



145 East 16th Street New York, NY 10003
Tel (212) 505-7090 Fax (212) 473-5085
www.ckponline.com

Chicago Area Guide

Dear Convention Attendee,

CKP staffers are never too busy to forego a fine meal and a great restaurant. We consider that to be our responsibility to fellow food-lovers, and one of the major perks of the job. Fortunately, pre-production trips have given us the chance to do a lot of dining out, Chicago-style, and have kept us up to date on all the current dish. Food is definitely among the many things this sophisticated city does well. There's something to suit every taste...and, for sure, steak-lovers are gonna be very, very happy. If you haven't been to Chicago before, we think you'll especially appreciate the friendliness and hospitality that is so evident at most area eateries.

As a reminder, time moves on quickly! Since it costs no more to start speaking with us earlier vs. later... you should call us as early as possible, when you are thinking about a new exhibit, promotional event (large or small), or some kind

of convention traffic building stunt. As most of you are aware, we can provide everything from spokespeople and models to imaginative hospitality suites, to the mega parties that have made us famous. Speaking with us early, not only gets you on our calendar, but the sooner we get involved, the more options we can bring you.

As always, our recommendations are a compilation of our personal favorites, as well as those of our local friends and associates, plus input from regional and national press. Our web site, www.ckponline.com is up and running. You will find this Chicago guide posted there, as well as some background on what we've been doing, and whom we've been doing it for. There's also a way to provide feedback...and we hope you'll use it to tell us what you think of our recommendations and to clue us in on your favorites around the country.

See you in the Windy City...and hang on to your hats. From what we hear, this Show is gonna blow you away.

Chuck Klein Shelley Babcock

While we have tried to make specific comments in the brief reviews, ratings, from K – KKKKK, are overall ratings, most heavily influenced by the food, but include other factors such as ambiance, décor and service. Cost estimates are based on one dinner with cocktail... \$ inexpensive, under \$18; \$\$ moderate, \$19 to \$34; \$\$\$ expensive, \$35 to \$49; and \$\$\$\$ very expensive, over \$50.

Keep in mind that in Chicago, as everywhere, restaurants and clubs can open and close, change hours, dark nights, credit card policies, and even move with very short notice. Many restaurants are closed Sundays and Mondays, or even Tuesday. So do call each place that you plan to try and, of course, feel free to mention Chuck Klein Productions.

Ambria – 2300 N. Lincoln Park W. (Lakeview) 773-472-5959 \$\$\$\$ KKKK: Still one of Chicago's most popular restaurants... watch a native's face light up when you mention the name. Ambria defines romance and elegance. Superb Contemporary French cuisine served by waiters who know their job, menu and wines. As impressive as the service, presentation, art nouveau décor and food may be, they manage to serve caviar, game, rack of lamb and the rest of the first-class works without pretense. Dinner only...jacket and tie requested.

Arun's – 4156 N. Kedzie Ave. (North Side) 773-539-1909 \$\$\$ KKKK: Not everyone will shell out big bucks for Pad Thai... but you won't regret it at Arun's. Chef/owner Arun Sampanthavivat has filled his restaurant with beautiful Thai art and creates exciting dishes on par with the setting. We recommend the endless tasting menu for an incomparable dining experience. Reservations required.

Atlantique – 5101 N. Clark St. 773-275-9191 (North Side) \$\$\$ KKK: Local critics are in complete agreement about Atlantique... they love it! Creator Jack Jones does a fabulous job with this neighborhood seafooder. The food is amazing... managing to be creative, stunning and delicious all at once. The warm lobster salad is heavenly and the seared scallops with lobster-mushroom polenta and a creamy lobster sauce are similarly celestial. We highly recommend giving this one a try.

Blackbird – 619 W. Randolph St. (West Loop) 312-715-0708 \$\$\$ KKK: Chef Paul Kahan opened Blackbird in the booming Market District, and it remains one of the city's hottest spots. Menu is creative New American, supported by impressive wine offerings. Getting a table can be tricky due to the *No Reservations* policy.

Bob Chinn's Crab House – 393 S. Milwaukee Ave. (Wheeling) 847-520-3633 \$\$ KKK: Here's a "Bob Chinn" statistic: excluding fast-food chains, no other restaurant in the U.S. serves so many people each day. 2,500 dinners in a typical night. So expect to wait... and wait. But the mobs are here for a reason and excellent Mai Tais ease the pain. Fresh fish is flown in daily for favorites like seafood gumbo, lobster and a variety of crabs in season. Don't have too many of those Mai Tais... you have a twenty minute drive home.

Bone Daddy – 551 North Ogden Ave. (West Loop) 312-226-6666 \$\$ KKK: If barbequed Baby Backs and Beer (over 2 dozen on tap,) sound good, you gotta check out the lean and chewy smoked ribs at Bone Daddy. More down-home good stuff on the menu includes the tangy Jerked Chicken, the Pork Tenderloin Sandwich, and the rich and gooey Mac and Cheese. Another good thing... live music some nights. Call to see who's playing.

Corporate Promotion Tradeshow Marketing Exhibits and Displays Special Events

Brasserie Jo – 59 W. Hubbard St. (River North) 312-595-0800 \$\$\$ KKKK: Chef/owner Jean Joho brought more than his experience from Everest (a Chicago favorite, reviewed below) to this hip brasserie. He also brought the ever-popular Shrimp Bag which is phyllo dough filled with roasted rock shrimp in cream sauce. The hearty Alsatian menu is reasonably priced and served in an elegant, cosmopolitan space filled to the super-high ceiling with an appealingly mixed crowd of Chicago's politicians and media types. Try not to miss this one. Open for dinner only, daily from 5 PM.



