

SPECIALTIES *of the* House



by Anne Kendall | Photography by Shamon Zahnle

Angel B's Galleria of Cakes • Café Django • Casa Brava • Crazy Horse • FARMbloomington • Feast
 Hobnob Corner • IMU Tudor Room • Janko's Little Zagreb • Laughing Planet • Malibu Grill • Nick's English Hut
 Lennie's • Restaurant Tallent • Scholars Inn Bakehouse Catering • Scotty's Brewhouse • Serendipity Martini Bar
 Short Stop Food Mart • The Village Deli • Uptown Cafe

(left) Chicken Vesuvio at Lennie's. (right) Polenta at the Uptown.

Grand Buffet *at the* Tudor Room

The Tudor Room—where sunlight shimmers through stained-glass windows, heraldic banners add regal flair, and enormous chandeliers hang from a soaring ceiling—is known for Old World grandeur. What's served on the white-linen-clad tables in the glorious dining room inside Indiana Memorial Union is just as majestic: a lavish spread offering something special for everyone.

"Our main focus," says director of catering Kirk Theiler, "is going over the top to make this grand, fantastic buffet."

On Sunday mornings, a brunch buffet is anchored by a prime-rib carving station for meat lovers and an omelet station where vegetarians and carnivores alike can create exactly what they're craving. Kids in particular love the waffle bar, which offers a choice of toppings. You can even tailor your morning cocktail at the new Bloody Mary and mimosa bar, perhaps opting for cucumber vodka with your tomato juice or a splash of mango nectar with your champagne.

And when the last drop is gone and the plates have been cleared? "We're really known for our dessert buffet," says Theiler. Confections from the in-house pastry chef fill the sweets table, and even fresh fruit is spooned carefully into wine glasses and dolloped with cream.

The Tudor Room's best-kept secret may be its lunchtime buffet, an especially smart deal for students (\$8 after 1 pm for the Tudor Room's all-you-can-eat buffet). Most daily buffets are themed, often with an ethnic flair to reflect the diverse tastes of the campus, says Theiler. "Our specialty is changing things up," he says. "We might do Asian one day, or Mediterranean, or down-home style."



Hours: 10:30 am-1:30 pm Sunday (\$17.50), 11:30 am-1:30 pm Monday-Friday (up to \$10.95 depending on buffet choice; student price \$8 with ID after 1 pm).

Indiana Memorial Union, 812-855-1620
www.imu.indiana.edu/dining/tudorroom.shtml

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 Bloomington

Home of the "Lugar Burger"
voted best burger in Indiana,
TV Food Network Magazine, May 2009

108 East Kirkwood • 812-323-0002 • www.farm-bloomington.com

FARM Fresh and Chic

Specialties? That would be pretty much everything on FARMbloomington's menu. Here are just a few of the dishes that the casually chic downtown eatery, owned by renowned Chef Daniel Orr and helmed by Executive Chef Bob Adkins, has become known for:

Buttermilk biscuits. Made from a recipe that's been in Orr's family for four generations, these flaky delights got FARMbloomington written up as a favorite breakfast spot in *Bon Appetit*. Slather them with delicately spiced apple butter, or ask for them topped with locally sourced eggs, cheese, or sausage gravy.

The Lugar Burger. Bison meat from southern Indiana gets rubbed in espresso and chili powder, then is cooked and piled onto a Scholars Inn "Everything" bun, topped with Hoosier goat cheese and bacon and finished with house-made ketchup and mustard. When it was Senator Richard Lugar's turn in 2009 to host a Capitol Hill luncheon featuring ingredients from his home state, his people called FARMbloomington and asked for a shipment of 50 such burgers, which now bear his name. The result: A beefy bison sandwich that Bobby Flay wrote up in *Food Network Magazine* as his favorite burger in Indiana.

Chili fries with turmeric aioli. Have you tried the parmesan-dusted taters, fresh from FARM's kitchen? If not, get thee to the restaurant. Right now. Seriously addictive stuff.

Small-plate swaps. The selection of small plates changes nightly, depending mostly on what FARM is known for: ultra-fresh ingredients. Dandelion Salad with Jowl Bacon and Blue Cheese is just one dish you might find, depending on what Orr found that day: "On my days off, I go out and forage for mushrooms, and I garden, and I bring in all these crazy herbs," he says. "We use all kinds of local ingredients."

Hours: 7 am-10 pm Tuesday-Saturday, 10 am-9 pm Sunday.

108 E. Kirkwood, 812-323-0002, www.farm-bloomington.com

CRAZY Good Food

The sturdy wooden bar and weathered brick walls at the Crazy Horse Food & Drink Emporium, located inside an 1880s building that has housed other restaurants, saloons, and even a circus company over the years, set the tone for what's on tap: A lively but laidback Bloomington hangout.

The menu is as unfussy as you'd expect, while delivering dishes with flair you might not. "We do a lot of comfort food that's been updated or has a little twist to it," says owner Ron Stanhouse. Take the quintessential Hoosier fare: a breaded tenderloin sandwich. "It's not too hard to find a tenderloin on a restaurant menu in the state of Indiana," says Stanhouse. "But did they make it by hand or did it come out of a box?" At the Crazy Horse, an enormous pork cutlet is hand-breaded and fried until golden.

