landlord."

### SERVE UP SOME FACTS ABOUT THE STRAITS MENU.

Bridges: It's Singaporean with a modern twist.

Yeo: We do have a lot of Chinese, Malaysian, and Indian influences. And a little bit of Thailand—my food is very similar to Thai food.

### WHY BRING A CALIFORNIA CONCEPT TO ATLANTA?

Bridges: Just getting back to my hometown. Atlanta's hip!

Yeo: The people in Atlanta surprise me because they like to eat. They like to go out. People do drive to get good food.

### WHICH DISHES ARE PARTICULARLY WORTH THE DRIVE?

Bridges: Chicken lollipops.

Yeo: Wok-fired mussels and origami sea bass.



### SO OTHER THAN STRAITS, WHERE DO YOU GET GOOD GRUB IN ATLANTA?

Bridges: Bone's is pretty good. As a kid, I liked Benihana.

### HAS THIS COLLABORATION PRODUCED ANY BUSINESS INSIGHTS?

Bridges: I've learned how to be more patient. I wanted to open it right away, but it's taken us a while to get it off the ground.

Yeo: He's more business-minded than people think. He owns the property. Before he committed to this restaurant with me, he sent one of his guys to come work with me for a month. He did his research before he invested. Chris is very good with money.

*Straits, 793 Juniper Street, [straitsrestaurants.com](http://straitsrestaurants.com) —ELISA MALA*