Buckingham's – Chicago Hilton and Towers, 720 S. Michigan Ave. (Loop) 312-922-4400 \$\$ KK: This steakhouse boasts an inventory of 100-plus single malt scotches. Guests of the Hilton are often surprised by the quality of food and service at Buckingham's... it's better-than-average hotel dining.

Carlos' – 429 Temple Ave. (Highland Park) 847-432-0770 \$\$\$\$ KKKKK: Just outstanding! Carlos' continues to reign supreme. The elegant Contemporary French degustation menu (about \$100 with wine) includes standouts like the Squab Salad with Baby White Asparagus, Truffle Vinaigrette and Sundried Cherry Port Reduction and Grilled Glazed Wild Boar Loin with Sweet Corn Cake and Smoked Fig Sauce. Owners, Debbie and Carlos Nieto go the distance to ensure a flawless dining experience and deserve all of the awards they've won over the past two decades. Closed Tuesday.

Charlie Trotters – 816 W. Armitage Ave. (Lincoln Park) 773-248-6228 \$\$\$\$ KKKKK: The three tasting menus offered nightly define creative fine dining. Ingenious New American fusions on the ever-changing menu inspire *foodies* to gush. And for the truly fanatical, Trotter has installed a teaching-demonstration facility where theater-style seating overlooks an "average" home kitchen (not NYC-sized!) and TV monitors show counter close-ups. Attentive service, extensive wine list and townhouse setting put Charlie Trotter's at the top of every Chicago list. Reservations required.

Chez Joel – 1119 W. Taylor St. (West Loop) 312-226-6479 \$\$\$ KKK: This is one of those dream-come-true little French bistros that has it all going on... even a secluded garden for dining under the stars. Local critics can't say enough about the terrific dishes emerging from the kitchen. You'll find great appetizers like Sea Scallops amidst caviar-topped chopped leeks in Saffron Cream, and wondrous, rich soups like the Potato-Turnip Puree. Lots of classic bistro dishes are done beautifully here...especially good is the Braised Lamb Shank with Wild Mushroom Fricassee and Mashed Potatoes. For dessert, try the scrumptious apple tart. If all the above isn't enough...may we add that the service could not be more charming. Open for lunch and dinner every day. Bon Appetit.

Chicago Chop House – 60 W. Ontario St. (River North) 312-787-7100 \$\$\$ KKK: You know you're in a boys' club when they offer a 64-ounce porterhouse... we dare you! Despite the old-school, slightly stuffy atmosphere, this steakhouse offers good value with reliable meat and complimentary sides. The waiters accommodate lingerers with grace, making this a good spot for a business dinner.

Chilpancingo – 358 West Ontario St. (River North) 312-266-9525 \$\$ KKK: Chef-owner Gino Bahena followed the success of his Ixcapuzalco with this regional Mexican winner. He learned his stuff from a 12 year stint under Rick Bayless at Topolobampo. Check out the Roasted Rack of Lamb in Oaxacan Yellow Mole Sauce or the Tuna and Sliced Squid in a Squid Ink Chile Sauce. Some fine tequilas add to the fun but for the ultimate good time, one must finish with the heavenly coconut pie and a flaming Café Maya.

Coco Pazzo – 300 W. Hubbard St. (Loop) 312-836-0900 \$\$\$ KKKK: The flavors of Tuscany rule at this beautifully done Manhattan import. Dig in to the great antipastos and hearty daily risotto and pasta specials (like the rigatoni alla butera with sausage and peas in a tomato cream sauce laced with Parmesan) The Pan Seared Rack of Pork is a winner. For dessert, try the lemon tart. Open for lunch (Mon-Fri) and dinner. .

Everest – One Financial Plaza, 40th Fl., 440 S. LaSalle St. (Loop) 312-663-8920 \$\$\$\$ KKK: It still doesn't share the same red-hot rep as Chef Jean Joho's other venture, Brasserie Jo, which is good for us. We won't have to fight crowds quite as hard to enjoy excellent French cuisine in an elegant room with one of the best views of Chicago. Wine-lovers will appreciate their 800 bottle wine cellar, with 300 bottles from Alsace alone. Our recommendation for a luxurious dining experience. Open Tues.-Sat., for dinner only.

437 Rush – 437 Rush St. (Gold Coast) 312-222-0101 \$\$ KKK: This steak and seafooder is big with politicians...even ex-prez Clinton has surfed and turfed here. For the record... the Lobster Cocktail appetizer and the aged, marbled and perfectly grilled 36 ounce Prime Rib Eye Chop gets our vote. .

Frankie J.'s American Grill (and MethaDome Theatre) – 4437 N. Broadway 773-769-2959 \$\$\$ KKK: For a savvy blend of food, fun, and improvisational comedy, check out the deliciously different offerings at Frankie Js. The menu offers lots of grilled goodies...and a Blue Cheese and Sage Stuffed Chicken Breast that's really tasty. Also yummy...the political satire and sketch comedy in the theatre upstairs. Strictly BYOB. Call for show times. Brunch on Sundays, closed Tuesdays.