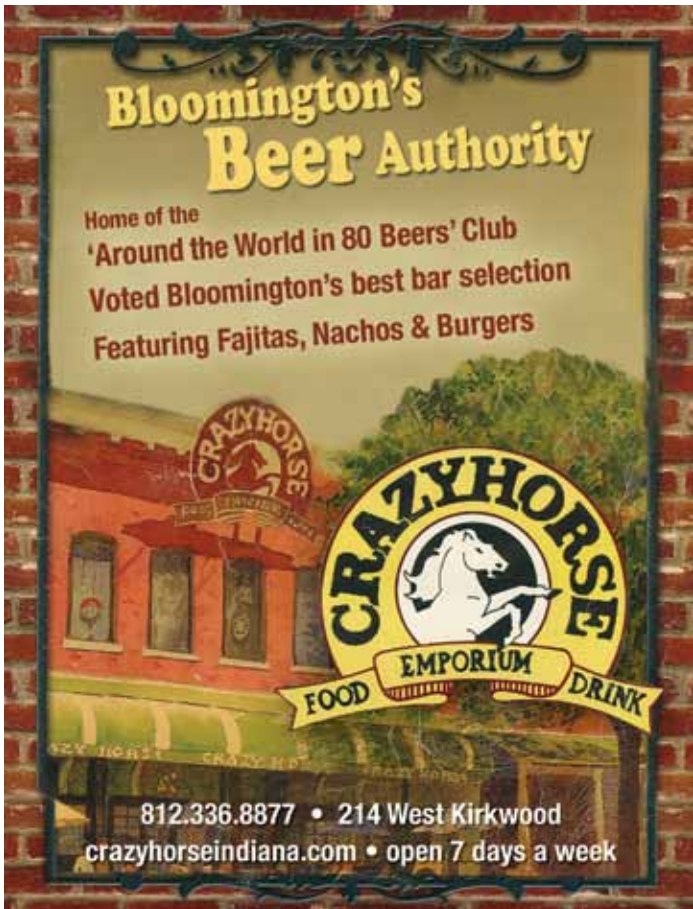
Another staple, mozzarella sticks, get similar attention here. "Everybody has cheese sticks, but when ours come out, people's eyes light up," says Stanhouse. "They're about three times as big as usual, hand-cut from blocks of mozzarella cheese, and hand-breaded."

Popular entrées include Cajun Chicken Pasta (penne tossed with strips of chicken breast and a spicy cream sauce) and a Cajun Chicken Pita that once, to Stanhouse's own surprise, earned the Crazy Horse a nod for "Best Greek Food" in a local vote.

Macaroni and cheese is about to make its mark on the menu in a big way. "Everyone likes it, and you can present it a lot of different ways," says Stanhouse. "We've breaded it and deep-fried it as an appetizer. You can put breaded chicken in it and serve it as an entrée or small side dish. It's fantastic at any age, any time of day."

Hours: 11 am-late night Monday-Saturday, noon-late night Sunday.

214 W. Kirkwood, 812-336-8877, www.crazyhorseindiana.com



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Breakfast of Dreams

Best breakfast in Indiana? According to the Food Network, it's in Bloomington—at the Village Deli, to be exact. When the network's foodies trekked the U.S. last year to find the finest breakfast spots in all 50 states, they were especially wowed by a signature Deli dish: Paxton's Potatoes, a plate of home fries piled high with homemade sausage gravy, shredded cheddar, and hand-cut green onions.

Some of the many other Village Deli favorites:

Giant buttermilk pancakes. They spill over the edges of their 9-inch plates, prompting many customers to ask how they're flipped. Answer: with a regular spatula that the cook has learned to wield expertly. "You have to do it quick, and with authority," says owner Bob Costello. The hotcakes can be dressed up with an array of mix-ins and toppings, including blueberries, strawberries, bananas, granola, walnuts, chocolate chips, peanut butter chips, or any combination you dream up.

French toast. Lightly seasoned with cinnamon and powdered sugar, then topped with a bevy of fresh berries and bananas.

Sour-cream coffee cake. Customers come in just for this moist treat, studded with walnuts; it's the perfect complement to the Village Deli's mocha java, ground fresh daily.

The Spinach Scramble. Two farm-fresh eggs are tossed with shredded Swiss, bacon, onions, and Popeye's veggie of choice. "It's by far one of our most popular dishes," says Costello.

The Hoosier Scramble. Both halves of an English muffin are buttered, then topped with scrambled eggs, shredded cheddar, and



French Toast (left) and California Salad (right).

sausage gravy. "That's for the heart-healthy," says Costello with a laugh.

Paxton's Patty Melt. Many breakfast regulars are surprised to find the Village Deli serves lunch, too, says Costello. Meanwhile, an avid lunchtime clientele stops in for sandwiches such as the patty melt: a chicken breast topped with grilled onions, Swiss, and Thousand Island dressing, served on rye. Ask for the hot potato chips with the house-made seasoned salt as your side.

Dave's Veggie Burger. A spicy black-bean patty is dressed up with guacamole, hot pepper-jack cheese, lettuce, tomato, and onion on a Kaiser roll.

The California Salad. The lighter side of the lunch menu includes mixed spring greens tossed with candied walnuts, mandarin orange slices, and Roma tomatoes, topped with a grilled chicken breast and drizzled with a house-made citrus vinaigrette.

Hours: 7 am-9 pm Monday-Friday, 8 am-9 pm Saturday-Sunday.

Breakfast served all day.

