

# NIGHT+DAY CHICAGO

Ins and Outs

Noteworthy Additions, Changes and Closures  
from publication date through December 31, 2008

### Key to Night+Day Symbols

|                         |  |                                  |
|-------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| <b>Restaurants</b>      | <b>Nightlife</b>                               | <b>Restaurants + Nightlife</b>   |
| <i>Singles-friendly</i> | <i>Includes bars, clubs, and entertainment</i> | <i>Prime-time noise levels</i>   |
| Communal table          | Cover or ticket charge                         | Quiet                            |
| Food served at bar      | <i>(otherwise, entry is free)</i>              | A buzz, but still conversational |
| (G) Gourmet destination |  | Loud                             |

Venues followed by an asterisk (\*) are those we recommend as both a restaurant and a destination bar.

### Key to Pricing

|                         |                      |                         |
|-------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Hotels</b>           | <b>Restaurants</b>   | <b>Attractions</b>      |
| <i>Best deluxe room</i> | <i>Main course</i>   | <i>Entry or service</i> |
| \$ \$100-\$199          | \$- less than \$10   | \$- less than \$10      |
| \$\$ \$200-\$299        | \$\$ \$20-\$29       | \$\$ \$20-\$29          |
| \$\$\$ \$300-\$399      | \$\$\$ \$30-\$39     | \$\$\$ \$30-\$39        |
| \$\$\$\$ \$400 and up   | \$\$\$\$ \$40 and up | \$\$\$\$ \$40 and up    |

### The Night+Day promise

Night+Day writers and editors use the same high standards in selecting and researching venues to be included in our Ins and Outs updates as we do for our books. Our local correspondents determine which new hot spots are the real deal and which are simply hype—just as you’d expect from **Night+Day**—to provide the kind of reliable information you need to make the best possible choices.

NightandDayGuides.com

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## The critics are talking about Night+Day's Cool Cities series ...

“Extraordinary detail, itineraries organized by theme, and a unique up-to-the-minute black book of what’s hot provides readers with the ultimate guide.” —*Forbes.com*

“Opening chapters set the spirited tone ... a host of food-focused entries accommodate all tastes.” —*Travel + Leisure*

“Focus[es] their information to attract vacationers who don’t want cookie-cutter itineraries.” —*Wall Street Journal*

“Well-written, cleverly organized ... remarkably comprehensive.” —*Passport Magazine*

“The most enjoyable feature may be the various three-day itineraries ... I don’t know that I’d want a manicure and a martini at the Beauty Bar around 10pm on a Friday night, but I’m delighted to know it’s possible.” —*New York Times*

“Perfect for the business person or jet-setter who’s in town for a few days and has little time to research a visit. But area residents can pluck a few gems from its pages, too.” —*Sacramento Bee*

“Numerous three-day itineraries to mix and match to your heart’s delight.” —*Chicago Tribune*

“Your one-stop guide to shopping, nightlife, restaurants, hotels and other attractions in the city.” —*DC Style Magazine*

***But it’s your opinion that counts.***

Let us know what you think at [NightandDayGuides.com](http://NightandDayGuides.com)

Closures (Please make a note in your Black Book.)

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**Violet Hour • Wicker Park • Ultralounge**

With a magical name (referring to T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and Bernard DeVoto's ode to the martini, *The Hour*), an intriguing concept (a bar that perfects cocktail recipes, some a century old), and an all-star lineup (including renowned mixologist Toby Maloney of NYC's Pegu Club and Milk and Honey), the Violet Hour has achieved instant classic status. The bar staff has been trained for 50 hours to craft concoctions using eight varieties of ice, house-made bitters, and fresh-squeezed juices. The décor is out of your dreams: Floor-length velvet curtains in cornflower blue, glittering crystal chandeliers, and high-backed chairs surrounding candlelit tables create a fantasy feel. The bar only lets in about 100 people at a time, so get here early in the week if you want to get in at all. *Sun–Fri 8pm–2am, Sat 8pm–3am.* ☑ 1520 N. Damen Ave. (LeMoyné St.), 773-252-1500

## Hip Chicago Attractions

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**The Salon at Clandestine Industries • Lakeview • Spa**

Fall Out Boy bassist (and Chicago native) Pete Wentz tacked a full-service salon onto his already popular clothing store, Clandestine Industries. So, along with browsing graphic T's and hoodies, you can now pop in for "rock star" hair and body treatments (color streaking, full-face makeup applications, highlights, and more). Bravo TV's *Shear Genius* reality-show runner-up Ben Molin runs the show. He's a tattooed renegade who can whip up a faux hawk as easily as a breezy feminine bob. *Mon–Fri 2–8pm, Sat noon–6pm.* \$\$\$ 952 W. Newport Ave. (N. Sheffield Ave.), 866-644-2526, [clandestineindustries.com](http://clandestineindustries.com)

**Threadless • Lakeview • Store**

Design geeks love the brick-and-mortar location of the popular Threadless website, where the public is invited to create and show off original T-shirt graphics. All site visitors can vote for their favorites online; winners are sold via the website and now the store. You'll find 20 different designs on the racks at a time (they're printed on short-sleeved and long-sleeved T-shirts, as well as hoodies). Choices rotate weekly, so buy while you can. And stop upstairs at the "gallery," where the work of local artists is shown. *Mon–Sat 11am–8pm, Sun noon–6pm.* 3011 N. Broadway St. (W. Barry Ave.), 773-525-8640, [threadless.com/retail](http://threadless.com/retail)

## Classic Chicago Restaurants

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**Tavern at the Park • Loop/Downtown • American**

The City of Big Shoulders lives large at this clubby hangout across from Millennium Park. Macho décor includes a gigantic granite-top bar (a wildly popular gathering place for the Loop office crowd), plush leather banquettes, and Old World pressed-tin ceilings. Sweeping views of the park come courtesy of floor-to-ceiling windows in this imposing two-story space. Plenty of private dining rooms host scores of business meetings, while the happy-hour habitués mingle for drinks and stay for dinner. Chef John Hogan's style is straightforward and substantial; feast on pork chops in a cherry-cola barbecue sauce, filet mignon

**The Trump International Hotel & Tower • Near North • (339 rms)**

Chicago's new luxury hotel and condominium complex, the Trump International Hotel & Tower, soars 92 stories over the Chicago River and the Near North neighborhood. Upon entering, guests are greeted with a quietly elegant lobby featuring a welcoming sitting area with custom-designed contemporary furniture. The hotel's 339 guest rooms, including one-, two-, and three-bedroom suites, as well as 53 separate spa accommodations, occupy floors 14–27 of the property, with condos taking up the higher levels. Each guest room has 10-foot floor-to-ceiling windows with magnificent views of Lake Michigan, the Chicago River, and the city skyline. Lavish amenities include contemporary custom-designed furniture, the Trump Luxury Sleep System beds, plush bathrooms with deep soaking tubs, and kitchens outfitted with stainless-steel appliances, Sub-Zero refrigerators, and Bernadaud china. Suites offer fireplaces, dressing areas, and spacious dining rooms. Tip: The "double 00" suites are of the grand deluxe variety, if you're so inclined. The Trump property includes Sixteen, its fine-dining restaurant, Rebar, a sophisticated lounge, and The Spa at Trump. You'll be rubbing elbows with high-flying travelers in Chicago for business and/or pleasure during your lap-of-luxury stay. \$\$\$ 401 N. Wabash Ave. (Kinzie St.), 312-588-8000 / 877-458-7867, [trumpchicagohotel.com](http://trumpchicagohotel.com)

## Hot & Cool Chicago Restaurants



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**A Mano • River North • Italian**


Chicago is in the throes of a revived love affair with Italian cuisine, and A Mano is one of the best products of that passion. Here, the owners of the wildly popular, wine-obsessed Bin 36 and Bin Wine Café have created a contemporary version of an authentic Italian trattoria. An expansive lounge, bar, and dining room are tied together with modern organic touches, such as countertops made from reclaimed oak floorboards, mocha-colored wainscoting, and matte-steel fixtures. A handcrafted brick oven is situated in an open showcase kitchen, so diners can actually see their crispy-crust pizzas being created. An onsite gelato machine churns out flavors ranging from familiar (hazelnut, pistachio) to far-out (olive oil, limoncello). A Mano caters to a nearly packed house of amorous couples, stylish groups of friends, and well-dressed families every night, so get here early in the evening (or for lunch), or prepare to cool your heels in the chichi lounge with a glass of Nero d'Avola. *Sun 5–10pm, Mon–Thu 11:30am–2pm and 5–10pm, Fri 11:30am–2pm and 5pm–midnight, Sat 5pm–midnight.* \$\$ ☑ 335 N. Dearborn St. (Kinzie St.), 312-629-3500, [amanochicago.com](http://amanochicago.com)