Frontera Grill – 445 N. Clark St. (River North) 312-661-1434 \$\$ KKK: Less expensive than Topolobampo, Frontera wins praise for authentic, quality Mexican. The festive space boasts museum-quality art, but can get a bit rowdy, so be sure you're in the mood for a fiesta. They have a *No Reservation* policy for smaller parties, so expect to wait.

Gibson's Bar and Steakhouse – 1028 N. Rush St., (Miracle Mile) 312-266-8999 \$\$\$ KKKKK: Chicago's own celebs choose Gibson's for the best steak in town, and we're not arguing with Dennis Rodman. If you think "a steak is a steak," you haven't been to Gibson's where the gargantuan portions are truly *prime*. Another favorite is the Australian lobster tail. Gibson's serves their full menu at the bar until 1 am. It's a fun place and a major scene. Some say it's a *meat market*... however you want to define it. Reservations might be hard to get, but you can always dine in the barroom on a first come, first serve basis. (And if that fails, remember **Hugo's Frog Bar (312-640-0999)**, next door, is owned by the same folks... and although the menu is primarily seafood, carnivores can order from the Gibson's menu). A custom ventilation system has been installed to accommodate Gibson's cigar smoking clientele.

Giocco – 1312 S. Wabash (South Loop) 312-939-3870 \$\$\$ KKK: Revitalized by new chef, Cocoran O'Conner, this South Loop veteran Italian is back on track. Unique starters, like the Octopus Carpaccio with oregano and olives, prepare you perfectly for the excellent pastas...like eggplant ravioli tossed with pesto-infused olive oil. In addition to the fine food, we love Giotto's speakeasy décor, enhanced by a semi-hidden back-alley entry way.

Green Dolphin Street – 2200 N. Ashland St. (Lincoln Park) 773-395-0066 \$\$\$ KKK: Come for dinner and stay all night (or at least 'til last call at 2am). In addition to fine Contemporary American fare, the venue includes live music nightly...everything from jazz and blues combos to a 15-piece big band. (Your dinner tab includes the cover charge...call to find out who's playing.) A very active bar makes a fun hang-out, and offers a comprehensive wine and liquor list. Cigar smoking is permitted. If dessert's your vice, try the decadent chocolate soup. Free valet parking.

Heat – 1507 No. Sedgwick St. (Old Town) 312-397-9818 \$\$\$\$ KKKK: It's expensive, but get ready for divine sushi and sashimi with stellar presentations. Also sensational...small tapas style plates of assorted delicacies... like the duck breast, stir-fried with white baby eggplant. Choose from over 22 different Sakes. Note: Heat can't accommodate parties over six.

Heaven on Seven – Garland Bldg., 7th Fl., 111 N. Wabash Ave. (Loop) 312-263-6443 \$ KKK: Some like it hot... and for them, this *is* heaven. 1165 varieties of hot sauce are part of the décor and there will be 15 or so on your table. The Cajun/Creole menu includes a mouth-watering gumbo, a Crawfish Tamale, and New Orleans BBQ'd Shrimp...hard to believe you're on the 7th floor of a Chicago office building; feels much more like Cajun country. Lunch only.



Ixcapuzalco – 2919 N. Milwaukee Ave. (West Loop) 773-486-7340 \$\$\$ KKK: Protégé of Rick Bayless (Frontera Grill), Chef-owner Geno Bahena has proven a natural running his own places (Chilpancingo is another Bahena winner!) This Mexico native brings lots of family secrets to the table, and you can see the whole show as it unfolds in the red-tiled open kitchen. Especially good: Jalapenos Rellenos stuffed with warm, smoked marin... the Florida Shrimp entrée done in a vanilla cream sauce with chile and garlic.... and the daily mole specials. For dessert, we loved the crepe filled with goat's milk caramel, and topped with toasted pecans and chopped plantains. Some delightful wines and over 100 Tequilas are on hand... and we promise, the Margaritas here are intense. Aside from the excellent food...this place is also excellent fun.

Joe's Seafood, Prime Steak, and Stone Crab – 60 East Grand Ave. (Loop) 312-379-5637 \$\$\$ KKKK: Yes... this is the same fabulous Joe's that you know from Miami. With great Chicago beef and fabulous Florida stone crabs (flown in thrice-weekly)...how can you miss? If you've never dunked a succulent, chilled crab claw into Joe's classic mustard-mayo sauce, you just haven't lived. Don't forget...this meal isn't over till they serve the Key Lime Pie.

Kamehachi – 1400 N. Wells St. (Lincoln Park) 312-664-3663 \$\$ KKK: "The freshest sushi" in Chicago... and it's served til midnight. Kamehachi caters to both the hard-core sushi lovers with the standards and the uninitiated with "Sushi for Beginners 101" that only includes vegetarian rolls and cooked fish. Dining in their outdoor garden is a pleasure.

Keefer's- 20 W. Kinzie St. (River North) 312-467-9525 \$\$\$ KKK: This 'new kid on the block' steak and seafood joint has become quite the draw for local radio and TV personalities. Top-quality beef (porterhouse, Delmonico, and strip steaks,) potato croquettes with cheese fondue, and sweet peas with pearl onions and bacon create a wonderfully satisfying meal. Chef John Hogan classes up the menu with foie gras appetizers, exquisite fish entrees, and properly gooey desserts. Over 100 choices in the wine cellar, including some intriguing boutique labels. Serves lunch and dinner week days, dinner only on Saturday, and is closed Sunday.

