The Rockets’ Daryl Morey makes the numbers work

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Supporting cast
With their deep bench and team approach, the Rockets are poised for a great season. General Manager Daryl Morey talks strategy, philosophy and the future of the game.  
by STEVE PITTMAN

Back to school
Surprise! Downtown is home to a slew of schools. From day care and preschool to post-graduate degrees, we give you the rundown.  
by JENNIFER SEGELKE

Questions or comments? Drop us a line at dtmagazine@downtowndistrict.org

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Published by:
It’s been just one year since we launched Downtown – and what a wonderful year it’s been. From last winter’s look at downtown’s urban art pioneers to this summer’s “Best of”... guide, we’ve been bringing everything fantastic about our city’s center to an ever-growing group of downtown enthusiasts.

Downtown is most certainly a labor of love and we know that everyone involved (from our writers to our readers) is sincerely committed to creating a true neighborhood here in the heart of Houston. We believe we are well on our way with a healthy number of restaurants and entertainment options already in place. And Discovery Green (leisure), One Park Place (living) and Houston Pavilions (retail) are important building blocks in those efforts.

In this birthday issue we take a look at a relatively unknown component of downtown life – education. Downtown has a surprising number of options for families, including day care, a private high school and two choices for advanced degrees. Check out the complete rundown on pg. 24. And don’t miss Rockets’ General Manager Daryl Morey’s take on basketball, his team’s upcoming season and life in Houston.

As always, Downtown is your go-to resource for events both big and small, and our restaurant listing covers all the bases. We’re also expanding our coverage by including Houston’s amazing Museum District, which is easily accessed via METRORail. Keep your issue handy for whatever leisure activity you might be planning. And remember to keep those comments and suggestions coming our way.

Happy Birthday

We’ve been bringing everything fantastic about our city’s center to an ever-growing group of downtown enthusiasts.

Bob Eury
DOWNTOWN DISTRICT

Andrew Huang
HOUSTON DOWNTOWN ALLIANCE

CHECK OUT OUR EXPANDED ARTS & CULTURE SECTION pg. 8
Since moving into the new downtown residential landmark building One Park Place last May, I am living a life in Houston that once seemed unthinkable. World-class dining, A-list entertainment and gorgeous green spaces are all for the taking, and somehow I’m lucky enough to be in the middle of it all.

I spent the bulk of my 20s and 30s living in New York City and am no stranger to the joys of a pedestrian lifestyle. And by pedestrian, I am referring to its primary meaning of “someone walking” as opposed to the secondary definition of “dull.” There is nothing dull about living downtown. Not anymore.

As a media relations flunky focused on food, entertainment and real estate, I have to walk—the—walk, not just talk—the—talk, and thanks to my new downtown lifestyle I now do that quite literally. Let’s say—hypothetically—that I was feeling particularly ambitious one weekend. It might go a little something like this:
FRIDAY
6PM Arriving home to One Park Place after a long week, I leave the car with the valet, muster the energy for a quick workout in the building’s state-of-the-art gym and reward myself with a dip in the meandering pool.

7PM After a quick change, it’s off to meet friends at the House of Blues for pre-concert cocktails and dinner at the clubby, cozy, cosmopolitan Foundation Room.

BEAT THE HEAT: The only thing separating HOB and me is the Four Seasons Hotel, and I cut through the lobby, give a shout-out to my extended family there, exit through the back, and – voila! – my favorite live music venue is catty corner from my air-conditioned pathway.

9:30PM I catch the show in the HOB Music Hall followed by reckless dancing – which may include one or more dance-offs – back in the Foundation Room.

SATURDAY
9:30AM Being something of a morning person in spite of my late night shenanigans, I am up and ready to walk across the street to Discovery Green for my Saturday morning yoga class in the park, but not before grabbing a much-needed latte at Starbucks in The Shops at Houston Center.