**Ai • River North • Japanese**



The name translates to "love" in English, and sushi aficionados are falling head over heels for Ai, a Japanese restaurant causing ripples throughout Chicago's saturated sushi scene. Ai features a chic River North address, a sleek dining room, and a slick red-and-black lounge serving an extensive wine and sake list and a late-night menu. Ai is quickly making a name for itself with signature maki creations (soft-shell crab "volcano," spicy tuna with pine nuts, pistachio, and rosemary) and elegant entrées (wasabi filet mignon, Parmesan salmon teriyaki). Feel the love with other sushi fans, from large groups of friends to

amorous couples whispering sweet nothings over their sashimi. *Mon–Fri 11:30am–11:30pm, Sat–Sun 5–11pm; lounge open Fri–Sat until 2am.* \$   = 358 W. Ontario St. (Orleans St.), 312-335-9888, [aichicago.us](http://aichicago.us)



#### **Blueprint • River North • American**

As style-savvy as its landlord (the design-mecca Merchandise Mart), Blueprint offers a brilliant plan for lunch, dinner, or drinks in the center of Chicago's art and fashion district. Shimmering stainless steel and cobalt blue make up the cool design scheme, while clean Asian-inspired dishes appear on the streamlined menu. The über-elegant lunch crowd consists of showroom owners and other tastemakers from the Merch Mart, while dinnertime welcomes an equally sophisticated, if a bit more varied, group. Communal dining tables and a lively bar scene make Blueprint an especially attractive choice for a solo outing. *Mon–Thu 11am–2pm and 5–10pm, Fri 11am–2pm and 5–11pm, Sat 5–11pm.* \$\$\$   = 222 Merchandise Mart Plaza, Ste. 135 (Wells St.), 312-410-9800, [blueprintchicago.com](http://blueprintchicago.com)

#### **Brasserie Ruhlmann • River West • French Bistro**

One would expect a restaurant named for a famed 20th-century French interior designer would be all style and little substance, but Brasserie Ruhlmann (a spinoff of the New York location) is full of surprises. First of all, the meat-heavy bistro menu comes courtesy of Christian Delouvrier, a French master with a weighty resume. A fabulous, overflowing raw bar commands attention for its sheer abundance, while ruby-color crushed-velvet banquettes and dramatic hand-laid tile work take up residence under soaring ceilings. Located right on the Chicago River in the Montgomery Building (which is also home to Ruhlmann's sibling restaurant, the perennially hip Japonais), this is one of the hottest tickets in town (as evidenced by the jet-set crowd of 20- and 30-something *bon vivants*), so plan accordingly, and come early or late, or try the magnificently decadent weekend brunch. *Sun–Mon 11:30am–2:30pm and 5–10pm, Tue–Thu 11:30am–2:30pm and 5–11pm, Fri–Sat 11:30am–2:30pm and 5pm–midnight.* \$\$\$   = 500 W. Superior St. (Kingsbury St.), 312-494-1900



#### **The Bristol • Bucktown • Pub Grub**

A focus on local and sustainable ingredients, and an ever-changing craft-beer list stand out among many thoughtful touches at this Bucktown gastropub. While pint-size, it packs in hoards of neighborhood folk (most playing it casual in T-shirts and jeans); communal tables help. Still, there can be long waits. The menu, largely composed of “snacks” such as duck-fat fries and fritters with scallion-mustard sauce, changes regularly. Check out the chalkboard specials for limited-availability dishes. *Mon–Wed 5:30–11pm, Thu 5:30pm–midnight, Fri–Sat 5:30pm–1am, Sun 5:30–10pm.* \$   = 2152 N. Damen Ave. (W. Webster Ave.), 773-862-5555, [thebristolchicago.com](http://thebristolchicago.com)



#### **C-House • Gold Coast • Seafood**

Much to the delight of Windy City foodies, celebrated New York Chef Marcus Samuelsson has brought his culinary talents to Chicago with the opening of C-House at the new Affinia Hotel. Featuring clean, modern lines (a nod to Samuelsson's Swedish upbringing) and elegantly subdued shades of mocha, amber, and sepia, C-House is a stylish destination for hotel guests, Michigan Avenue shoppers, area worker bees, and city slickers alike. The restaurant's centerpiece is the open kitchen and adjacent raw bar, where diners can sit and



#### **Par Lounge • Wicker Park • Lounge**

Par Lounge has taken over the legendary Sweet Alice space on Damen Avenue. Gone is the grungy rock vibe, and in its place is a sexy, artsy lounge feel. Exposed brick walls are adorned with paintings by local artists, while low-slung ottomans, candlelit tables, and a long narrow bar are filled with eclectic, easy-on-the-eyes regulars. The bar menu of globally influenced small plates, a bevy of beers, and signature cocktails satisfies the crowd, while a sultry soundtrack of jazz, funk, and R&B creates a mellow vibe. You might encounter a wait on weekend nights, but the place never feels overly packed. Get there early to grab a seat. *Mon–Fri 6pm–2am, Sat 6pm–3am.*   = 1415 N. Milwaukee Ave. (Wolcott Ave.), 773-252-6410



#### **Paramount Room\* • Neighborhood • VenueStyle**

Whether you like your beer on tap, in the bottle, or in the can, Paramount Room has it. The former speakeasy is now a dual-level lounge, replete with boisterous clients and blasting rock music. *Mon–Fri 11:30am–2am, Sat noon–3am, Sun noon–10pm.*   = 415 N. Milwaukee Ave. (W. Kinzie St.), 312-829-6300, [paramountroom.com](http://paramountroom.com)



#### **Relax Lounge • Wicker Park • Lounge**

Formerly known as Pharmacy (gee, wonder why that didn't fly), Relax retains some vestiges of its former taboo moniker. The bar's exterior is marked by a glowing acid-green cross, and a vintage “Prescriptions” sign gets top billing. Otherwise, it's all rock 'n' roll, baby. Black-and-white photos of legendary musicians such as the Rolling Stones, Bob Marley, and Frank Sinatra by photographer Paul Natkin set the mood, while neighborhood regulars and unpretentious tattooed taste makers make the too-cool-for-school scene. Order your poison: Cocktails are stiff (bourbon is a favorite), and the burgers and fries are tasty. *Mon–Fri 6pm–2am, Sat 7pm–3am, Sun 2pm–2am.*   = 1450 W. Chicago Ave. (Bishop St.), 312-666-6006

#### **Scarlet • Lakeview • Lounge**

Scarlet, Chicago's newest gay bar, has a decidedly upscale sheen, with a colorful backlit bar, gorgeous stained-glass windows, vintage photographs and two giant antique mirrors. Speaking of reflective surfaces, Scarlet also displays flat-screen TVs showing pop-music videos or sports during the early evening hours that humorously switch over to mirrors as night descends. DJ-driven dance music and signature martinis served by eye-candy bartenders keep the good-looking patrons (of both genders, but heavily in favor of boy toys) grooving and cruising. The entire effect is laid-back but unmistakably sophisticated. *Mon–Wed 6pm–2am; Thu, Fri and Sun 4pm–2am; Sat 4pm–3am.*   = 3320 N. Halsted St. (Buckingham Pl.), 773-348-1053

#### **Stay • River North • Lounge**

A true late-night lounge, Stay opens at midnight and doesn't usher patrons out until just before sunrise. It lures trendy locals working in the bar and restaurant industry—and while the spot's not entirely exclusive, the unmarked doorway disguised by a collage of distressed concert posters will keep unknowing tourists away. Plush sofas pepper the sleek, minimalist space. Bottle service is the norm, and the DJ is open to requests. *Tue–Fri midnight–4am, Sat midnight–5a.*   = 111 W. Erie St. (N. Clark St.), 312-475-0816, [staylounge.com](http://staylounge.com)

things drape themselves on antique furniture and mill around the DJ booth (actually an old church pew). Specialty cocktails, including Manhattans and margaritas, are the bar's forte. But it's more tempting to hang around the vintage photo booth or pool table and wait for wandering bartenders to arrive; they'll sell you beer right out of the six-pack. *Sun–Fri 6pm–2am, Sat 6pm–3am.* ☎ 701 N. Damen Ave. (W. Huron St.), 312-929-2349

#### The Bluebird Bistro and Wine Bar\* • Bucktown • Pub/Tavern

Small-batch, handcrafted beers—some 50 total—are lovingly poured at this quaint spot. Light eats and a well-edited wine list satisfy most tastes. *Sun–Fri 5pm–2am, Sat 5pm–3am.* ☎ 1749 N. Damen Ave. (W. Willow St.), 773-486-2473, [bluebirdchicago.com](http://bluebirdchicago.com)