Kevin- 9 W. Hubbard St. (River North) 312-595-0055 \$\$\$\$ KKK: One of Chicago's most talented chefs, Kevin Shikami (former star man of Jimmy's Place,) is wowing the town with his own new place and his stylish French-Asian Fusion creations. Don't miss the wasabi infused tuna tartare, served with hamachi-green papaya salad. It's divine. Additional pluses include gracious service and killer desserts from Pastry Chef, Cindy Schuman.

Kiki's Bistro – 900 N. Franklin St. (North Side) 312-335-5454 \$\$\$ KKK+: Bistro is to haute French cuisine as down-home comfort food is to luxe Continental. The menu offers a few contemporary surprises, but you will be comforted by steak pommes frites, duck pate, crème brulée, baked onion soup and the rest of your favorites. The excellent preparations, together with the warm and friendly hospitality keeps Kiki's Bistro high on our list.

La Scarola – 721 W. Grand (River West) 312-243-1740 \$\$ KKK+: You want your guests to think you really know Chicago? This is the place. An unassuming storefront, and local favorite, serving large portions of the best of Mom's Italian cooking. We lucked out and were introduced to the place on a recent trip. We'll be back.

Lawry's The Prime Rib – 100 E. Ontario St. (Miracle Mile) 312-787-5000 \$\$\$ KKK: The huge slab of prime rib is a perennial favorite (if you're feeling ambitious, order the bone-in Chicago cut) and the "spinning salad" offers enough distraction that people actually take their eyes off the beef occasionally. The lunch menu offers a few lighter options, including seafood dishes and a sandwich bar. To close, try Jackie's Famous Chocolate Bag.

Le Bouchon – 1958 N. Damen Ave. (River West) 773-862-6600 \$\$ KKKKK: One of the toughest reservations in Chicago, Le Bouchon *defines* bistro. True to form, it's cozy and inexpensive with wonderful classics like the onion tart, salad Lyonnaise, and charcuterie. The pates and escargots are pure heaven. Save room for the mega-rich crème brulée or the apple tart. Open for dinner only.

Les Nomades – 222 E. Ontario St. (Miracle Mile) 312-649-9010 \$\$\$ KKK: This once-private club went public in 1996 to much of Chicago's delight (save for the original members who didn't want to share.) The zinc bar, Lalique flower vases and antique travel posters take you straight to Paris. Owners Mary Beth and Roland Liccioni (formerly of Le Francais,) do "elegance" to a 'T'. The cuisine is French, haute and fabulous, and the service is spectacular. Jacket and tie requested.

Lou Mitchell's – 565 W. Jackson Blvd. (West Loop) 312-939-3111 \$ KK: If you believe that breakfast is the most important meal of the day *and* that Milk Duds can be a part of that meal, Lou Mitchell's is the place for you. Legendary omelets (made with double-yolk eggs), pancakes and french toast are *de rigueur*. Home-made pastries, breads, jams and ice creams (18% butterfat!) round out the plate. (By the way, the Milk Duds are complimentary for women and kids while you wait for a table... the men make do with donut holes.) If you need one last cholesterol fix before leaving the Windy City, try LMExpress at O'Hare International Terminal at the airport. NO CREDIT CARDS.

Marché – 833 W. Randolph St. (West Loop) 312-226-8399 \$\$\$ KKKK: Chicago's beautiful people are part of the ambiance here. A (rather Americanized) French menu is served up by a waitstaff almost as attractive as the clientele. The food is really good, but what amazed us is the great interior design. When you walk in, if you are looking forward to your table conversation, you fear that you will be assaulted by the loud music... however, once you settle in, the music doesn't intrude, it just adds to the fun and upbeat atmosphere. We really appreciate that Chicago's Midwestern emphasis on hospitality has kept that *cooler than cool* attitude out of even the trendiest of eateries. We like Marché a lot.

MK - 868 N. Franklin St. (River North) 312-482-9179 \$\$\$ KKKK: This place made Conde Nast Traveler's list of the Top 50 Best Restaurants in the World just a few months after it's opening a few years back. Chef-owner, Micheal Kornick, (the former executive chef of Marche) is really gifted, and foodies remain all agog over his Contemporary American creations. Although décor, lighting and ambiance are all terrific, you'll be so taken with the food itself that you might not notice anything else. Start with the Sautéed Sweetbreads with Carmelized Endive and a Sherry Shallot Sauce, and follow with the Sautéed Squab with Truffle Madeira Sauce and Braised Savoy Cabbage. Dessert Chef Mindy Segal provides truly exquisite concoctions like her Bittersweet Chocolate Cake layered with Malt Mousse and Cashew Meringue Crisps. Great Cheeses are matched with lush dessert wines. Prime tables at the edge of the upstairs loft are the best *see and be seen* locations.

Mod – 1520 North Damen Ave. (West Loop) 773-252-1500 \$\$ KKK: At Mod, the food is all about pure, natural flavors and the mood is all about high style. Cuisine is experimental American with a Gen-X flex. You'll find some awesome salads... like the Roasted Half Moon Bay Beets tossed over frisee, and topped with a toasted slab of goat cheese. Try the Skillet-Roasted Black Mussels appetizer... and the garlic-laced Lamb Shank entrée. Prices here are not hard on the wallet, but the noise level can be a bit hard on the ear.