11AM I try to lead a balanced life, so yoga is followed by a Robert Del Grande Texas smokehouse cheeseburger at The Lake House in Discovery Green. Nothing chases yoga like a juicy cheeseburger, trust me.

NOON Following a brief recovery period, I walk a few blocks to the Houston Pavilions, get a quick trim from James at Clique Salon, then wade through the mountains of magazines at Books-A-Million, fast becoming a favorite refuge.

1PM Since I’m already at the Pavilions – and reading tends to make me thirsty and slightly snacky – I grab a Mexitini – or the brilliant combination of Lapis Reposado tequila with Cointreau, Gran Marnier and a splash of sweet and sour – and some quesadillas from Guadalajara del Centro for a little early afternoon sustenance.

3PM As much as I love eating cheese daily, I don’t particularly enjoy its effects on the waistline, so I opt for a bike ride through Sam Houston Park, check out the historic homes in the city’s only outdoor museum, and make my way down the bike path along Allen Parkway.

5PM Nap. Just because.

6:30PM I call the concierge at Hotel Icon for the London Taxi, which picks me up for a lift to Voice restaurant and a meeting of the minds with partner-in-crime for drinks and dinner by celebrated chef Michael Kramer. I go for my favorite one-two punch in the form of the mushroom soup cappuccino and the rack of lamb.

9PM Next up we bounce over to Market Square and duck into La Carafe, where I insist on playing my favorite juke box anomaly: Bing Crosby singing Hey Jude. We stop by Warren’s Inn for a quick drink before heading to Last Concert Café. Hula-hooping on the backyard beach ensues, accompanied by the soulful sounds of The Hightailors. At 1:30 it’s over and out, and proprietress extraordinaire Dawn Fudge very nicely calls me a cab for the four-minute drive home. Safety first!

SUNDAY
10AM My beloved godson arrives from Austin for a family-friendly Sunday in downtown Houston that starts with a chartered pontoon boat ride down Buffalo Bayou, which is oddly serene and exotic. One of us screams upon approaching the bat bridge. It is not him.

11AM Once I’ve recomposed myself, we grab lunch at The Grove, and I can’t resist the pulled rotisserie chicken sandwich along with a ginger margarita and several cups of coffee. Drinking coffee and a margarita simultaneously proves to be quite fun.

NOON We grab fresh donuts for dessert from the Donut Lady at the Sunday Downtown Green Market at Discovery Green. Words can’t describe the deliciousness, and my godson goes into a state of 9-year-old delirium.

1:05PM We cross the park to see the Astros at Minute Maid Park where said godson keeps asking why people call Lance Berkman “Fat Elvis.” Thanks to Google image search on my iPhone, he now knows.

4PM After the game we head to the Theater District for an early dinner at the Downtown Aquarium followed by a ride on the Ferris wheel and an urban shark expedition. Against my better judgment, we do it in that order.

7:30PM My godson’s real parents mercifully pick him up, and I walk over to the Alley Theatre to take in an impromptu play. And on the walk back home, I can’t help but think how lucky I am to be in downtown Houston. That’s right, Houston. 🧐

IF THAT WEREN’T ENOUGH for one weekend, this fall downtown Houston will have even more offerings for the taking. Houston Pavilions will cement itself as the city’s premiere entertainment destination with the opening of Lucky Strike Lanes & Lounge in late September. The super-bowl bowling lane/lounge hybrid is modeled after the famous Hollywood Star Lanes featured in The Big Lebowski. This dude abides.

After Houston’s heat and humidity settle in for their not-so-long winter’s nap, our friends here at Downtown will launch Downtown & A Movie at Discovery Green featuring faves such as Christopher Guest’s Best In Show and Mel Brooks’ Young Frankenstein. The city’s showcase urban green space also will play host to Strange Fruit – the first ever Texas performance of Australian acrobatics. Not sure what that means, but you can bet I’ll be there to find out.