#### Chaise Lounge • Wicker Park • Ultralounge

It's the Delano-meets-Chicago at this gorgeous, ethereal hangout. A pastel color scheme complements free-flowing fabrics, candlelit tables, and a breezy indoor-outdoor vibe. The romantic dining room and bar is a sweet spot for sampling Chef Isaac Holzwarth's seasonal Mediterranean-influenced menu, sipping creative fruit-flavored cocktails, and sizing up the young, beautiful, and typically eclectic Bucktown crowd. The street-level patio and breathtaking rooftop deck are wildly popular options when it's balmy. Come on a weeknight, and you might find yourself surrounded by couples, but Fridays and Saturdays are dominated by groups of good-looking jet-setters. *Monday–Friday 11am–2am, Sat 11am–3am, Sun 10:30am–2am.* ☎ 1840 W. North Ave. (Honore St.), 773-342-1840, [chaiseloungechicago.com](http://chaiseloungechicago.com)

#### The Libertine • Lincoln Park • Lounge

Embracing a *Pirates of the Caribbean* décor, with vintage-looking chandeliers, gilded mirrors, a wooden staircase, and fleur-de-lys motifs, and drawing an equally decadent party crowd, The Libertine isn't all about debauchery. The bar/restaurant also boasts a French-accented menu (think charcuterie, grilled steak, and pommes frites) with global beer pairings. The dinner crowd thins out as the night goes on, and by midnight The Libertine is full of sexed-up revelers. A separate bar upstairs boasts a roped-off VIP area. Monday nights cater to the hospitality-industry crowd, with Chicago's top chefs serving as guest bartenders, a great opportunity for anyone to meet some of the city's culinary stars up-close and personal. *Mon–Fri 6pm–2am, Sat 6pm–3am, Sun 9pm–2am.* ☎ 1615 N. Clybourn Ave. (North Ave.), 312-654-1782, [libertinechicago.com](http://libertinechicago.com)

#### Lumen • River West • Ultralounge

Art-gallery sleek and minimalist chic, Lumen attracts Chicago's most resplendent party stars. A multimedia installation of LED lights, video, and sound elevates Lumen above the dime-a-dozen dance clubs, while a no-VIP policy makes everyone shine. This 5,000-square-foot former meatpacking factory is filled with low-slung modular sofas, so there are plenty of places to take in the show of lights and streams of pretty people. You can call ahead for bottle service, which reserves you a table, but otherwise it's first come, first served. You might encounter a line on weekends, but you'll find a stylish crowd here on school nights, too. *Wed–Fri 8pm–2am, Sat 8pm–3am.* ☎ 839 W. Fulton Mkt. (Green St.), 312-733-2222, [lumen-chicago.com](http://lumen-chicago.com)

watch the magic happen. The seafood-centric menu is Samuelsson's showpiece, with several tasting options available, including sashimi-style offerings, various shellfish, and fresh fish prepared in multiple ways. The wine list features an emphasis on American vineyards and seafood-friendly wines. A small bar at the front of the restaurant accommodates the inevitable overflow; try C-House for lunch if your evenings are jam-packed. *Daily 6–10am and 5:30–11pm; Mon–Fri 11:30am–3pm.* \$\$\$ ☎ 166 E. Superior St. (St. Clair St.), 312-523-0923, [affinia.com](http://affinia.com)

#### Eve • Gold Coast • American

This immaculately kept dining room is the more sophisticated version of its sister restaurant, Lincoln Square's Tallulah. Chef Troy Graves does fancy things with fresh, seasonal ingredients, delighting the well-heeled businesspeople and socialites who pass through. Among the menu's hits are grilled lobster sausage with chanterelles, and truffles and escargot plated with Arctic char. The setting is framed by a pretty mosaic glass window and soft drapery. Needless to say, sneakers and jeans won't fly here. *Mon–Fri 11am–10pm, Sat 5–11pm, Sun 5–9pm.* \$\$\$ ☎ 840 N. Wabash St. (E. Chestnut St.), 312-266-3383, [evechicago.com](http://evechicago.com)

#### Farmerie 58 • Magnificent Mile • American/Japanese

This bilevel downtown hot spot has two specialties: sushi and farm-grown, sustainable fare. Contradictory? Maybe. But the latter dishes are so expertly prepared, it's best not to dwell on the fact that half the menu is comprised of endangered fish. The grass-fed beef tenderloin plated with braised Tuscan kale, and the pork belly with chestnut–sweet potato puree, define upscale comfort food. They're best enjoyed in the sedate second-floor dining room; the louder street-level lounge is better suited for a round of cocktails and maki. *Sun–Thu 11am–3pm and 5–10pm (bar until midnight), Fri–Sat 11am–3pm and 5–11pm (bar until 1am).* \$\$ ☎ 58 E. Ontario St. (N. Rush St.), 312-440-1818, [farmerie58.com](http://farmerie58.com)

#### La Madia • River North • Italian

Chicagoans have been lusting for authentic Italian thin-crust pizza in all its incarnations, and La Madia entered the dining scene at just the right moment. The restaurant has taken a simple, time-tested formula—wine and pizza—and brilliantly elevated it to something chic and truly memorable. The surroundings are stunning: a glass-enclosed 250-bottle wine cellar, a clean modernist décor, and a lovely-to-look-at crowd of professional diners and drinkers. Elbow past the PYTs crowding the front lounge, and try to score a seat at the pizza bar, where you can catch your artisanal pie being made firsthand. The mind-boggling wine list is a draw in itself—peruse selections from around the globe while you ponder the simple pleasures of pizza. *Sun–Thu 11:15am–11:15pm, Fri–Sat 11:15am–midnight.* \$ ☎ 59 W. Grand Ave. (Clark St.), 312-329-0400, [dinelamadia.com](http://dinelamadia.com)

#### L20 • Lincoln Park • Seafood

One of the most talked-about openings in town has been L20, world-renowned Chef Laurent Gras' entry into the Chicago dining scene. Housed in the former Ambria space in the Belden-Stratford Hotel overlooking Lincoln Park, L20 has completely transformed the formerly stuffy dining room, adding serenity and luxury in the form of Macassar ebony columns, onyx tables, a crushed velvet-lined

alcove, and a stainless-steel mesh screen. Fresh flower arrangements arrive each day, and yellow cedar tables in the private-dining Tatami room are sanded daily to give off a woody aroma. This attention to detail extends to the menu as well, which is organized into two options: a 12-course tasting menu (\$165) and a four-course prix-fixe menu (\$110). The seafood-focused dishes, which fall into the categories of raw, warm, and main, are masterfully prepared, with Gras clearly at the top of his game and enjoying the process of opening his own tour de force restaurant. Join the well-dressed, in-the-know patrons here, and dive in. *Mon, Wed, Thu 6–10pm; Fri–Sat 5–11pm, Sun 5–9pm.* \$\$\$\$ 📍 2300 N. Lincoln Park West (Belden Ave.), 773-868-0002, [l2restaurant.com](http://l2restaurant.com)

#### **Madame Tartine • River North • French Bistro**

As a re-creation of a classic French bistro, it gets everything right—from the tender steak frites topped with herbed butter, to the simmering coq au vin. Laid-back patrons (many of them area businesspeople) share plates of charcuterie and cheese, and clink glasses of Bordeaux. Boosting the Parisian feel is vintage jacquard wallpaper and black-and-white photos of Brigitte Bardot. Not a Francophile? There's a “Le Cheeseburger” with your name on it. *Mon–Fri 11:30am–2am, Sat 11:30am–3am.* \$\$ 📍 22 E. Hubbard St. (N. State St.), 312-755-0007, [madametartines.com](http://madametartines.com)

#### **Old Oak Tap\* • West Town • American**

Log-legged tables and a roaring fire set a ski-lodge vibe. Microbrews pair nicely with comfort-food standards, such as sharable plates of pork and super-chewy homemade pretzels. *Sun–Fri 11am–2am, Sat 11am–3am.* \$ 📍 2109 W. Chicago Ave. (N. Hoyne Ave.), 773-722-0406, [theoldoaktap.com](http://theoldoaktap.com)

#### **Perennial • Lincoln Park • American**

Hot-shot restaurateurs Kevin Boehm and Rob Katz (who also own Boka and Landmark, as well as an in-demand catering company) have done it again. Chicago is all a-flutter over Perennial, a chic American bistro housed in the Park View Hotel. Featuring a color scheme of soft browns and blues punctuated with magenta and turquoise, Perennial is filled with natural materials, such as stone floors and sleek walnut furnishings. A wooden banquettes in the center of the dining room encompasses a line of illuminated white birch trees, while a gold-color canvas drapes overhead. Floor-to-ceiling windows look out onto the busy Lincoln Park streets, and, in the summer months, the Green City Market (Chicago's largest farmers market). A cocktail lounge adjacent to the dining room is a stylish gathering place for the well-dressed young professionals who flock here, and it offers a fireplace for cozy cold-weather nights. Also on hand is The Strand, a semi-private dining room filled with images from photographer Paul Strand, as well as cushy couches, an elegant walnut bar, and a soothing color palette. Executive chef Giuseppe Tentori, who was recently named one of *Food & Wine's* best new chefs, and chef de cuisine Ryan Poli have crafted a seasonal menu filled with simple flavors and refined presentations. A global wine list of 100 bottles and 20 wines by the glass is joined by Perennial's reserve list, which offers selections chosen by 30 notable Chicagoans, including Alinea chef Grant Achatz, Charlie Trotter, and former White Sox player Frank Thomas. *Mon–Fri 11:30am–2pm and 5–10pm, Sat–Sun 9am–2pm.* \$\$ 📍 1800 N. Lincoln Ave. (Clark St.), 312-981-7070, [perennialchicago.com](http://perennialchicago.com)