409 E. Kirkwood, 812-336-2303, www.villagedeli.biz

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Not Just Food—A Fiesta

First there was La Charreada, which opened its doors in 1992. Now two Casa Brava locations in Bloomington (and a third in Bedford), owned by the Montano family, offer the same mouthwatering—and lengthy—menu of fajitas, chimichangas, margaritas, and much more.

So where to begin? Loyal customers crave the cheese dip—white Mexican cheese served warm in a molcajete. “Jalapeno is what gives it that great taste,” says Johnny Hernandez-Young, corporate customer relations manager for all three restaurants. “We’re really well known for it.” Salsa, of course, is a mainstay; not too chunky, not too runny, it’s made daily with fresh ingredients.

A signature entrée is the Fajitas Chihuahua. These sizzlers don’t skimp on the meat: beef, chicken, shrimp, and bacon all get smothered in that famous white cheese dip alongside staples like rice and beans, guacamole, sour cream, pico de gallo, and, of course, tortillas. Steaks, too, are topnotch—whether you go for the ribeye with shrimp or the T-bone with cheese sauce, you can expect quality carne. “Our steaks are very juicy—they’re all really good,” says Hernandez-Young.

The popular taco salad is one of many dishes that can be made vegetarian upon request. Your choice of grilled chicken, beef, or beans is topped with sour cream, guacamole, and cheese and served in a fried tortilla shell.

Finally, just see if you can resist sneaking your spoon over to the platter of fried ice cream: a scoop of vanilla rolled in cinnamon, sugar, and toasted cornflakes, then drizzled with honey and covered in whipped cream and chocolate and strawberry sauces.



It’s hard to resist cocktail hour at any of the three locations, known for (left) Margaritas. (right) Fajitas.

a generous selection of Mexican beers and a creation dubbed the Crazy Mexican (vodka, tequila, rum, gin, triple sec, and fruit juices). The name of the Monster Margarita is not just hype—we’re talking 32 ounces of tequila, triple sec, sweet and sour, and a generous squeeze of lime. “We have one of the best margaritas ever,” says Hernandez-Young. Order it frozen or on the rocks, classic or one of a host of flavors: Strawberry, Raspberry, Peach, Kiwi, Mango, or Lime. House-made sangria starts with Oliver Winery’s Soft Red.

Making as much as possible from scratch is key, says Hernandez-Young. “We owe our success to the best and freshest ingredients.”

Hours (all 3 Bloomington restaurants): 11 am-10 pm Monday-Thursday; 11 am-10:30 pm Friday-Saturday; noon-9 pm Sunday.
 Casa Brava east side: 410 S. College Mall Rd., 812-339-2777
 Casa Brava west side: 3482 W. Third St., 812-339-1453
 Casa Brava Bedford: 3405 16th St., 812-275-2558
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The LAUGHING PLANET
CAFE

The Laughing Locavore

Laughing Planet has been a leader in the locavore movement since before the farm-to-table concept even had a trendy name. The downtown fixture, which owner Bob Costello calls a “California-style burrito house,” has been serving super-fresh lunches and dinners for 12 years. “We take as much as is available of local, organic produce and farm-raised, hormone-free chicken,” says Costello. Burritos can be filled with that chicken, tofu, or seitan, wrapped up in a whole-wheat flour or gluten-free tortilla. A few favorites:

Cuban Burrito. Organic brown rice, black beans, sweet potatoes (typically provided by Heartland Farms in season), and plantains are enlivened with Laughing Planet’s homemade barbeque sauce and tropical fruit salsa.

Zappatista Salad. The restaurant’s original owner was a huge Frank Zappa fan; the salad named for the music icon includes corn chips, mixed spring greens, black beans, Monterey Jack cheese, salsa fresca, and sour cream (vegan version upon request). Salad dressings, all made onsite, include Tao, sweet and sour sesame, and herb vinaigrette.

Veggie Burgers. The Classic, the Mushroom Cheese, and the Bubba Burger all start with Laughing Planet’s house-made vegan patties of black beans, millet, aramant, carrots, brown rice, lentils, and more. Even the whole-wheat buns are organic. The mushrooms in the Mushroom Cheese are sautéed, and house-made BBQ sauce makes the burger a Bubba.

A member of the Local Growers Guild, Laughing Planet works with nearby farmers to source sweet potatoes, spring mix, bok choy, and much more. “There’s just been this growing trend of people wanting to eat locally grown food as well as food that’s really good for them,” says Costello. “The founder of the business was ahead of his time.”

Hours: 11 am-9 pm daily.

322 E. Kirkwood, 812-323-2233, www.thelaughingplanetcafe.com

Come for Dinner, Stay for Jazz

The party is starting much earlier these nights at Serendipity, the martini bar and restaurant that opened last fall at the corner of West 4th Street and South College. It’s still probably best known for its fabulous cocktail list, with 22 martinis and interesting liqueurs (like absinthe). But now the “restaurant” end of things is really taking off, too.

“It used to be that people would eat dinner elsewhere and then come here,” says owner Tariq Khan. “It’s changing very rapidly, and now we have people coming in at six o’clock to have dinner.”

From the start, Serendipity offered an array of small plates to complement the great cocktails. Now they’re expanding into entrée territory:

Steak. A 10-ounce sirloin from a Chicago stockyard is served with garlic mashed potatoes or French fries. “It’s really, phenomenally good,” says Khan. “When it comes out, it’s like a work of art—totally perfect.”