Not to be outdone, the Historic District will host A Night at Market Square on Saturday, October 17. The most exciting news for any downtown resident, however, is the fall opening of Byrd’s Market Cafe, which will provide locals with a true, neighborhood market featuring an affordable fast casual dining experience, an extensive wine selection, artisan pastries and breads baked in-house, specialty groceries, basic household necessities and (yes) a basement event space perfect for art exhibitions and other happenings. Byrd’s is located on the northwest corner of Main and Prairie and Grape, a new wine bar, will be found right next door.

Fall also means the beginning of a new season and big shows in Houston’s Theater District, including Houston Grand Opera’s rendition of Wagner’s Lohengrin beginning October 30 and Broadway Across America’s production of Mary Poppins beginning October 22.

It’s totally supercalifragilisticexpialidocious.
Downtown Nightlife
Better than ever

Houston’s sprawling and diverse communities, neighborhoods and hot spots have sometimes made it a little too easy to overlook the pulsing heart of the city. Admittedly, downtown has not always had the healthiest of hearts. But today downtown is poised to return to its state of former glory. BY PHIL HUDSON

Starting last year, the restaurant revolution hit with a string of prominent openings such as The Grove, The Lake House, McCormick & Schmick’s Seafood Restaurant, Collins Chop House & Whiskey Bar, Voice, Cielo’s Mexican Bistro and Guadalajara del Centro. But leave it to Houstonians and our abundance of riches. Where else in the world would some of the coolest entertainment venues be a well-kept secret? That’s exactly what has been happening over the last few years, but with a stunning variety of entertaining attractions and a seemingly endless docket of concerts, sporting events and activities, the secret is getting out. If you don’t work downtown and you haven’t been lately, you’re missing what is now arguably the most vital area of the city — literally bustling with foodies, hipsters and nighttime-is-the-right-time thrill seekers every night and weekend. That’s right. Downtown Houston is busy again. It’s cool again. And it’s the place to find great entertainment.

The cornerstone of good times at Houston Pavilions is the House of Blues with its unmatched combination of Southern-inspired signature cuisine and a diverse offering of live music. It also has a Foundation Room, the House of Blues’ private VIP lounge where the swells go to swill cocktails. Concerts can range from The Pretenders to O.A.R to a cover band for Johnny Cash. There’s something for everyone, including their famous Gospel Brunch every Sunday. Sightlines to the stage are superb, and the venue has a great vibe as well as an amazing collection of original folk art. From the restaurant to the concert hall, it’s a visual feast. A perfect night at House of Blues? Arrive early for a concert and have a bite to eat in the restaurant (you can’t go wrong with the fried catfish bites and sweet potato fries). Then make your way to the concert hall, where you’ll find fantastic sound quality in an intimate setting. Enjoy the concert. Sip a frosty cocktail. After the show, gain access to the members-only Foundation Room, which is sometimes open to the public after select concerts. With its jewel-encrusted wall coverings, velvet couches and custom cocktails, the Foundation Room is luxurious people watching at its very best.

The latest addition to the Houston Pavilions line up is Pete’s Dueling Piano
Bar, known for loud-and-proud singing in a fun and casual atmosphere. The main stage showcases two baby grand pianos and each night the entertainers team up and perform oldies, goodies and crowd requests. From ’50s classics to the hits of today, the show is a non-stop sing-along, clap-along, drink-along, have-one-helluva-good-time-along show.

Lucky Strike Lanes & Lounge is on its way and set (finally) to open in October. Lucky Strike is glam bowling at its best and if Paris, Jen and Pink can slip out of their Jimmy Choos and don bowling shoes, so can you. Aside from actual bowling (which does happen), you’ll find cutting-edge cocktails, bottle service, high-end snacks such as tuna lollipops, pool tables, a VIP lounge, hi-tech videos and a DJ. Lucky Strike, which initially opened in the heart of Hollywood in 2003, is the nation’s first truly upscale bowling lounge. With locations across the country, it combines retro elements, modern décor and state-of-the-art technology. Sleek bowling lanes are edged in mini-runway lights with artwork by up-and-coming artists projected onto floor-to-ceiling video screens. The Houston location also will be one of only three in the nation to have a Luxe Lounge (read: velvet rope), where customers can bowl while watching short films projected in 3-D.