#### **Sushi X • Lincoln Park • Japanese**

The highly stylized Sushi X of West Town launched a hotly anticipated larger location in Lincoln Park. The bulk of the extensive menu is made up of both traditional and creative rolls, such as the White Tiger (a spicy concoction of tuna, hamachi, and salmon) and the Five-O (bacon and hamachi rolled in bacon bits and wrapped in prosciutto). A long list of nigiri, sashimi, and pan-Asian entrées are also on hand. The stylish scene features a sleek blue and silver design scheme, with Japanese animation projected on a beaded shimmer screen and a cool little lounge area. The place gets packed with young couples and posers of friends on weekend nights; try coming in for lunch, or pick a weeknight. *Mon–Fri 11am–2pm and 5–11pm, Sat–Sun 5–11pm.* \$ 📍 543 W. Diversey Pkwy. (Cambridge Ave.), 773-248-1808, [sushi-x.net](http://sushi-x.net)

## Hip Chicago Nightlife

#### **Aberdeen • Wicker Park • Lounge**

A high-flying yet laid-back hangout in the heart of the ever-evolving Wicker Park nightlife scene, Aberdeen parlays its small space into an intimate atmosphere. It's a sports bar by day, with six TVs and a straightforward bar-food menu, including burgers, hot wings, and salads, but by night Aberdeen morphs into a laid-back lounge, and resident DJs and bottle service rule the roost. Wooden accents, tons of candles, and white chandeliers lend some swagger to the space and create a classy atmosphere for a diverse group of clubbers. Weekends can be a bit claustrophobic, so show up early, or choose a weeknight. *Mon–Fri 4pm–2am, Sat noon–3am, Sun noon–close.* 📍 1856 W. North Ave. (Wolcott Ave.), 773-365-0091, [aberdienchicago.com](http://aberdienchicago.com)

#### **Angels & Kings • River North • Lounge**

Homeboy Pete Wentz (bassist for the band Fall Out Boy and a Highland Park native) has added to his ever-growing empire, which includes bars here and in New York, plus a clothing line with Angels & Kings. Co-owners Wentz and Chicago club impresarios Matt Eisler and Stephen Westman, along with celebrity blogger Perez Hilton (of all people), teamed up to open this too-cool-for-school rock lounge in River North. Sporting bench seating and oversize booths for prime mingling, plus a platform for impromptu performances and rock 'n' roll karaoke, Angels & Kings has a fun clubhouse feel. Celebrity mug shots of the likes of Ozzy Osbourne and James Brown line the walls, and, if you look closely, you'll find pics of Wentz and his wife, Ashlee Simpson-Wentz, in the mix, too. Throw-caution-to-the-wind cocktails, such as the Trainwreck (Jameson whiskey, Cointreau, and lemon) and the Gun Clip (bourbon, bitters, and sugar syrup) make up the menu, but it seems the young, fashionable, and hyped-up crowd here prefers to do shots. In fact, there's a gong located behind the bar for the staff to ring when someone buys the house a round. *Sun–Mon and Wed–Fri 8pm–2am, Sat 8pm–3am.* 📍 710 N. Clark St. (Huron St.), 312-482-8600, [angelsandkingschicago.com](http://angelsandkingschicago.com)

#### **Bar DeVille • Ukrainian Village • Lounge**

From the outside, the Ukie Village bar looks like an illicit boudoir (blame it on the ominous black façade, the lace curtains, and the crystal light fixture dangling above the doorway). Inside, the feel is flea-market chic. Pretty young

**Powerhouse • West Loop • American**

The aptly named Powerhouse opened in one of the more unique venues we've heard of—a building that formerly housed the coal-fired generators and boilers used to power the Chicago Northwestern Railroad. Because this is Chicago after all, the building isn't some depressing warehouse; it's a historic Beaux Arts jewel with a grand 223-foot smokestack towering over the West Loop neighborhood. The restaurant is garnering lots of buzz for its contemporary comfort-food menu, served in both the fashionable dining room and bar. Expect trendy burgers, and seasonal game and meat dishes, served with the requisite mile-long wine and cocktail list. A young, stylish group turns out in droves most nights—better make reservations. *Sun–Thu 11am–2:30pm and 5–10:30pm, Fri 11am–2:30pm and 5–11pm, Sat 11am–2pm and 5–11pm. Bar 11am–1am daily.* \$\$\$ 📍 215 N. Clinton St. (Lake St.), 312-928-0800

**The Publican • West Town • Gastropub**

If you're serious about beer, this is your restaurant—and if you love pork, even better. A faithful interpretation of a European brasserie, The Publican serves more than 100 ales, lagers, and stouts by the bottle—most microbrew or imported. Chef Paul Kahan's pig-centric cuisine, including crispy-skinned pork belly with gamebird terrine, teems with robust flavors. No reservations are taken, so expect a wait. Or settle for one of the standing-room-only tables at the front, which free up much quicker. *Mon–Sat 3:30–10:30pm, Sun 5–10pm.* \$ 📍 837 W. Fulton Market (N. Green St.), 312-733-9555, thepublicanrestaurant.com

**Risque Café • Wrigleyville • American**

Where there's smoke there's fire, certainly the case at this popular new barbecue joint in Wrigleyville. Combining a love of bourbon, craft beers, barbecue, and 1940s-style pin-up girls, Risque Café offers a throwback charm not often found in this sports-crazed neighborhood. The racy interior features an abundance of pin-up-girl photos and B-movies shown on 42-inch plasmas, plus burgundy walls and a stainless steel-topped bar. The smokehouse menu is made up of barbecue favorites—pulled pork, brisket, ribs, and the like—as well as home-style side dishes such as fried green tomatoes, bacon-cheddar gratin, and broccoli with beer-cheese sauce. The beer list is organized by state and features more than 200 selections, while the whiskey menu offers all the heavy hitters. You'll find a young, friendly crowd of Wrigleyville inhabitants hanging out; however, if it's a home-game day for the Cubs, expect the place to be a madhouse. *Mon–Fri 5pm–2am, Sat 11am–3am, Sun 11am–2am.* \$ 📍 3419 N. Clark St. (Roscoe St.), 773-525-7711, risquechicago.com

**Rockstar Dogs • West Town • American**

With the motto “No Limp Pickle,” this late-night hot-dog stand sets itself apart from the average corner Vienna Beef joint. Its owner, nightlife impresario Dion Antic (Iggys, Bar 13), caters to revelers leaving nearby clubs, with cheekily named dogs such as The Kiss (a chili-cheese dog) and Jane's Real Addiction (an Italian sausage). Everyone gets a free tchotchke, be it a guitar pick or temporary tattoo. For those really feeling the vibe (and the blaring rock music), there's a stripper pole; anyone who performs on it after 10pm gets a free dog. *Mon–Wed 11am–midnight, Thu 11am–2am, Fri–Sat 11am–4am, Sun 11am–midnight.* \$ 📍 801 N. Ashland Ave. (W. Chicago Ave.), 312-421-2364, rockstar-dogs.com

**Piccolo Sogno • River West • Italian**

Former Coco Pazzo Chef Tony Priolo's “little dream” (as the restaurant's name translates from Italian) has a big draw: its sprawling outdoor patio. Enclosed by a tall fence and dappled with illuminated trees, it seats 120 (halve that number in winter, when part is heated and enclosed). If you can't hack the usual hour wait for a table there, sit inside, where service feels more frenzied. Expertly prepared dishes include fontina-filled zucchini flowers in crushed-tomato sauce and handmade pastas in full- or appetizer-size portions. *Mon–Thu 11:30am–2:30pm and 5:30–10:30pm, Fri 11:30am–2:30pm and 5:30–11pm, Sat 5:30–11pm, Sun 5:30–10pm.* \$\$\$ 📍 464 N. Halsted St. (Grand Ave.), 312-421-0077, piccolosognorestaurant.com

**Province • West Loop • American**

Exciting décor attempts to trump the cuisine at Randy Zweiban's modern American restaurant. Five petrified manzanita trees hang upside-down from the dining room ceiling; softly illuminated, they give the space an ethereal *Midsummer Night's Dream* feel. Ecofriendly accents, such as cork flooring and recycled leather seats, are more subtle. Happily, the menu holds its own. Start with blue cheese fondue and continue with rabbit confit or slow-cooked salmon. The 900-plus-bottle wine wall should keep you fueled along the way. *Mon–Thu 11:30am–10:30pm, Fri 11:30am–11:30pm, Sat 5–11:30pm.* \$\$\$ 📍 161 N. Jefferson St. (W. Randolph St.), 312-669-9900, provincerestaurant.com