Molive – Whitehall Hotel, 107 E. Delaware Place (Gold Coast) 312-573-6300 \$\$\$ KKK: If you're in the mood for sexy and intimate, this 2-year-old Cal-Mediterranean bistro is just the ticket. Prepare for tangy entrees like an Oak-Grilled Lamb Loin with Chianti Sauce and Gingered Tomato Jam. And for dessert, the

bittersweet Valrhona Chocolate Cake with a warm liquid center is a knock-out. A most interesting wine list includes some spiffy Chiantis that work perfectly with the Cal-Med fare.



Morton's of Chicago – Newberry Plaza (lower level) 1050 N. State St. (River North) 312-266-4820 \$\$\$\$ KKKK: Zagat and *Gourmet* choose Morton's as number one for steak in Chicago. And that's something in the meat capital of the world. This is where the Morton's empire got started. It's a bit dark, but you're not here for the atmosphere. You're here for huge portions of delectable grain-fed beef and super-fresh seafood. Open for dinner only. Reservations required.

Nacional 27 - 325 W. Huron (River North) 312-664-2727 \$\$ KKK: Terrific Latin American dining, featuring cuisine from 27 countries, is just one of the draws at Nacional. This smashing supper club and bar does great dinner and cocktail business during the week, and opens their dance floor (with a savvy DJ spinning Latin beats galore) on weekends. It's one of the best parties in town.

Naha – 500 North Clark St. (Loop) 312-321-6242 \$\$\$\$ KKKK: Chef-owner Carrie Nahabedian, (after a lengthy stint as executive chef at the Four Seasons / Beverly Hills,) presents Mediterranean influenced American cuisine that delights both the palette and the eye. To start, try the Osetra Caviar-topped Ahi Tuna Tartare or the Seared Foie Gras. Follow with the Herb Roasted Wild Striped Bass. To close... there's an almond and pear cake done up with ice cream and sorbet that you

simply must not miss.

Nick's Fishmarket – 51 South Clark St. (Loop) 312-621-0200 \$\$\$ KKK: Chicago's first choice for seafood, Nick's is one of Chicago's only power scenes that doesn't focus on beef (of course they've got it on the menu as a backup). After fresher-than-fresh seafood, impeccable service is the next thing fans mention. If the prices cause hesitation, remember Nick's motto, "One cannot think well, love well or sleep well, if one has not dined well." Reservations required.

Nine- 440 W. Randolph St. (West Loop) 312-575-9900 \$\$\$ KKK: For the mega-hip. Striking minimalist décor in browns and stone provides a great background for the pretty patrons draping the Caviar and Champagne Bar. In addition to its stylish steak and seafood entrees, the menu offers some extremely tasty options for those who'd rather nibble on this and that. The brasserie-style shellfish platter is great, and we can't say enough about the trio of caviars (served with crème fraîche, egg salad, and delectable potato pancakes.) For a sweet retro finish, try the Root Beer Float for dessert.

Nomi – Park Hyatt Chicago, 800 N. Michigan Ave. (Loop) 312-335-1234 \$\$\$\$ KKK: Rated one of Chicago Magazine's top 10 New Restaurants of 2001. Splendid views of Lake Michigan and Water Tower Park are second only to the spectacular dishes emerging from the kitchen of French-born chef, Sandro Gamba. Try the Roasted Halibut in Black Truffle Beurre Blanc, or the Napoleon of Salmon, Crab, and Tuna, topped with Osetra Caviar. A 3,000 bottle wine cellar offers some unique pours.

Ohba – 2049 W. Division St. 733-772-2727 \$\$\$ KKK: Very hip, very cool wine and sake bar that also offers patrons an impressive tasting and dining menu. Cuisine blends the foods and flavors of Japan with dishes of the American South. Try Kato's Jonah crab claws wrapped with crab and shrimp mousse. Also good...the Kobe beef carpaccio. Sake enthusiasts can treat themselves to a 4 - sake tasting complete with notes describing the background of each.

one sixtyblue - 160 N. Loomis St., at Randolph St. (West Loop) 312-850-0303 \$\$\$\$ KKK+: This Contemporary American, under the direction of Chef Martial Noguier, continues to impress. Quite simply...the folks love the food. Lots of imagination shows up in the menu...like an Egg Salad Parfait appetizer, layered with avocado and caviar. The Rare Duck Breast over Butternut Squash Risotto with Dried Cherries is a typically flamboyant and delicious entrée. Almost after the fact, one remembers another reason this place is way cool... one of the silent partners of this venture is the ever- fabulous Micheal Jordan

Opera - 1301 S. Wabash Ave. (South Loop) 312-461-0161 \$\$\$\$ KKK+ - Opera's whimsical rendition of contemporary Chinese cuisine is conceived by Paul Wildermuth, formerly of Red Light. Staged in a former warehouse, Opera appears wonderfully over-the-top...featuring crimson and black walls covered with Chinese newspapers, graffiti, and nudes. Sexy lighting and plush quilted-back chairs add to the overall decadence. Try the whole lobster, done with a Fresno chili - curry lobster sauce. Also terrific: the Shellfish Fried Rice, and the Charred Pork Ribs seasoned with 5 spice salt.