Bayou Place

Everything about Rocbar screams rock and roll. It’s loud. It’s in-your-face rock. It’s heavy metal music. It’s also très chic with its red-and-black décor, 60-foot “rock” bar, lounge seating and outdoor area. From sexy bartenders to live music to huge video walls to beautiful ladies swinging from, well, swings, this hot spot is a non-stop ride on the band’s tour bus. And the crowd is something to see. Rocbar provides a world-class clubbing experience – part lounge, part showcase – so its weekly entertainment lineup can include anything from DJs to fire blowers. Can you still party like a rock star?

Slick Willie’s is the complete opposite of Rocbar. This is the place to go for a relaxed game of pool and to hang out with good friends. It has 14 regulation-sized pool tables, as well as darts, air hockey and several televisions to catch the game. The atmosphere is warm and friendly, and you don’t have to be a pool shark to come here and have some fun. Yes, it’s all about pool, but all types of players are on the tables … from beginner to expert. The food is standard pool hall fare – pizza, cheese sticks, nachos and, of course, wings. What you may not expect? It’s really quite good.

Also at Bayou Place is the Verizon Wireless Theater with a unique design that permits the seating to be configured in theater, cabaret or general admission styles. This flexibility allows the venue to be tailored to the performances, which range from concerts to stand-up comedy to (yes) Xtreme Fighting. The venue itself is ideally sized with excellent sound quality. So whether you’re on the floor with a general admission ticket or seated in the balcony, you can hear clearly and feel like you are a part of the action.

Downtown has it all when it comes to entertainment and people are clearly taking notice. Economic experts may use terms like resurgence, rebirth and revitalization to describe the comeback but perhaps Paris says it best, “That’s hot!”

Bayou Place

HOUStON PAViLIONS

House of Blues
1204 Caroline @ Dallas
888.402.5837 hob.com
Daily 11 a.m. - close (depending on show schedule)

Pete’s Dueling Piano Bar
Third floor next to House of Blues
713.337.PETE petesduelingpianobar.com
Tue 8-1, showtime 9 Wed-Sat 7-2, showtime 8

Lucky Strike Lanes & Lounge
Third floor across from House of Blues
bowlluckystrike.com Opening October

BAYOU PLaCE

Rocbar
530 Texas
713.236.2737 rocbartx.com
Hours vary depending on show schedule

Slick Willie’s
560 Texas
713.225.1277 slickw.com
Mon–Sat 11 a.m.–2 a.m. Sun noon–2 a.m.

Verizon Wireless Theater
520 Texas
713.230.1600 livenation.com
Hours vary depending on show schedule

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[Images and contact information for various hot spots]

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This fall expect to be taken places far beyond your imagination. Surround yourself with legends from and beyond our time, see your favorite performers, be introduced to international superstars, admire a collaboration between two distinct art forms, learn what it takes to bring magic to the stage and travel back in time.

THE STARS

Rockapella opens the fall season with the Houston Symphony over Labor Day weekend. Also gracing Houston Symphony’s fall repertoire is Brian Stokes Mitchell. You will recognize his unmistakable baritone voice from this year’s July 4th television special with the National Symphony. On October 16-18, this Tony Award-winning Broadway leading man will give Houston audiences the opportunity to be wowed as he performs music from South Pacific, West Side Story, Sweeney Todd, and Man of La Mancha.