Chicken. An oven-roasted breast is topped with mushroom cream sauce, served with oven-roasted vegetables and couscous.

Salmon. The fish is roasted over cedar planks, then drizzled with tequila-lime butter and served alongside garlic mashed potatoes or rice pilaf.

Khan sees two drinks being carried out into the dining room most often: the Pomegranate Martini, a mélange of Finlandia Grapefruit, Pama pomegranate liqueur, Citronge orange liqueur, and cranberry juice; and the Mango Martini, which sweetens Ketel One and triple sec with mango purée.

Serendipity is also staying busy by hosting graduation parties and other special events. It’s a welcoming—and affordable—alternative to much more expensive venues, says Khan. “The place can be intimidating because it’s so nicely done,” he says with a laugh, “but our bark is worse than our bite.”

*Hours: 3:30 pm-11 pm Monday-Thursday, 3:30 pm-1 am Fri-Sat.
201 S. College, 812-330-6688, www.serendipitymartini.com*

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SCOTTY'S BREWHOUSE IS

Brewing Big Flavor



(left) Dill chips and (right) the Shewman Special.

To really take it over the edge, you might add a splash or two of Scotty's own Mo'Fo' Sauce

Scotty's Brewhouse is not fooling around when they refer to their "Big-Ass Brewhouse Burger." We're talking 24 ounces of meat—yes, a pound and a half—in any of six Scotty styles, from Swiss-n-Shroom to Backyard Bar-B-Q.

To really take it over the edge, you might add a splash or two of Scotty's own Mo'Fo' Sauce, which the restaurant started bottling and selling during the holidays. "It started off as a wing sauce and then we started putting it on everything," says Scotty's spokeswoman Lauren Fiedler. "Now, we're known for it."

Other things customers specifically come in for include Dill Chips—thick-sliced

pickles dipped in homemade batter and served with horseradish sauce or ranch dressing—and the Shewman Special, a half-pound burger topped with an eclectic combination of peanut butter, jalapenos, cheddar, and bacon. The 7 Tidal Buffalo Chicken Dip melds chicken, bleu cheese, cream cheese, cheddar, and mild sauce, served with blue-corn tortilla chips and celery. The Sweet Chicken Club Wrap is a honey-wheat tortilla packed with breaded chicken tossed in a homemade honey mustard with turkey, cheddar, lettuce, and tomatoes. And the wings—mmm, the wings. Ask about the extensive sauce selection, and don't forget the homemade chunky bleu cheese on the side.

"We've infiltrated the community and made it our own," says Fiedler. "Since we're not a chain per se"—Scotty's has a few more locations around the state, but is essentially a homegrown entity—"we have time to focus on each restaurant and interact with our guests. We take the time to know that every customer matters."

In Bloomington, Scotty's is becoming a destination on lazy Saturday and Sunday mornings; the restaurant has been serving brunch on weekends until 1 pm for about six months. If you're nursing a hangover, you may appreciate the "Where Did I Leave My Car" Scrambled Eggz, served with hash browns, bacon, and sourdough toast. Or the brunch item that has become a fast favorite: Crunch Berry French Toast, battered with—yep—Cap'n Crunch Berry cereal. Duncan Doughnut Holes (10 for three bucks) come fresh out of the fryer, with cinnamon or powdered sugar, and, if you like, chocolate or caramel dipping sauce.

Then there's the Mo'Fo' Mary Bar, where, for a mere \$5, you can have your glass rimmed with celery salt, Old Bay, or table salt and choose your proportion of Worcestershire sauce, lime juice, Tabasco, horseradish-stuffed olives and more.

"We strive to make everyone who walks through our door a raving fan of our company," says Fiedler.

*Hours: 11 am-10 pm Sunday-Tuesday,
11 am-11 pm Wednesday-Saturday.
302 N. Walnut, 812-333-5151,
www.scottysbrewhouse.com*



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Sweet Surrender at Angel B's

The cupcake craze is alive and well in Bloomington—Mark Brethauer, owner of Angel B's, A Galleria of Cakes, sees it every day. "We get people stopping in, even in the pouring rain, just to buy a simple cupcake," says Brethauer. "They tell me it's their little treat and makes their day a little better. This is why we opened Angel B's."

Brethauer and his "angel," wife Loretta Brethauer, opened the specialty pastry shop in the historic McDoel neighborhood in 2007. The couple bakes small batches of cupcakes throughout the day so you're never buying a confection more than a few hours old. In addition to cupcakes, they turn out all kinds of other treats as well, from airy lemon tarts to carrot cake so dense, hoisting your to-go order requires more heft than you might think.

You can call in the morning and request a cake for that afternoon, or just walk in the shop and choose straight from the shelves. The two top sellers are Chocolate Mousse, which is as rich as it sounds, and Tiramisu, a labor of love. The classic Italian dessert begins with chiffon sponge cake, flavored with house-made coffee reduction, then filled with zabaglione custard blended with mascarpone cheese and Marsala wine.

Loretta handles the decorating, topping each cupcake with a hand-piped pansy and leaning on her scrapbooking background to take "photo cakes," where you bring in the snapshots, to the next level. Her cakes look like pages from an actual album, with buttercream renditions of the images seemingly held in place by rolled-fondant photo corners. Got a different type of decor in mind? Talk to the master. Says Mark: "She's got a few tricks up her sleeve."