Pizzeria Uno and Pizzeria Due – 29 E. Ohio St., (Miracle Mile) 312-321-1000 and 619 N. Wabash Ave., (Miracle Mile) 312-943-2400 \$ KK: Add *pizza to religion* and *politics* as topics that shouldn't be discussed in Chicago. Everyone has their own strong opinions. Pizzeria Uno might be the home of the original deep-dish pizza and has little to do with the ubiquitous mall franchises you see all over the country. Overflowing crowds swear by the excellent pies. Pan pizza takes 45 minutes to bake, so expect to order before you sit down. Due is not as crowded as the original. (Other famous joints for Chicago Pizza include **Giordano's**, **Gino's**, and **Lou Mainati's**... each with their own recipe.)

Red Light – 820 W. Randolph St., (West Loop) 312-733-8880 \$\$ KKK+: You can't miss it... the gold building practically waves to you. The beautifully designed surreal interior compliments the spicy Pan-Asian menu for rave reviews. Be impressed by the 78-ft. granite bar. It's a great place to go to if you're hungry and wearing black. Their Mango Martinis are m-m-m....m-m-m...good. Likewise, their tangy Pork and Ginger Dumplings.

Ritz-Carlton Dining Room – Ritz-Carlton Hotel, 12th Fl., 160 E. Pearson St., (Miracle Mile) 312-266-1000 \$\$\$\$ KKKK: Who has more class than the Ritz? As always, the Dining Room offers flawless Contemporary French with perfect service, opulent décor and an awesome wine list. Award-winning Chef Sarah Stegner also creates low-calorie alternatives that don't sacrifice flavor.... the best diet menu in the world! Reservations required.

Rushmore – 1023 West Lake St. (West Loop) 312-421-8845 \$\$ KKK: Down home cooking with uptown style awaits you at this hot spot in the West Loop. Start with the 5 Spice-Cured Foie Gras with Tokay Wine Aspic. Follow with the melt-in-your-mouth Braised Short Ribs served off the bone and surrounded by baby root vegetables, red onion marmalade, and horseradish oil. For dessert...just cut to the chase and go directly for "Big Ed's Banana Cake."

Seasons – Four Seasons Hotel, 120 E. Delaware Pl., (Miracle Mile) 312-280-8800 \$\$\$\$ KKK: New Chef, Robert Sulatycky, is a Canadian import, and adds a French accent to Seasons' Continental American menu...like his appetizer of squab and sweetbreads with foie gras-stuffed morels. Flavorful food, gracious service and an elegant setting make Seasons a perennial favorite. If you're feeling indulgent, check out a dessert called the "Eighth Wonder of the World" (chocolate, bananas and coconut sorbet). Reservations recommended.

Shanghai Terrace – (The Peninsula Hotel) 108 E. Superior St. (4th floor) 312-573-6754 \$\$\$\$ KKK : Lovely 1930's-style supper club...intimate and exotic. Perhaps the best Chinese cuisine in town. Fabulous appetizers and outstanding entrees...like the Szechwan Beef Tenderloin. The Peking Duck is to die for and must be ordered 24 hours ahead. Expect superb wines and sakes. Open for lunch and dinner.

Signature Room at the 95th – John Hancock Bldg., 95th Fl. (Miracle Mile) 312-787-9596 \$\$\$\$ K: The sweeping 95th-floor view is the main attraction here and the Contemporary American fare is priced "sky-high" by many accounts. To avoid feeling "ripped off," go for the bargain-priced lunch buffet (about \$10)... the view is the same.

Spiggia – One Magnificent Mile Bldg., 2nd Fl., 980 N. Michigan Ave. (Miracle Mile) 312-280-2750 \$\$\$\$ KKKK: The Italian food is outstanding at the luxuriously appointed Spiggia. Celebs like Madonna, Al Pacino, Helen Hunt, Michael Jordan and Goldie Hawn have been spied sampling the perfect gnocchi, seafood risotto, roasted guinea hen and salmon filet. One negative... the service, while acceptable, does not quite live up to the price tag. For better value, you can try Café Spiggia next door.



Spring - 2039 W. North Ave. 773-395-7100 \$\$\$\$ KKK+ : Since its opening about a year and a half back, this fusion sea-fooder has wowed the people and the press. Chicago Magazine awarded Spring it's coveted Best New Restaurant trophy, and raved about Chef Shawn McClain's Australian Bass (done with black truffle oil and served alongside steamed clams and potato / celery root ravioli.) This revamped old Russian Bath House gets high marks for design as well...you'll zen out yourself when you see their lovely sand and rock gardens. Dinner only...closed Mondays.

Tallgrass – 1006 S. State St. (Lockport) 815-838-5566 \$\$\$\$ KKK: The intimate Victorian brownstone and arty interior is a perfect backdrop for elegant, delicious New French cuisine. Diners choose a four- or five-course meal that always includes a trio of soups in one bowl. (How do they do that?) Perfect service rounds out the experience. Open Wed.-Sun. Reservations a must.

Thyme - 464 N. Halsted (River West) 312-226-4300 \$\$\$ KKK: Thyme is the creation of Chef John Babula (the guy behind the success of Marche.) Mirrors, statues, blue glass chandeliers, striking glass walls and a long open kitchen contribute to the theatrical feel of the place. We're fans of the extremely dramatic French and Spanish-influenced cuisine. Succulent spit-roasted game, delectable seafood appetizers, an impressive wine list, and a wonderful outdoor garden are just a few of the many attractions. For super cocktails and an ultra-cool bar scene, check out co-owned Sage next door...it's a great hang-out both before and after dinner.