Two other quintessential American icons appear onstage with Houston Symphony: Kenny Rogers (November 5) and Mary Wilson of the Supremes (November 6–8). Taylor Hicks brings Time magazine’s 2007 No. 1 pick for musical of the year to the Hobby Center with Theatre Under The Stars, September 8–20. Grease is a classic made fresh with spectacular talent. VIP experiences include cast talk-backs and a Hicks meet-and-greet. Be one of the first to witness the next piano sensation when Van Cliburn International Piano Competition Gold Medalist Nobuyuki (Nobu) Tsujii of Japan makes his Houston debut. Nobu began showing interest in the piano at age 2 and began taking lessons at age 4. Born blind, he plays completely by ear. Be one of the people to say, “you knew him when...” when Society for the Performing Arts brings him on September 27. Richard Alston, “the finest choreographer the British modern-dance scene has ever known” (New York Times), brings his company to Houston for the first time in SPA's Dance Series on October 16. Launched in 1994 to critical acclaim, Richard Alston Dance Company has grown into one of Britain’s most avidly followed contemporary companies. Paris Opera Ballet Etoile’s Marie-Agnès Gillot performs in Dominic Walsh’s 21st century take on The Firebird as part of the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Ballets Russes. Other classics featured in 2009-2010: The Great Collaborators of the Ballet Russes include The Dying Swan, The Afternoon of a Faun, and Le Spectre de la Rose. You can catch this as part of the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts’ Uniquely Houston series, October 15–17. Gexa Energy Broadway Across America brings the magic of Mary Poppins and transforms Hobby Center into a “practically perfect in every way” world October 22 through November 8. Featuring Ashley Brown and Gavin Lee, originators of the roles on Broadway, everyone’s favorite nanny comes to life. Arriving directly from Glyndebourne Opera Festival in England and across the pond to Wortham Theater Center is a never-before-seen-in-Houston phenomenon.

This fall expect to be taken places far beyond your imagination. Surround yourself with legends from and beyond our time, see your favorite performers, be introduced to international superstars, admire a collaboration between two distinct art forms, learn what it takes to bring magic to the stage and travel back in time.
the U.S. production of Donizetti’s *The Elixir of Love* running October 23 through November 7 with Houston Grand Opera. Russian soprano Ekaterina Siuriana makes her HGO debut with this role. Also making his HGO debut in Wagner’s *Lohengrin* (October 30–November 15) is one of the most gifted and distinguished singers of his generation, Simon O’Neill. This native of New Zealand and principal artist with the Metropolitan Opera has been called the young Wagnerian of our times.

**LEGENDS**

In the Ukraine the name Pavlo Virsky is synonymous with excellence in dance. For more than 70 years the Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company has been bringing the wisdom, humor and optimism of its people to the stage through traditional dances that are charming, romantic, passionate and exciting. The renowned folk dance ensemble embraces the beauty of their native country at Jones Hall on October 2 with SPA. Romance comes in all styles in Da Camera’s Romantic Spirit season. Marking the 200th anniversary of the births of Robert Schumann, Felix Mendelssohn and Frederic Chopin, this celebration of the Romantic generation presents the ideal opportunity to explore romanticism in music through the centuries. The famed Juilliard String Quartet kicks it off on October 3 at the Wortham Theater Center. Violinist Nick Eanet makes his first Houston appearance with the quartet following the departure of Joel Smirnoff. Da Camera opens their jazz series with legendary jazz saxophonist Charles Lloyd, on October 17 with the New Quartet featuring High School for the Performing Arts alums pianist Jason Moran and drummer Eric Harland. Be a part of this special evening and give our fellow Houstonians a warm welcome as they take you on a journey through one of Lloyd’s most creative periods. Legends continue to prevail on November 6 with saxophonist Kenny Garrett. Known for his five years with Miles Davis, Garrett’s music is a roll-up-your-sleeves, in-your-face blowing of rippling melodic songs. You never know when you meet someone that they can put a stamp on your life forever. This rings true for New York Times columnist Frank Rich as he conducts a live, unscripted conversation with composer and lyricist Stephen Sondheim and offers a most personal and engaging view of Sondheim and his life in the theater. Their connection goes back to when Rich was in college. They reunite onstage when SPA presents An Evening with Stephen Sondheim on October 25.