**Room 21 • South Loop • American**

Situated in a former Prohibition-era Al Capone safe house, Room 21 retains a sexy, in-the-know, speakeasy feel with a thoroughly modern revamp. Eye-popping shades of crimson and fuchsia in plush, lush textures enliven a sophisticated, boudoir-esque lounge and dining room, which are separated by an art installation that resembles pillowy sea creatures. Contemporary American cooking (mostly seafood and steaks done with flair) complements an ample wine selection and clever martini list. A diverse group, from flashy young professionals to artsy creative types, frequents this South Loop gem. A sultry secret garden is a hot spot for warm-weather dining or drinks. *Sun–Thu 5:30–10pm, Fri–Sat 5:30–11pm.* \$\$\$ 📍 2110 S. Wabash St. (21st St.), 312-328-1198, room21chicago.com

**Sepia • West Loop • American**

A burnished glow permeates Sepia, one of Chicago's most buzzed-about restaurants of 2007. Art Nouveau-meets-Austin Powers touches are found throughout the intimate space, including crystal chandeliers encased in translucent silver scrim, floor tiles featuring a custom-designed scrollwork pattern, and wood paneling reminiscent of the '70s lining the cozy lounge. Plan in advance to score the semiprivate circular table lit by a branch-covered pendant lamp. This earthy-glam mix is evident in chef Kendal Duque's menu as well, which features rustic dishes made with fresh-from-the-farm ingredients. Signature cocktails made with infused vodkas and old-school spirits keep the fashionable lounge full. Expect a well-turned-out crowd that is into more cash, less flash. *Mon–Thu 11:30am–2pm and 5:30–10pm, Fri 11:30am–2pm and 5:30–10:30pm, Sat 5:30–10:30pm, Sun 5:30–10pm; lounge Sun–Thu until midnight, Fri–Sat until 1am.* \$\$\$ 📍 123 N. Jefferson St. (Randolph St.), 312-441-1920, sepiachicago.com


**Sixteen • Near North • American**

Sixteen, the restaurant at the Trump International Hotel & Tower, is no standard-fare hotel restaurant. Elegantly appointed and graciously staffed, Sixteen is a fine-dining destination par excellence. An intimate lounge area at the entrance is a stylish hangout for guests awaiting tables or enjoying a nightcap. Diners then pass through a 900-bottle, glass-enclosed wine gallery that leads into the stunning dining room. The first thing you'll notice is the face-to-face view of the Wrigley Building clock tower, followed by the Tribune Tower, Navy Pier, and Lake Michigan, through floor-to-ceiling windows. A large-scale mirror on the back wall of the restaurant provides reflected views for those diners facing away from the windows. A dazzling 14-foot chandelier, made of 19,000 Swarovski crystals, is another dramatic touch. The menu, which changes daily, is the work of celebrated Australian chef Frank Brunacci and pastry chef Hichem Lahreche. Sixteen is the talk of the town, drawing droves of hotel guests and sophisticated locals alike. *Sun–Fri 6:30–10:30am, Sat 6:30am–noon, Mon–Fri 11:30am–2:30pm, Sun–Wed 5:30–10pm, Thu–Sat 5:30–10:30pm.* \$\$\$  [Trump International Hotel & Tower, 401 N. Wabash Ave. \(Kinzie St.\), 312-588-8030, trumpchicagohotel.com](#)

**Spertus Café by Wolfgang Puck • South Loop • American**

The recently redesigned (and architecturally significant) Spertus Center for Jewish Studies has partnered with celebrity Chef Wolfgang Puck to open a café in its gorgeous new space in the South Loop. The restaurant, which is overseen by local Chef Laura Frankel, offers a completely kosher menu, which makes it the only kosher restaurant in the area. Puck-o-philes will notice some signature dishes, such as the Chinois chicken and Caesar salads, as well as peppercorn-crusted roast beef and an Israeli-salad pita sandwich. The second-floor space features a contemporary minimalist design and offers beautiful views of Grant Park. Loop worker bees and museum visitors gather here for lunches and grab-and-go snacks such as the addictive Devil's food cupcakes and chocolate-peanut butter tarts. *Mon–Wed 9am–6:30pm, Thu 9am–7pm, Fri 9am–3pm, Sun 10am–5pm.* \$  [610 S. Michigan Ave. \(Harrison St.\), 312-322-1757, spertus.edu](#)

**Table Fifty-Two • Gold Coast • American**

With the almighty Oprah seal of approval, Chef Art Smith has become a household name. His upscale comfort food is being re-created in kitchens across America, but now you can go straight to the source at Table Fifty-Two, Smith's new Gold Coast restaurant. Plantation chic is Smith's aesthetic (he's from Florida), with a pressed-copper ceiling, ornate light fixtures, a fireplace, and paintings of the American South. During the week, join Gold Coast denizens and Oprah groupies sampling such dishes as cedar-plank fish and wood-oven pizzas. But the *pièce de résistance* is Smith's famous "Sunday suppers," a traditional feast boasting Southern specialties such as fried chicken and waffles, shrimp and grits, and the delightful hummingbird cake. *Tue–Sat 5–10pm, Sun 4–8pm.* \$\$\$  [52 W. Elm St. \(Dearborn St.\), 312-573-4000](#)

**Takashi • Bucktown • Japanese**

Acclaimed Chef Takashi Yagihashi, who has helmed the kitchen at such world-class restaurants as Ambria in Chicago, Tribute in Detroit, and Okada in the Wynn Las Vegas, returned to Chicago to open his eponymous restaurant in late


**Mana Food Bar • Wicker Park • Vegetarian**

The menu at Susan Thompson and Jill Barron's intimate, convivial hot spot is meatless. No matter: It's the international flavors that have everybody buzzing. Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, and Asian veggie dishes provide a bona fide graze fest for the young, trendy locals who commune at the long wooden bar. Choices include spanakopita, beet carpaccio, *bi bim bop*, and buckwheat soba noodles—all available in small- and large-plate format. Bartenders whip up creative sake cocktails, and fresh smoothies prove well worth their \$8 price tag. *Mon–Thu noon–10pm, Fri–Sat noon–11pm, Sun noon–10pm.* \$  [1742 W. Division St. \(N. Wood St.\), 773-342-1742, manafoodbar.com](#)


**Mercat a la Planxa • South Loop • Spanish**

At the revamped Blackstone Hotel, Mercat a la Planxa has breathed new life into this Loop legend. Chef Jose Garces, a Chicago native who made a name for himself with his popular Philadelphia restaurants Amada and Tinto, has returned to his hometown to head up this authentic Catalan tapas lounge and restaurant. A vibrant design scheme includes a lower-level lounge outfitted with a multicolor backdrop, a cozy bar, and banquettes with groovy armchairs. A sweeping staircase leads to the sprawling main dining room, which offers a convivial atmosphere and killer views of Grant Park. The menu features tapas classics, plus cured meats, cheeses, flatbreads, and grilled dishes (*a la planxa* means on the grill). Various sangrias, cocktails, wines, beer, and even absinthe keep the cosmopolitan crowds partying late into the night. *Daily 6:30pm–2am.* \$\$  [638 S. Michigan Ave. \(Balbo Dr.\), 312-765-0524, mercatchicago.com](#)



**Otom • River West • American**

Smaller, less expensive, and infinitely more accessible than its sibling restaurant, the infamously adventurous Moto, Otom is a chic-but-cheery lounge serving creative comfort food and flawless top-shelf cocktails. A modern space revved up with juicy hits of orange hosts an equally easy-on-the-eyes group: Expect gallerinas, scenesters, and hipsters galore. Nibble on teensy portions of hearty food, such as chicken pot pie, andouille mac 'n' cheese, and hot wings with a celery-root puree, from talented Chef Daryl Nash (formerly sous chef under the mad genius Homaro Cantu at Moto). Want the Saturday-night buzz without the weekend-style wait? Come on a Wednesday night. *Mon–Thu 5–11pm, Fri–Sat 5pm–midnight; lounge Fri–Sat until 2am.* \$\$  [951 W. Fulton Mkt. \(Sangamon St.\), 312-491-5804](#)

**Paramount Room • River West • American**

Breathing new life into the seemingly inexhaustible gastropub trend, Paramount Room has a refreshing rock 'n' roll attitude. Housed in a former speakeasy, Paramount Room spreads the easygoing, good-time vibe over two floors. On street level, you'll find a welcoming storefront tavern with upscale touches—lofted ceilings, wraparound tufted banquettes, and an indigo color scheme. Downstairs, the owners have resurrected a speakeasy scene, with an elevated DJ booth cranking out loud rock tunes and a laid-back, fun-loving crowd. The impressive pub-food menu features such delicacies as tempura-fried green beans, ale-steamed mussels, and wagyu (American Kobe) beef burgers. While there is a healthy selection of wines, champagnes, and cocktails, the focus here is beer—drafts, bottles, and cans. *Mon–Fri 11:30am–2am, Sat noon–3am, Sun noon–10pm.* \$  [415 N. Milwaukee Ave. \(Kinzie St.\), 312-829-6300, paramountroom.com](#)