Topolobampo – 445 N. Clark St. (River North) 312-661-1434 \$\$\$ KKKK: It shares a kitchen with Frontera Grill, but Topolobampo quickly eclipsed its older sister's stellar reputation. Sophisticated, authentic regional Mexican gourmet cooking in a tony setting is what this place is about. The menu changes frequently, but you can't go wrong with the 5-course tasting dinner. They also boast a \$1600 bottle of Jose Cuervo 1800 Coleccion Anjejo that you can sample for \$150... that's a lot of dinero for tequila! Closed Sun. and Mon.

Trader Vic's – Palmer House, 17 E. Monroe St., (Loop) 312-726-7500 \$\$\$ K: If you like a little camp in your cocktail, Trader Vic's jumbo-sized, Crayola-colored and ultra-potent concoctions fit the bill. Add the over-the-top Polynesian décor and a pu-pu platter and you'll wish you'd brought your hula skirt and lei. Go for the giggles... not the food, unless you really have a great sense of humor.

Trio – 1625 Hinman Ave. (Evanston) 847-733-8746 \$\$\$\$ KKKKK: Recognized nationally as one of the Chicago area's most inventive restaurants, Trio offers Fusion cuisine that draws upon French, Asian and Italian tradition. Instead of choosing just one or two spectacular dishes, experience Trio through one of the three daily tasting menus that include a Japanese-inspired Keiseki, chef's degustation and a vegetarian degustation. Stunning presentation is standard form here and is carried through the dessert menu. Reservations essential.

Tru - 676 N. St. Clair St. (Loop) 312-202-0001 \$\$\$\$ KKKKK: Expensive...and should be. This place treats all things food like the ultimate art form... one that delights every one of the senses. Creators Rick Tramonto and Gale Gand understand all the essential elements... textures, tastes, colors, service, presentation, dazzle and fun... and they are all present in abundance. For example...an appetizer called Stairway to Heaven is served on 8 glass "steps" holding 4 caviars and 4 accompaniments, all eaten with mother of pearl spoons. Or, if you have the squab entrée... beneath your plate there's a hidden bowl of duck consommé and floating foie gras filled ravioli. Your waiter, reveals this surprise with a flourish. Bottom line: just put down this piece of paper and call for a reservation now.

Twisted Spoke – 501 N. Ogden Ave. (West Loop) 312-666-1500 \$\$ KK: Bikers who love burgers have 'em *their* way at the Twisted Spoke. Be warned...just like a mile of bad country road, a bent sense of humor runs through this joint so expect a few yucks with your meal. Check out their signature burger...the infamous Fat Boy...a giant, juicy hunk of ground beef, grilled and topped with barbeque sauce, crisp bacon and grilled onions, served on a toasted garlic bun. Management suggests you stay off your Harley for at least 30 minutes after eating.

Vivo – 838 W. Randolph St. (West Loop) 312-733-3379 \$\$\$ KKK+: It might have lost a bit of its cachet, but you can still dress in black and head to the *industrially-chic* Vivo. Luckily, the Italian fare was always as good as the rep and the food ain't changed. Antipasto, pastas and seafood dishes are all excellent. Try the thinly sliced Veal Chop with Portobello Mushrooms.

Vong – 6 W. Hubbard St. (Loop) 312-644-8664 \$\$\$\$ KKKK: You'll experience exquisite Thai-French Fusion cuisine, created by NY celeb chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten, and executed brilliantly by chef de cuisine, Geoff Felsenthal. Start with an exotic house cocktail, created from tropical fruits and spices, or check out the Kaew [green] Martini (Litchi-infused vodka and Chartreuse.) Now you're ready for the Black Plate appetizer...a gorgeous Balinese platter (black, of course) holding tasting portions of 5 exotic starters including Thai Spiced Quail. For a main course, consider the Pepper-crust Venison (finished with soy caramel, mushrooms and taro potato cake.) It's simply out of this world. Close with the White Plate... a presentation of unique sweets, like a banana frangipane filled with almond cream.

Wave – (W Hotel) 644 N. Lake Shore Dr. 312-255-4460 \$\$\$ KKK: The cool dining room in the cool hotel. Crowd is pretty, so is the Med cuisine. We do love the look of this place, especially the luxe banquettes.

The Whiskey Bar and Grill – 1015 N. Rush St. (Gold Coast) 312-475-0300 \$\$\$ KKK: Following Whiskey Bar's success in NYC and L.A., Rande Gerber opened another branch here. Lots of leather and dark wood, clubby and cozy, The Whiskey is one part restaurant, and most parts ultra-comfortable bar and lounge. Though the seafood, steaks and chops are tasty, most patrons are here for the fabulous drinks and the incredible *good luck* they have at this mega-active bar. We're talking *pick-up city!!!* And, last but not least: always the possibility of a live Cindy (Mrs. Gerber) Crawford sighting.

Yoshi's Café – 3257 N. Halsted St. (Lakeview) 773/248-6160 \$\$ KKK: Chef Yoshi Katsumura was one of the first to bring the idea of Fusion cuisine to Chicago and he still hasn't run out of ways to add Japanese mystery to his French dishes. Service is always excellent.