*Hours: 7:30 am-5:30 pm Monday-Friday, 8 am-3 pm Saturday.
407 W. Patterson Dr., 812-332-2537, www.angelb-s.com*

West Coast Fare on the Square

It may be nestled in south-central Indiana, but Malibu Grill lives up to its name with California-inspired cuisine that has been luring in diners for 16 years. The menu is upscale but unfussy—think wood-fired pizzas, hand-cut steaks, seafood, fresh salads, and pastas with a little something extra.

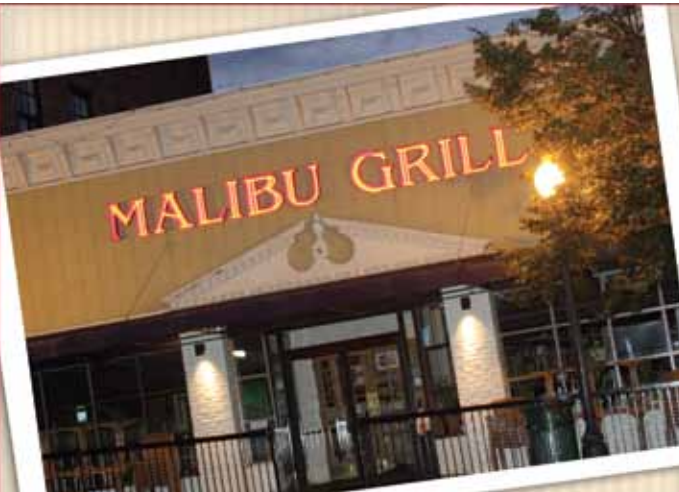
Managing partner John "JB" Bailey says freshness and made-from-scratch offerings define the locally owned and operated restaurant. From the house-made sauces and salad dressings made with natural ingredients to the local, all-natural Fischer Farms beef, "People don't get tired of fresh food," JB says. "It's a big reason people keep coming back."

Steaks are a perennial favorite, including hand-cut New York strips, center-cut filets, and the Hawaiian Ribeye—marinated for 48 hours and topped with pineapple rings. Blackened Rare Tuna is new on the menu, next to signature dishes such as Caramelized Salmon, glazed with a honey-dijon sauce. The Pan-Seared Sea Scallops are "the freshest and best you can imagine," JB says, then caramelized to the point of perfection before they're drizzled with lemon beurre blanc.

Lime Chicken Fettucine, with spinach pasta, bell peppers, fresh cilantro, and tequila cream sauce, and Penne Alla Vodka, with crushed red pepper in the creamy marinara, are just two of the popular pastas.

With other selections like fish tacos, burgers (including the house-made black-bean variety), the best-selling creamy Spinach Artichoke Dip, and a full kids' menu, Malibu will suit vegetarians, devoted carnivores, calorie watchers, and meat-and-potatoes people.

It's easy to see why JB says "There's something for everyone at Malibu."
Hours: 11:30 am-2 pm and 5:30 pm-9:30 pm Monday-Thursday, 11:30 am-2 pm and 5:30 pm-10:30 pm Friday, noon-10:30 pm Saturday, noon-9 pm Sunday, 106 N. Walnut, 812-332-4334, www.malibugrill.net



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Go Creole at the Uptown

Chorizo and eggs in the morning, or maybe a lazy weekend afternoon; etouffee, gumbo, or Creole BBQ shrimp for dinner.

After 35 years in business, Uptown Cafe owner Michael Cassidy thinks Bloomingtonians know what to expect from his downtown standby: “Hearty comfort food, boldly flavored, with personality.” House specialties are largely inspired by the spicy down-home fare of New Orleans, where a populace of wildly diverse ethnicities has historically come together to get le bon temps rolling. “The people there have just really embraced food and entertainment,” says Cassidy. “I hope the food here represents that ‘spirit.’”

Breakfast and brunch feature dishes that are lighter, yet still distinctive: Buttermilk-malted waffles, lighter-than-air pancakes made with cottage cheese, and Smoked Salmon Eggs Benedict. Omelets might go classic (ham and cheese) or Creole (andouille sausage and green peppers).

Come lunchtime, the Creole influence can be felt in classics like the Muffaletta—whether vegetarian or with pepperoni, the sandwich is stuffed with mozzarella, lettuce, and tomato, all in a toasted ciabatta roll spongy enough to soak up the house-made olive-and-red-pepper relish. Soups alone are worth a trip; favorites include Oyster Artichoke and West African Peanut, which mingles chicken and peppers in a tomato-peanut-butter base. Then there’s Uptown’s signature Louisiana Hot Pepper Chicken, featuring spicy strips of chicken breast topped with a zingy hot pepper cream sauce.

Dinner standouts include Crawfish Etouffee and Louisiana BBQ Baby Back Ribs. “One of the things people have come to know the



(above) Creole BBQ shrimp. (right) Maryland crab cakes.

Uptown for are jumbo lump Maryland blue crab cakes,” says Cassidy; they’re served Thursday through Saturday nights.

Cassidy makes sure that the steak quality stays high, so only the finest filet mignon gets char-grilled, crusted with gorgonzola, and served with a port-shallot demi-glace. Likewise, the freshest of fish goes into dishes like the Cajun-Fried Yellow Lake Perch, served with a—naturally—spicy tartar sauce.