**ARTISTIC COLLABORATIONS**

The Houston Symphony gives the audience a sneak peek of *The Planets – An HD Odyssey* on official season opening night, September 12, with Emanuel Ax’ Beethoven. This special music and video project will make its world premiere with the orchestra in January before going to Carnegie Hall in New York City. Houston Symphony brings a film/music collaboration to the stage with *Der Rosenkavalier – Film and Music* September 25-27. Richard Strauss adapted his sumptuous opera score after seeing Robert Wiene’s 1926 silent film *Der Rosenkavalier*. Hans Graf and the Houston Symphony unite the classic film with Straus’ dazzling orchestra score for its first performance in America. Other firsts include Rachmaninoff’s quicksilver *First Symphony* November 13-15. Another star of our generation debuts with his latest collaboration centered around Mussorgsky’s epic piano suite *Pictures at an Exhibition* on November 13-15.
November 22 with SPA’s Music Series. International piano star Leif Ove Andsnes plays along to a video installation by South African artist Robin Rhode. Musiqa, Uniquely Houston’s contemporary music ensemble, collaborates with InPrint, to combine contemporary chamber music with the readings of Mat Johnson on October 10 at the Hobby Center.

THE STAGE

It is always an amazing feat to turn a theater stage into a magnificent design to transport the audience to the magical locations performances take us. Houston Grand Opera will do just that with their co-production with Geneva Opera of Wagner’s Lohengrin. By the time you read this, the huge production set will have been loaded into shipping containers and transported to Houston’s Ship Channel. The crew will spend two weeks assembling the set so it will look exactly like it did on the stage in Geneva. Other prop-tastic pieces of art coming to the stage include the iconic trolley in the MGM classic Meet Me in St. Louis with TUTS at the Hobby Center September 29 through October 11. The trolley took six men and three weeks to construct at the Paper Mill Playhouse in New Jersey using everything from wood to aluminum. This impressive piece of machinery is completely electric and will be shipped in especially for the TUTS production.

TIME TRAVELING

Ars Lyrica of Houston takes you on a musical journey to the great halls of Europe with works by Bach and Telemann at Hobby Center on September 20. Ars Lyrica uses period instruments because they produce a sweeter, more intimate sound than their modern equivalents and are a better vehicle for the performance of Baroque music especially. Houston Ballet launches its 40th sea-

son with a revival of the epic love story Manon, choreographed by Sir Kenneth MacMillan and featuring scenery and costumes by the acclaimed British designer Peter Farmer. Launching their season with Manon is an acknowledgment of the key role that MacMillan played in Houston Ballet’s history and his influence on Houston Ballet’s repertoire during his time as the company’s artistic associate from 1989 until his untimely death in 1992.

PREMIERES

Thought-provoking and darkly funny describe Alley Theatre’s world premiere of Rajiv Joseph’s Gruesome Playground Injuries. Director Rebecca Taichmann makes her Alley debut in this imaginative tour de force for actors and audiences alike. Best to leave the kids at home as it includes strong language, profanity and violence. Houston Ballet’s fall repertory program features a world premiere of Elements by Stanton Welch to the music of Paul Hindemith alongside company premieres by two of the 20th century’s greatest choreographers. European master Jiří Kylián’s Falling Angels is a mesmerizing study in motion and minimalism showcasing eight female dancers. Set to a pulsating score by Philip Glass, In the Upper Room is a signature work for Twyla Tharp, contrasting the power and energy of modern dance with the speed and aerial dexterity of a more classical language. Without Boundaries comes to Wortham Center September 24 – October 4. Trey McIntyre presents his ground-breaking contemporary ballet company in their Houston debut as part of the SPA Dance Series on November 13. Prior to forming the company in 2004, McIntyre was also Houston Ballet’s former choreographic associate. TMP touches down in Houston a day after McIntyre’s 40th birthday and after touring more than 25 cities across the nation and the world.