Now, for a quick look at some of Chicago's Nightlife...which is wide-ranging, sophisticated and extremely cool. (Hey, Sinatra didn't call it "My Kind of Town" for nothing!) You'll find just about every kind of bar, tavern, club, joint or dive right here, most with their own loyal following. To find your sort of place, talk to your concierge, and Chicago friends about the local scene. Below you'll find a few of our own Late Night Notes. Additionally, we've pointed out restaurants with particularly active bar and nightlife scenes in the above food reviews. Look at the addresses and you'll see that many are within walking distance of each other.

B.L.U.E.S.- 2519 N Halstead (773-528-1012)- It gets pretty crowded in this small and popular blues club. You'll have a sublime musical experience unless you're an asthmatic... the smoke gets pretty thick.

Corporate Promotion Tradeshow Marketing Exhibits and Displays Special Events

Buddy Guy's Legends- 754 S Wabash (312-427-0333)- If you're at the Hilton, you have one of the Country's best blues clubs right behind your hotel.



Charlie's Chicago – 3726 N. Broadway (773-871-8887) – This gay honky tonk does Rhinestone Cowboy *for real*. Cowguys and cowgals two-step the night away beneath a glittering pair of mirrored boots. Does it get any better than this? Open way late. For a more hetero take on country, see Carol's Pub below.

Carol's Pub – 4659 N. Clark St. (773-334-2402) - More than a little bit country! Dave Doran and the Diamondbacks play all the classics (like Merle, Woody, Willie and Dolly) from 9 pm till 4 or 5 in the a.m. The place is kind of a mess and proud of it. Décor features a Bud Light Clock, much spilled beer and stomped cigarette butts. Lots of honky-tonk lovin' singles hook up for dancing and partying at this truly fun all-night party.

Division Street Bars- Division bet. State and Dearborn- If you want to pub-crawl, get in line... there are plenty of clubs on this block. Each is a little different, but mostly the same.... Kinda funky, kinda young. Watch out on St Patricks Day.

Frankie J.s American Grill and MethaDome Theatre – 4437 N. Broadway 773-769-2959 - Food and comedy improv. Strictly BYOB. Call for showtimes. (See food review above.)

Funky Buddha Lounge- 728 W Grand (312-666-1695)- Hot music keeps this smart, ethnic mix of young people dancing up a storm in the backroom. The front bar is quieter and more social.

Fulton Lounge – 955 W. Fulton Market – 22 foot ceilings, Art Deco couches, a working fireplace, hefty drinks, and really pristine, private bathrooms attract a good-looking, affluent crowd.

Ghost Bar – 440 W. Randolph St. (312-575-9900) – Very chic. Perched above the ultra-hip restaurant, Nine.

Gibson's- 1028 N Rush- This popular spot offers a lot more than steak. Not only is this a fun bar scene, but it's in the middle of a lot of other fun bar scenes. A good starting point for a night of martinis.

Green Dolphin- 2200 N Ashland- This glamorous nightclub brings together cool jazz, cigars, chilled cocktails with good food and an eclectic crowd.

The Green Mill- 4802 N Broadway (773-878-5552)- Green Mill is described as a *movie-set-perfect jazz club*. However it's described, you should know that it brings together all classes, ages and races into a very gritty neighborhood for some very good music. The place goes back forever and used to host such notables as Charlie Chaplin and Gloria Swanson.

House of Blues- 329 N Dearborn (312-467-1947)- Some outstanding talent performs at this great looking venue. Check out the roster with your concierge.

Jazz Showcase- 59 W Grand (312-670-2473)- Your first greeting comes from an oversized Charlie Parker in the lobby of this leading jazz club. Then you get to listen to some of the best jazz artists around Chicago while tuxedoed waiters tend to your libations.

Jilly's- 1007 N Rush (312-664-1001)- Pinky rings and cigars are popular props at this hot spot... a tribute to the original "Rat Pack." Downstairs is **Retro**, specializing in 70's Disco... *I will Survive!*

Kingston Mines- 2548 N Halstead (773-477-4646)- Two rooms, two stages mean never a dull moment as some of Chicago's best blues artists do their thing for *real* blues fans.

Nocturnal – 1111 W Lake (312-491-1931) - Icy blue lighting highlights toned bods sweating to Progressive House on the Hologram dance floor.

Second City – 1616 N Wells St. 312-337-3992 – Breeding ground of many big name comedy folk ... like Belushi, Gilda Radner, and Bill Murray. If you want comedy that's a little more cutting edge than you'll find here, try the Annoyance Theatre (3747 North Clark St. 773-929-6200,) or the Improv Olympic (3541 North Clark St. 773-880-0199.)

Spin – 800 W Belmont Ave. 773-327-7711 – Super fun gay dance club. Cool and super-friendly...no matter what your sexual orientation! When this place closes down, most revelers head over to Berlin (954 West Belmont Ave. 773-348-4875.)

Underground Wonder Bar- 10 E Walton (312-266-7761)- Great Jazz, Blues, and even some cabaret, until 4am in this funky little bar off State St. Get there on the right night and you'll be lucky enough to experience the owner, Lonie Walker, doing her thing. Once again, we've asked Lonie to perform at a client's party, and we've almost worn out two of her CDs. Guess we must be fans.

The Whiskey Bar and Grill- 1015 N Rush St (312-475-0300)- The rich, famous and pretty people doing the bar thing in a big way.

Zebra Lounge- 1220 N State St. (312-642-5140)- This is a beautifully designed, tiny piano bar tucked safely in an apartment building off of Division St.

5/118/01