A carefully edited bar menu focuses on craft beers, many of them local, and well thought-out wines. One waiter is a certified sommelier; at the Uptown, he’s known as simply the Wine Guy. “I hope the restaurant is a friendly, unpretentious environment that people feel comfortable in,” says Cassidy. “The comfort food and New Orleans stuff fits well with that ambience.” Good times rolling, indeed.

*Hours: 7 am-10 pm Monday-Friday, 8 am-2 pm and 4 pm-10 pm Saturday, 9 am-2 pm Sunday.
102 E. Kirkwood, 812-339-0900, www.the-uptown.com*



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Asparagus sandwich.

open-face on a ciabatta with fire-roasted red peppers, feta, and garlicky mayo. Other seasonal specialties have included shrimp with capers and feta on house-made fettucine.

Then there's that jambalaya—heavy with rice, andouille, and

Nashville's Hobnob Corner Restaurant has been living up to its name for decades as a place to, well, hobnob—meet up, catch up with old friends, maybe make a few new ones.

It's also a place proudly steeped in tradition, where hearty classics like liver and onions and strawberry shortcake are served up in the oldest building in Brown County. Still, Warren and Betsy Cole, who took over the restaurant in the Taggart Building in 1979, aren't afraid to add fresh touches. For the last two years, they've been experimenting with a rotating selection of after-5 specialties. This spring, one hit is the asparagus sandwich, served

tasso, a type of generously seasoned pork. It's all sautéed with what Warren calls the "holy trinity" of onion, celery, and peppers, then stewed with chicken stock and seasoned rather seriously. "We don't hold back on that," says Warren. "It's made like it should be. If you don't like it spicy, you'll want to order something else."

One of the soups, perhaps? All three—the Hobnob Onion, topped with bread and cheeses browned beneath a broiler; the Pepper Steak, cooked in a rich brown sauce flavored with mushrooms, onions, and bell peppers; and the Black Bean, served on rice—are equally beloved by frequent Hobnobbers.

Or the pot roast sandwich, which isn't on the menu yet, but gets made almost every day. Long-simmered meat is mixed with horseradish and scooped onto a slice of house-made bread, then aged Emmenthal cheese is melted over it. "That one has been a real hit," says Warren. Another favorite sandwich is on the menu: the Rube Martin, corned beef grilled with plenty of sauerkraut and Emmenthal.

There's also liver and onions like your mom used to make, if not better. Two slices of beef liver are lightly dredged and sautéed in butter with generous doses of onions and red wine. The Hobnob's menu says that it's "for those of you who never get this dish at home." As Warren notes, perhaps diplomatically, "people who like liver and onions are really fond of that recipe."

Hours vary by season. Breakfast and lunch served seven days a week, dinner served Wednesday-Monday.

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Peruvian-Asian Fusion

When the owner of Café Django decided she was ready to retire and sell the beloved Bloomington restaurant last spring, she settled on somebody who wanted to keep things essentially the same: Linda Eversoll, better known to customers as Chana for the four years she had worked there as bartender.

Fans of the funky house on Grant Street can breathe a sigh of relief that Eversoll, too, loves the distinctive Asian-Mediterranean fusion that the restaurant has been known for over the past 14 years. The three best sellers? Nutty Noodles, sautéed in peanut sauce whose spice level can be cranked from one to six; the house curry, offered in many incarnations; and momos, addictive little dumplings that can go vegetarian or non. “With the soy sauce and ginger—oh, it’s amazing,” says Eversoll.

While carrying on the Django tradition, Eversoll is adding a few touches of her own. Curry dishes can now be ordered with the traditional jasmine or brown rice. Servers have been trained to point out which dishes are gluten-free.

More noticeable changes on the menu are new dishes inspired by Eversoll’s native Peru. The distinctively spiced Peruvian Sautéed Noodles are traditionally served with beef, but here they’re also available with chicken, shrimp, or tofu. Eversoll’s own recipe for a smoky eggplant Baba Ghanoush has been doing well enough to become a menu mainstay.

With the advent of warm weather, Café Django is gearing up to serve ever-popular sangria and mango smoothies on the deck.

“It’s a nice funky place, with live jazz on the weekends, and people come here and have drinks and are happy,” says Eversoll. “Whenever I see how happy people are when I serve the dishes, that’s what I like.”

Hours: 11:30 am-10:30 pm Monday-Thursday, 8:45 am-11:30 pm

Friday-Saturday, 8:45 am-10 pm Sunday.

116 N. Grant St., 812-335-1297, www.cafedjango.us

From the Oven to Your Door

There’s a reason the two Scholars Inn Bakehouses have become iconic around Bloomington and beyond. Several reasons, actually—artisan bread, amazing granola, pastries as pretty as they are delicious—but the common thread is freshness. The famously chewy loaves, bagels, croissants, and other baked goods that come out of Bakehouse ovens every day have become the, well, bread and butter of a relatively new venture: Scholars Inn Bakehouse Catering.

“The thing that sets us apart is our bread,” says Tashia Coffman, catering manager. “A lot of people know the Bakehouse, and know they’ll get sandwiches on fresh bread with fresh ingredients.” The bestseller is the Turkey Lorraine, with Swiss, avocado, lettuce, tomato, and tomato-basil aioli on sourdough, but people call up for anything from a pastry platter for 10 to a full brunch for 300. Specialty desserts like chocolate petit fours and miniature lemon tarts “kick everything up a notch,” says Coffman. And granola—oh, the famous Bakehouse granola, baked fresh constantly and shipped to addicts far and wide. “It’s honestly the best granola I’ve ever had,” says Coffman, and she’s definitely not alone.