**Exposure Tapas • South Loop • Contemporary American**



A polished addition to the burgeoning South Loop scene, Exposure Tapas features a glam supper-club atmosphere (think glittering chandeliers, rich red crushed-velvet walls, loads of candlelight) and an assortment of fashionable guests of all ages from the neighborhood and beyond. The menu mingles Mediterranean flavors with straightforward American favorites (such as beef carpaccio and Moroccan lamb “lollipops,” plus tempting raw-bar selections and fondue), all served tapas style. The drink list won’t disappoint either, with fresh-fruit mojitos getting top billing. Exposure showcases work by local artists, as well as occasional live jazz bands. *Tue–Thu 5–11pm, Fri 5pm–1am, Sat 5pm–3am.* \$   1315 S. Wabash St. (13th St.), 312-662-1082, [exposuretapas.com](http://exposuretapas.com)

**Graham Elliot • River North • American**



On the hot lists of Chicago diners is Graham Elliot, the eponymous restaurant from the former chef of Avenues at the Peninsula Chicago. Elliot is a card-carrying member of the molecular-gastronomy club, championed by A-list Chicago chef Grant Achatz of Alinea, but Elliot puts his own whimsical stamp on rule-breaking cuisine. His blend of high- and low-brow ingredients (a foie gras-topped Rice Krispie treat, anyone?) is becoming his signature, and at his own restaurant, Elliot really gets to play. Whereas Avenues was fine-dining personified, Graham Elliot takes a bistro approach—paper menus, linen-free tables, and servers in jeans and Chuck Taylors, plus relatively affordable prices for a chef-driven restaurant. Straightforward surroundings—exposed brick walls, a copper-top bar, and brown leather banquettes—are tempered by clever touches. The lighting scheme here changes seasonally (golden yellow for summer, cooler hues come winter), as well as tableaux of seasonal fruits. And to top it off, Elliot even recorded original music to be played in the dining room. Talk about creative control. *Sun, Tue–Thu 5:30–10:30pm, Fri–Sat 5–11pm. Lounge Sun, Tue–Thu 5:30pm–1am, Fri–Sat 5pm–1am.* \$\$   217 W. Huron St. (Wells St.), 312-624-9975, [grahamelliott.com](http://grahamelliott.com)

**Hub 51 • River North • American**

Brothers R.J. and Jerrod Melman, sons of legendary restaurateur Rich Melman of Chicago’s mega-successful Lettuce Entertain You Enterprises, have taken up the family business with the opening of Hub 51. Located on the hot-shot restaurant corridor of Hubbard Street (near Rockit, Brasserie Jo, and Vong’s Thai Kitchen), Hub 51 features the trappings of River North: lofty ceilings with exposed ductwork and industrial concrete columns that loosely define three separate rooms. Marrying dining and nightlife seamlessly, the front part of the dining room has its own DJ booth, a large bar with flat-screen TVs, and high-top tables. A smaller dining room is tucked off to the side with its own bar, and, in between, there are tables and booths, mostly packed with flashy 20-somethings. The menu was obviously a labor of love for the Melman brothers, ranging from soft-taco choices (chicken, steak, pulled pork, and halibut) to sushi rolls to “The Dude,” an 18-ounce rib eye. The bar scene jumps late into the night, with an intriguing beer and wine selection, and, perhaps best of all, food is served until last call. And Thu–Sat nights, make reservations for Sub 51, the restaurant’s lower-level lounge. *Sun–Wed 5pm–midnight, Thu–Fri 5pm–2am, Sat 5pm–3am.* \$   51 W. Hubbard St. (Dearborn St.), 312-828-0051, [hub51chicago.com](http://hub51chicago.com)

2007. This highly personal endeavor shines with its uncomplicated elegance and attention to detail. Located in a Bucktown townhouse, the slender dining room decorated in sedate tones of gray and taupe has the inviting feel of a neighborhood restaurant, but it has the menu of a fine-dining destination. Yagihashi combines his Japanese heritage with an extensive background in French cuisine to create inventive, flavorful dishes with an emphasis on seafood. An open kitchen provides an entertaining glimpse into the process. The affable servers are well versed in the menu and wine list, which features global selections, including an innovative sake program. Takashi attracts diners from around the city and suburbs, as well as a good number of well-dressed neighborhood regulars. *Tue–Thu 5:30–10pm, Fri 5:30–10:30pm, Sat 5–10:30pm, Sun 5–9:30pm.* \$\$   1952 N. Damen Ave. (Armitage Ave.), 773-772-6170, [takashichicago.com](http://takashichicago.com)

**Tallulah • Lincoln Square • American**

Tallulah is a contemporary American bistro that perfectly suits its neighborhood of Lincoln Square: It’s chic without being overbearing, which makes it the natural hangout of choice for the young professionals and families who inhabit this affluent area. The dining room is dolled up in sophisticated earth tones, with walnut accents and an illuminated alabaster-top bar. The sophisticated surroundings are the perfect foil for elevated comfort food from Chef Troy Graves, which includes dishes such as braised short ribs with bacon-and-Brie mashed potatoes, and Meyer-lemon risotto with crispy artichokes. Tallulah is a don’t-miss brunch spot (as long as you don’t mind a wait), with such decadent dishes as bananas-Foster pancakes and a braised rabbit skillet. *Tue–Thu 5–10pm, Fri–Sat 5–11pm, Sun 11am–3pm.* \$\$   4539 N. Lincoln Ave. (Sunnyside Ave.), 773-942-7585, [tallulahchicago.us](http://tallulahchicago.us)

**ZED451 • River North • American**

A striking three-story wood-paneled façade on perpetually packed Clark Street makes ZED451, a new spin on the South American steak house, stand out from the crowd of restaurants and bars on this busy strip. ZED451 wows guests right off the bat with a towering fire pit, a glass-enclosed wine room, and a separate wine bar, all located in the main dining room. A spacious lounge, complete with a fireplace and intimate seating area, offers a gracious spot to wait for a table or a sophisticated destination in itself. Several private-dining options are upstairs (which also open on busy nights), and a sexy rooftop lounge is located just steps above. Sleek seating options abound, including tables perched on a patch of real grass. Get there early for a spot on the rooftop; lines start forming around 7pm on warm summer nights. The crowd is made up of chic 20- to 40-somethings, with the range skewing younger on weekends. *Daily 4:30–11pm, Sat–Sun 11:30am–3:30pm. Rooftop lounge (weather permitting) Mon–Thu 4:30–11pm, Fri 4:30pm–midnight, Sat 11:30am–midnight, Sun 11:30am–11pm.* \$\$\$\$   739 N. Clark St. (Superior St.), 312-266-6691, [zed451.com](http://zed451.com)

## Hot & Cool Chicago Nightlife

### C-View • Gold Coast • Lounge

Taking over the rooftop of the recently renovated Affinia Chicago, C-View is the hotel's signature lounge and sibling to C-House, Marcus Samuelsson's sophisticated seafood restaurant. With magnificent views of Lake Michigan and the cityscape from the 29th floor, C-View would be a destination even without great looks and creative cocktails. Luckily for the young, beautiful set C-View attracts, it's got it all: Chocolate-brown outdoor furniture punctuated with juicy pops of orange pillows, plenty of candles, and a long communal table take up the outdoor patio, while an indoor lounge offers plush seating at the bar or on a long banquette perched against the wall, perfect for getting cozy with the special someone of the night. Infused vodkas line the back of the mirrored bar, but there is a full list of wines, champagnes, and cocktails on hand, and a well-edited menu of light bites. *Sun–Wed 4pm–midnight, Thu–Sat 4pm–2am.* ☎ 166 E. Superior St. (St. Clair St.), 312-523-0923, [affinia.com](http://affinia.com)

### Climax Lounge • River North • Nightclub

Decadent in every way, Climax Lounge wants you to have a good time ... a really good time. Vying for the title of Chicago's top DJ-driven dance club, Climax hosts the nation's top spinners, including LA gadabout DJ AM. Just a few of the outrageous design details: two 750-pound griffin-shape lights salvaged from an East Coast mansion, a bar made from a 700-year-old bubinga tree, a 21-foot live maple tree, and 35-foot ceilings topped with skylights. All this in a 6,250-square-foot 1920s-era building, and all smoke-free ... talk about a happy ending! Weekends can be unbearably crowded; we recommend Thursday nights. *Wed–Fri 8pm–2am, Sat 8pm–3am.* ☎ 324 W. Chicago Ave. (Orleans St.), 312-280-9800, [climaxloungechicago.co](http://climaxloungechicago.co)