The catering division has taken off in the last year, says Lyle Feigenbaum, who owns the Bakehouses with his wife, Kerry Feigenbaum. “One, when people have events, they want to make sure it’s easy—they can make a phone call, and choose a menu, and know someone is taking care of it,” says Lyle. “Two, the food wows their guests. And three, it’s affordable.”

Coffman takes every single job seriously. “It’s important that I take care of everything for my customers so they don’t have to think about a thing,” she says. “You end up with very happy people.”

Contact: Catering Manager Tashia Coffman, 812-327-4842
bakehousecatering1@gmail.com



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BBQ Bliss on Thursdays

Pork: 600 pounds. Ribs: 120 slabs. Burgers, brats, chicken breasts, and hot dogs: Countless. Pounds of charcoal to fire up the barbeque train that holds just some of the grills used to cook it all: 140.

Short Stop Food Mart stocks all of that plus extras (think house-made cole slaw and fudge) for its weekly summer barbeques. From April through October, a temporary BBQ headquarters springs up every Thursday next to the pumps at what also happens to be a Sunoco gas station.

To say it is catching on like wildfire would not be much of a hyperbole. When new owners Chris and Betsy Smith launched the barbeque two summers ago, they averaged a handful of customers on BBQ Thursday. By the end of last summer, the crowds had increased forty-fold. "It never stopped," says Chris Smith. "Every Thursday, the lines were there."

All meat comes from The Butcher's Block and is dry-rubbed at Short Stop using a recipe developed over 30 years by Tom Vernon, the father of Smith's best friend. It's served Carolina-style, meaning sauce—Sweet and Tangy or Hot and Spicy, both made in Short Stop's own kitchen—is on the side. "In Indiana, our concept of barbeque is a wet blob of meat on a sandwich bun," says Smith. "When people around here who are from the south found out what we're doing and showed up, we won them over."

Every day, Short Stop sells made-from-scratch biscuits and gravy, roasted potato-cheddar-bacon soup, and other comfort food you'll be shocked to find if you think Short Stop is just a convenience store.

"We do simple, great food at a reasonable price," says Smith.

Barbeque hours: 10:30 am-6 pm Thursdays from April through October.

Main menu hours: 7 am-8 pm daily.

901 N. Smith Rd., 812-334-0266, www.shortstopfoodmart.com

Nick's: A Taste of History

Generations of students have piled into the wooden booths at Nick's English Hut for a round of Sink the Biz. It's been an institution on Kirkwood Avenue since even before 5th Street changed its name to Kirkwood, it's made *Playboy's* list of Top 10 College Sports Bars, and even Barack Obama stopped by on the campaign trail.

With that kind of cred comes responsibility, figures Gregg "Rags" Rago, who—with wife Susan Bright—is only the third owner in the pub's 84 years. "We're fortunate enough to be considered an icon in the Bloomington area," says Rago, "so we try to pass that on by buying things from as many local places as possible."

Nick's burgers, for instance, are made with a one-third pound of all-natural, grass-fed beef from Fischer Farms in Jasper, or lamb from Ewenique Sheep, Produce, and Grains in Seymour. Ewenique also provides the black beans that go into Nick's made-from-scratch veggie patties. All burgers are cooked to order and go best with a bucket of Sink the Biz fries—lightly seasoned cheese fries with Nick's addictive garlic mayo.

Still top sellers after all these years: strombolis. A menu mainstay for decades, they're the go-to item for alums stopping by Nick's for old time's sake. "Most people want strombolis, original recipe," says Rago. "It's amazing how many we sell. It's stroms and burgers—mostly stroms."

Said "stroms" are essentially a pizza sandwich, the classic recipe calling for a submarine bun stuffed with ground pork, mozzarella, and tomato sauce that's been made from the same recipe for more than half a century. Vegetarian and BBQ versions are available, too.



(above) Stromboli and pizza.

(right) Made-from-scratch veggie burger.



Rago and Bright are proud to carry on the Nick's tradition while taking it into a new century. Bright, a veteran of Bloomingsfoods, has led the charge to buy locally sourced ingredients whenever possible. The venerable two-story building now uses solar panels to heat its water, and recycling is handled via Bloomington Pedal Power.

Customers who think of Nick's as primarily a late-night hotspot may be surprised to know it actually sells more food than liquor. But if its image is still more suds-soaked than gourmet, that's OK with Rago, who has worked at Nick's for 34 years. "We're still associated with being a bar," says Rago. "But that's a great problem to have."

Hours: 11 am-midnight Monday-Wednesday, 11 am-2 pm

Thursday-Saturday, noon-midnight Sunday.

423 E. Kirkwood Ave., 812-332-4040

www.nicksenglishhut.com

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'Local' Favorite Lennie's A 'First' for 20 Years

Lennie's has brought a lot of firsts to Bloomington over the past 20 years. Consider their gourmet pizzas (now a restaurant staple) and Bloomington Brewing Company (BBC, the first commercial brewery in the county). Combine these and you have Lennie's as the first brewpub in southern Indiana.

Now Lennie's is at the forefront of the farm-to-table trend, taking their menu in a locavore direction. "The focus is on doing our part to support the growth of the local food movement," says General Manager Michael Fox, who works with Chef Fred Manion to find menu items close to home. "There's a good network of farmers around Bloomington and we've had great response from our customers on our direction," says Fox. "Much of our meat and eggs come from local farms and smaller producers. Some even come from our own Loesch Farm. It's exciting."

Take the brunch item Chicken & Waffles. Chicken breasts from Miller Farms in northeast Indiana are marinated in buttermilk and dusted with seasoned flour, then fried to a golden crisp. On the side: two house-made waffles and syrup whose kicker is made at the brewery: BBC Brown Ale. Most diners like it with a dash of Local Folks hot sauce, made in Sheridan.

Another brunch highlight, Pizza & Eggs, harks back to the upscale pies Lennie's introduced in 1989. A pizza slice is topped with an egg (cooked to order) from Heartland Family Farm in Bedford, along with spinach, tomato, and bacon or ham.



(above) Chicken and waffles (right) Chicken Vesuvio.

The dish to try at lunch or dinner? Sausage and Peppers Penne has been "an overwhelming favorite," says Fox. "All the sausage at Lennie's comes from Fischer Farms of Jasper or from our own farm." For Chicken Vesuvio, chefs roast a chicken breast from family-operated Schacht Farm in Bloomington with local Yukon Gold potatoes in chicken broth with lemon, oregano, garlic, and white wine, then top it with artichoke hearts and green peas.


A visit to Lennie's is best rounded out with a pint of BBC beer. Ten choices are typically on tap, and carryout is available via 1/2 gallon "growler" jugs and quart-size Ball jars—now seven days a week, thanks to recent changes in the law. "The great thing about our growlers and Ball jars," says Fox, "is the sustainability aspect. You buy a bottle once or bring in your own quart jar and you can reuse the same package indefinitely. It is very low waste."

Hours: 11 am-11 pm Sunday-Thursday, 11 am-midnight Friday-Saturday (pub is always open one hour later).

1795 E. 10th St., 812-323-2112, www.bbcbloomington.com



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—Phil Vettel, *Chicago Tribune*

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restauranttallent.com

Tallent Is Simply Irresistible

Restaurant Tallent welcomes you to its website with this thought: "The best cooking is that which takes into consideration the products of the season."

It's a quote from Ferdinand Point, widely considered the father of modern French cuisine, and it immediately clues diners in to what they'll find on their plates at Tallent: innovative meals made with whatever ingredients are freshest and most flavorful at that moment.

"I think we've become known for our creative use of local, Midwestern ingredients," says Chef David Tallent, a four-time James Beard nominee, who owns the restaurant with his wife, Kristen Tallent. Indeed, over the past eight years, Restaurant Tallent has played a major role in making downtown Bloomington a culinary destination. Foodies from miles around flock to Tallent for an ever-evolving menu that, depending on what's good right now, might include risotto studded with fried tomatoes or a barbecued Indiana beef brisket with bacon-cheddar macaroni and cheese and collard greens. Kristen's desserts have recently included pomegranate panna cotta and gingerbread waffles with caramelized pears and brown sugar ice cream.

As you'd expect, ingredients are sourced mostly from local farms. Even the Tallents themselves are homegrown—Kristen was raised in Bloomington, David in Indianapolis. They met in 2000 while working at Upland Brewing Co., soon went off to study at the Culinary Institute of America together, and, not long after marrying, opened the first incarnation of Restaurant Tallent in 2003 on West Kirkwood. The restaurant moved to its current downtown locale a few years later.

Its success may stem from the fact that the Tallents have always kept things beautifully simple.

Hours: 5 pm-10 pm Monday-Saturday.

208 N. Walnut, 812-330-9801, www.restauranttallent.com

Jankos: A Legend Far and Wide

Steaks are legendary at Janko's Little Zagreb. Perhaps even more so is the grill they're cooked on, known to staffers and regulars as the "Magic Grill."

"I'll take a steak home and cook it on my own grill, and it's not the same," says owner Mark Conlin. "I think all the steaks that have been cooked on our grills for the past thirty years provide a unique seasoning and flavor to our meats." Conlin also attributes the steaks' excellent quality and consistency to the experience and longevity of the staff. "Some of the staff have worked here for well over a decade."

Conlin has carried on the tradition of this Bloomington institution with its red-and-white-checked table linens, seriously topnotch steaks, and a few other specialties thrown in. Barbecued ribs and the spicy appetizer Meatballs Bucharest are "fan favorites," Conlin says. His knowledge and passion for fine wine has helped the restaurant win the coveted *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence three times.

For most diners, it's all about the meat—always USDA Prime cuts, always generously portioned. Customers ask what it's marinated in. The answer? Nothing, save a dash of garlic salt and pepper. The menu has also expanded to include chicken, pork, duck, fish, and seafood, as well as vegetarian dishes.

Janko's steaks are known throughout the Midwest—maybe the nation, or even the world. "We have people from all over come in and say they've heard about us," says Conlin. The restaurant is closely aligned with IU's athletic department, and hosts many recruits. Says Conlin: "It's not unusual on any given night to look up and see a pro athlete or a celebrity dining with us."

Hours: 5 pm-10 pm Monday-Thursday, 4:30 pm-10 pm Friday-Saturday. Open for private parties on Sunday.

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