### Mannequin Nightclub • West Town • Dance Club

An ode to fashion and the supermodels who prance around in it, Mannequin is a tongue-in-cheek club with display cases featuring tableaux of designer looks. A hard-partying throng fills the two levels of this massive dance club (perch on the mezzanine to check out all the action below). The city's top DJs take up residence here, while the girls on the dance floor seem to be competing with the club's namesakes. Tables are available for bottle service, but you'll be just as happy to mix and mingle with the comely crowd until dawn. *Thu–Fri 10pm–4am, Sat 10pm–5am.* ☎ 306 N. Halsted St. (Wayman St.), 312-850-0065, [mannequinchicago.com](http://mannequinchicago.com)

### Manor • River North • Nightclub

Opulence and decadence reign supreme in this return to over-the-top after-dark glamour. Rich woods, Bordeaux-color leather banquettes, and an omnipresent crest, as well as ultra-VIP bottle service, entice Chicago's nightlife royalty. A bevy of beautiful servers offers attentive, professional service, while go-go dancers and innovative DJs keep the crowds amped. Personal lock boxes stow away belongings under your table while you're shaking it with the young and ready-for-anything throng. There's even a concierge on hand to help set up hotel and travel reservations. (How's that for service?) Weekends are slammed, so

cinnamon and saffron velvet. The after-work set congregates here for relaxing cocktails and a cosmopolitan scene. *Daily 5:30–11pm.* \$\$ ☎ 660 N. State St. (Erie St.), 312-202-6050, [danahotelandspa.com](http://danahotelandspa.com)

### The Bluebird Bistro and Wine Bar\* • Bucktown • American

If we had to pick one restaurant style that has dominated Chicago in the past year, it would be the gastropub, that heady combination of bistro food and abundant alcohol. Enter the Bluebird Bistro and Wine Bar, from the owners of the popular Webster Wine Bar in Lincoln Park. A cozy urban-country ambience is enhanced by the use of reclaimed materials (the lighting fixtures and wood were salvaged from old buildings). Grab a seat at the long, skinny bar, or head to the back if you've got the menu more in mind. A list of more than 50 handcrafted beers, a well-chosen wine list, and superb small plates and entrées such as flatbreads, salads, and charcuterie please the palate. Bucktown regulars flock here when they're looking for an easygoing weeknight out, while weekends see plenty of small groups, and couples perched on bar stools and snuggled into banquettes. *Sun–Fri 5pm–2am, Sat 5pm–3am.* \$ ☎ 1749 N. Damen Ave. (Willow St.), 773-486-2473

### Café Wicked • Bucktown • American

There seems to be a profusion of dessert-focused cafes cropping up in Chicago—not that we're complaining. Bucktown's Café Wicked is one such sweets destination, with more than 35 temptations on hand, including cakes, pies, tortes, mousses, pastries, and ice cream. House favorites include the dulce de leche cheesecake, the red velvet cake, and the Chocolate Eruption (a turtle cheesecake with chocolate cream and a caramel center). The cafe also offers paninis, salads, and soups, in case you need a little sustenance before you indulge, as well as coffee and tea drinks, and smoothies. Low-slung tables with overstuffed chairs create a living-room feel, but the stylish crowds of kissy couples and groups of girlfriends are more reminiscent of an in-the-know, European-style hangout. *Tue–Thu 11am–9pm, Fri–Sat 11am–10pm, Sun 11am–7pm.* \$ ☎ 2151 W. Armitage Ave. (Leavitt St.), 773-227-8227

### Chaise Lounge\* • Wicker Park • American

A sun-dappled rooftop lounge attracts the masses in summer. Still, the airy dining room—girlishly outfitted with white tufted walls and chairs—is a great place to grab a fruity cocktail and Waldorf salad year-round. *Tue–Fri 4pm–2am, Sat 4pm–3am.* \$\$ ☎ 1840 W. North Ave. (N. Honore St.), 773-342-1840, [chaiseloungechicago.com](http://chaiseloungechicago.com)

### Duchamp • Bucktown • American

Walls are painted black, and lighting is dim, but the mood is anything but somber at the restaurant named for the French artist. Sidling up to chatty strangers is unavoidable (Philippe Starck–designed Louis Ghost chairs nearly about each other at communal tables). The to-the-point menu is divided into small, large, and dessert categories, with selections ranging from braised pork shoulder with puttanesca ragout, to smoked salmon tartare. The waitstaff encourages sharing. *Tue–Thu 5–10pm, Fri–Sat 5–11pm, Sun 11am–3pm and 5–10pm.* \$ ☎ 2118 N. Damen Ave. (W. Charleston St.), 773-235-6434, [duchamp-chicago.com](http://duchamp-chicago.com)

eyelash tinting, lip and brow waxing, and paraffin hand dips. *Mon–Fri 8am–9pm, Sat 8am–8pm, Sun 8am–6pm.* \$\$\$ Palmer House Hilton, 17 E. Monroe St. (S. State St.), 312-422-1336, [spachakra.com](http://spachakra.com)

### The Spa at Trump • Near North • Spa

The Spa at Trump, located on the Trump International Hotel & Tower's 14th floor, offers sleek, serene surroundings in which to enjoy decadent treatments that aim to calm, balance, purify, heal, and revitalize. The spa features 11 luxurious treatment rooms—including two offering couples' services—an event space, and a store stocked with high-end bath and beauty products. Signature treatments include gemstone massages, Dermalucent facials, relaxation programs, hydrotherapy options, and lavish nail services. A personal spa attaché attends to guests' needs during their spa visit. Personalized services include a private nutritionist, spa products, and wellness education. The hotel's Health Club, which adjoins the spa, offers state-of-the-art equipment, personal trainers, a yoga and Pilates studio, a heated pool, and roomy areas for weights, cardio, and classes. *Daily 8am–9pm.* \$\$ Trump International Hotel & Tower, 401 N. Wabash Ave. (Kinzie St.), 312-588-8000, [trumpchicagohotel.com](http://trumpchicagohotel.com)

## Hip Chicago Hotels

### Dana Hotel & Spa • River North • (216 rms)

A sleek, Asian-influenced urban retreat in River North, the Dana Hotel & Spa is the city's only locally owned and operated luxury hotel. The hotel offers several amenities for the cosmopolitan crowd that stays here, including the chic Ajasteak restaurant and sushi bar, a luxurious spa, a 24-hour gym, and Vertigo, an indoor-outdoor rooftop lounge. The 216 guest rooms all offer thoughtful touches, such as wine chillers, glass-enclosed shower rooms, sound systems, and floor-to-ceiling windows. Suites feature soaking tubs with picture windows, kitchens, and in-room fitness equipment. \$\$\$ 660 N. State St. (Erie St.), 312-202-6000 / 888-301-3262, [danahotelandspa.com](http://danahotelandspa.com)

## Hip Chicago Restaurants

### Ajasteak • River North • Japanese

Housed within the so-hip-it-hurts Dana Hotel and Spa, Ajasteak (pronounced Asia-steak) couples the artful precision of Asian cuisine with the verve of a modern steak house. A culinary dream team of four accomplished chefs are at the helm of Ajasteak, each bringing a different sensibility to the sophisticated menu. Kobe beef, sourced directly from the Kobe region of Japan, is prepared by the ounce and offered as tartare, filet mignon, New York strip, and yakitori. Artisan-raised beef and pork from well-known ranches, and sushi crafted from premium seafood flown in from around the world, are also on hand. A sake list of 30 bottles, as well as a tea menu with 10 selections, complement the exotic fare. The restaurant's two-level design allows interesting architectural elements to stand out, such as a two-story fireplace and a “floating” sushi bar that appears to hover over the main dining room below. Steps from the hotel lobby is Ajasteak's sexy lounge, featuring a black-galaxy granite bar and ottomans in

arrive early and dressed to impress to avoid the inevitable velvet-rope wait. *Thu–Fri 10 pm–2 am, Sat 10 pm–3 am.* ☏ 642 N. Clark St. (Ontario St.), 312-475-1390, [manorchicago.com](http://manorchicago.com)

### Martini Park • River North • Lounge

Polished to a decidedly upscale sheen, Martini Park is an elegant lounge that somehow skirts taking itself too seriously. Decked out in golden limestone, with three gleaming honey-hued bars and enough candles for a cathedral, Martini Park attracts a sophisticated social set. The menu is made up of small shareable plates, all the better to put the focus on Martini Park's namesake—more martinis than you can shake a swizzle stick at. Happy hours are becoming legendary here—show up on a weeknight around 6pm, and don't be surprised if you stumble out in the wee hours. *Mon–Fri 4pm–2am, Sat 4pm–3am.* ☏ 151 W. Erie St. (LaSalle St.), 312-640-0577, [martinipark.com](http://martinipark.com)

### NV Penthouse Lounge • River North • Ultralounge

One of the Windy City's most buzzed-about bars is NV Penthouse Lounge, loftily located on the top floor of a River North high-rise (you can see it glowing green from street level). Even the elevator ride up is exciting. All the elements of a chic after-dark playground are in place: DJ beats, scantily clad servers and table dancers, and a glammed-out crowd of young clubbers. What sets this place apart is the intimate (read: tiny) balcony offering private cabanas, heat lamps in chilly temps, and a breathtaking skyline view. The earlier you arrive, the shorter your velvet-rope wait. Better yet, make a reservation for bottle service. *Thu–Fri 9pm–2am, Sat 9pm–3am.* ☏ 116 W. Hubbard St. (Clark St.), 312-329-9960, [nvpenthouselounge.com](http://nvpenthouselounge.com)

### Old Oak Tap\* • West Town • Bar

Tables made from reclaimed barn doors introduce a rustic vibe at this casual and unpretentious bar. Still, the swarms of 20-somethings wearing designer sneakers and skinny jeans make it feel anything but provincial. Little-seen imports and microbrews dominate the beer list (12 on tap and around 20 by the bottle), and the menu of upscale comfort food includes a spicy tilapia sandwich and house-made soft pretzels with Guinness mustard dipping sauce. In summer, the big attraction is an outdoor patio seating 100; in winter, it's the roaring fireplace inside. *Sun–Fri 11am–2am, Sat 11am–3am.* ☏ 2109 W. Chicago Ave. (N. Hoyne Ave.), 773-772-0406, [theoldoaktap.com](http://theoldoaktap.com)

### Pomme Rouge • River North • Ultralounge

Decked out in the finest Moulin Rouge fashion, Pomme Rouge is the place for an illicit rendezvous. Plush red-velvet banquettes can be coquettishly cordoned off with lace curtains or completely shrouded with a heavy drape. The room is cleverly designed in three distinct areas: Paradis, the heavenly main area, which is laden with luxurious couches, fireplaces, and a gorgeous French Victorian bar; Enfer, a seductive seating area for 12 with the design scheme of an opium den; and La Salle à Manger, the dining room, which serves tempting French-tinged dishes. *Sun–Fri 5pm–2am, Sat 5pm–3am.* ☏ 108 W. Kinzie St. (Clark St.), 312-245-9555, [lapommerouge.com](http://lapommerouge.com)

**Rebar • Near North • Lounge**

Rebar, the chic lounge in the new Trump International Hotel & Tower, has the benefit of a truly exceptional vantage point: On the mezzanine level of the hotel, Rebar seems to float over the Chicago River. The views of the Michigan Avenue Bridge through floor-to-ceiling windows are incomparable. Rebar, which is named for the building's construction style of reinforced concrete, also flaunts beautiful black-and-white architectural photographs and a gorgeous backlit bar. Guests indulge in a "liquid kitchen" menu of cocktails made with fresh-squeezed fruit juices, plus wines, champagnes, and sipping spirits, as well as light bites, sushi, and sashimi. The crowd includes hotel guests, as well as slick executive types after work and a chic gathering of beautiful people as the night progresses. A plush private VIP room can accommodate up to 25 *bon vivants*. *Mon–Wed 2:30pm–midnight, Thu–Fri 2:30pm–1am, Sat noon–1am, Sun noon–midnight.* 📍 [Trump International Hotel & Tower, 401 N. Wabash Ave. \(Kinzie St.\), 312-588-8000, trumpchicagohotel.com](#)

**Religion • River North • Nightclub**

Chicago's famed Club 720, which has gone through several revamps over the years, has added a sexed-up new dance club, Religion, to its sprawling third floor. The nightclub's look was inspired by churches and features reclaimed stained-glass windows, Gothic chandeliers, gilded touches, and 15-foot cathedral-style windows that offer a divine skyline view. The DJ booth resembles a pulpit and plays host to the country's top spinners playing house and dance beats. Two full-service bars keep the drinks flowing for the high-energy crowd that is clearly here to dance, flirt, and dance some more. Bottle service is offered in a VIP area, named the Altar, located in a loft overlooking the action below. *Thu–Fri 10pm–4am, Sat 10pm–5am.* 📍 [720 N. Wells St. \(Superior St.\), 312-787-2375](#)

**Rocks • Lincoln Park • Bar**

With an oft-used dartboard and TVs broadcasting important sports games, Rocks has all the trappings of a typical corner bar. But the laid-back locals who frequent it know that the real attraction is the scotch and bourbon selection, which runs some 70 deep. Giant ice cubes swim in each glass, hence the bar's name. Friendly bartenders and a menu of reliable pub grub, including club sandwiches and burgers, make the trip worthwhile. *Mon–Thu 5pm–2am, Fri 4pm–2am, Sat 11am–3am, Sun 11am–2am.* 📍 [1301 W. Schubert Ave. \(N. Lakewood Ave.\), 773-472-7738, rocksinlincolnpark.com](#)

**Vertigo Sky Lounge • Magnificent Mile • Ultralounge**

Housed on the 26th floor of the Dana Hotel and Spa, this indoor-outdoor lounge isn't technically in the sky. But the glass-walled terrace, which gives open (and, yes, vertigo-inducing) views of the city, beats the scene at most skyscrapers. An outdoor fire pit comes off more sexy than quaint, and servers wearing hot pants and heels push "welcome wagons" stocked with specialty cocktails, adding to the *Temptation Island* vibe. Table space is limited, but you can still order sushi and small-plate dishes that come from Ajasteak restaurant downstairs. *Wed–Sun 5pm–2am.* 📍 [Dana Hotel and Spa, 2 W. Erie St. \(N. State St.\), 312-202-6060, danahotelandspa.com/rooftop-lounge/index.cfm](#)

## Hot & Cool Chicago Attractions

**Blo.dri • River North • Spa**

Cuts and color? Not at this bright and airy "styling salon," where the menu is limited to quickie updos, blowouts, and curls. The idea is to get you party- or business-ready without a lot of fuss—and save you a buck or two in the process (blowouts start at only \$25, as opposed to the standard \$40 at other salons). Gimmicky? Sure. But you won't complain after being chatted up by an amiable stylist, who works your tousled mop into a chic chignon in 20 minutes flat. Another bonus: no reservations needed. *Mon–Wed 8am–6pm, Thu–Fri 8am–7pm, Sat 10am–6pm.* \$\$ [408 N. Clark St. \(Hubbard St.\), 312-595-3000, blodri.com](#)

**Le Dress • Wicker Park • Store**

Your search for the perfect party dress ends at this super-girly boutique, opened by two sisters-in-law who worked for fashion houses (Dior, Oscar de la Renta, Marc Jacobs). More than 40 designer labels—Shoshanna, Trina Turk, and Betsy Johnson among them—fill the racks, with prices ranging from \$40 (casual cotton shifts) to \$500 (sequined cocktail frocks). The warm staff helps with fittings and solves fashion emergencies. (Bulging straps? Try double-stick tape.) Another bonus: an in-house seamstress. *Mon–Wed 11am–6pm, Thu 11am–8pm, Fri–Sat 11am–6pm, Sun 11am–5pm.* [1741 W. Division St. \(N. Hermitage Ave.\), 773-697-9899, ledresschicago.com](#)

**More • Magnificent Mile • Store**

New York City has Magnolia Bakery. And now, Chicago has More. The shop offers more than 30 varieties of cupcakes—and not all of them are sweet. To wit: flavors such as cracked pepper and Parmesan, blue cheese and port, and bacon and maple. You'll still find classics, such as red velvet, carrot, and lemon (prices for all hover around \$4). Famous pastry chef and cookbook author Gale Gand consulted on the menu, and that's part of the reason lines often snake outside. Get a six-pack of mini cupcakes if sampling's your thing. *Mon–Sat 8am–7pm, Sun 10am–6pm.* [One E. Delaware Pl. \(State St.\), 312-951-0001, morecupcakes.com](#)

**The Oprah Store • West Loop • Store**

The Queen of Talk opened shop across the street from her studio, attracting audience members looking for a post-show souvenir. A predictable assortment of O-branded goods (T's, mugs, towels) is attractively displayed under a lofted, timber-beam ceiling. But less typical finds (cashmere sweaters, linens, African crafts) make it truly worth the trip. Another draw: the Oprah's Closet section, where you can buy outfits she wore on the show; proceeds go to charity. *Mon–Sat 10am–5:30pm, Sun noon–4pm.* [37 N. Carpenter St. \(Washington St.\), 312-633-2100, theoprahstore.com](#)

**Spa Chakra • Loop/Downtown • Spa**

A \$170 million renovation at the historic Palmer House Hilton prompted the opening of this luxury spa, where treatments run \$210 to \$420. Excessive? Sure. But the service is top-notch, starting with the complimentary footbaths for first-time guests and ending with the built-in gratuity policy (tips are graciously declined). The menu includes massage, body wraps, manis, and pedis—most incorporating Guerlain products. For an extra-special experience, try the Exceptional Orchidée Impériale Treatment, a facial with bonuses such as