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND & CLASSICS

Alley Theatre opens their season with the Pulitzer Prize-winning Our Town October 2 through November 1. Thornton Wilder’s enduring American treasure and one of the greatest plays of world theater follows the courtship and marriage of George and Emily. Set in a fictional New England town at the start of the 20th century, its portrait of life, love and death still ring true to this day. Houston Symphony brings audience favorites including Tchaikovsky’s Fifth Symphony with Ingrid Fliter on piano and conductor Hans Graf (September 17, 19, 20); Ode to Joy: Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony (October 1,3,4); and Kavakos Plays & Conducts Mozart, October 30 – November 1. Mariza sings the soul of Portugal with her stunning vocal range and acoustic, seven-piece ensemble for one-night-only in Jones Hall on November 12.
How long have you been with TUTS and how did you find your way here?
I’ve been with TUTS for 19 years. I spent much of the 1980s touring with Broadway shows and with the magician David Copperfield. Those were wonderful times and I got to visit almost every state and much of the rest of the world. But after a decade of living out of a suitcase, I was ready to settle down. I met TUTS founder Frank Young in 1989 when I toured with Debbie Reynolds in The Unsinkable Molly Brown. Molly Brown started here at TUTS and then went on to play our sister theater in Seattle as part of a yearlong tour. Frank told me that if I ever got tired of touring, he’d see if there was a place for me here in Houston. Fast forward 18 months and I was back in Houston with a tour of Oklahoma with John Davidson. The tour closed here at TUTS and while in town, I visited with Frank and told him I was ready to get off the road. Within a month, I sold my house in Michigan, bought a place out near Jersey Village and moved to Houston.

Have you always loved theater or was it a career that took you by surprise?
I grew up in a small city in Southern Indiana and really wasn’t exposed to much theater as a child. It wasn’t until college that I really became involved. It had always been in the back of my mind that I’d follow in my father’s footsteps and become a lawyer. So when I picked a university, I picked one with a good law school and started on the typical prelaw/business course load. As luck would have it, Michigan also had a good theater program and in my sophomore year, I took an introductory course in technical theater and I was hooked. As the year went by, I was getting better grades on Theatre 201 than I was in Accounting 201, so I decided to declare a theater major and I’ve really never looked back. I’m forever thankful that I took those business courses also, because they help so much with the job I now hold. I must admit, there were times when one tour had closed and the next one hadn’t started and there was no paycheck when I really asked myself what I had done.

What is your proudest TUTS moment?
The opening of the Hobby Center was certainly one of them. After a decade of producing shows in the old Music Hall, working in the Hobby Center is a dream come true. Our production of Deaf West Theatre’s Big River at Miller Outdoor Theatre will always stick with me, both for its artistic excellence and for its inclusiveness. Our creation of the Tommy Tune Awards to honor excellence in high school musicals is one of TUTS’ finest contributions to Houston. I also am especially proud of our production of Les Misérables this spring. Les Mis is a huge and complex show and I think we succeeded on all levels.

Where do you go to unwind after a performance?
If I’m in Houston, straight home to a nice single malt scotch. If I’m in New York City, usually out with friends.

With any spare time you have – what do you do? Do you see other performances?
Between my kids and TUTS, I manage to stay pretty busy. If I actually have any, I try to go horseback riding. I do see other shows, but probably not as much local theater as I should. I’m a Tony Awards voter, so I have to see all of the new shows in New York City every year. Between our shows, Broadway and shows I see at other theaters around the country, I am pretty much “theater-ed” out.

What is your ultimate goal for TUTS?
My goal is to make sure that TUTS continues to be an important part of the fabric that makes Houston a great city. We have an important role in bringing the best of musical theater to Houston, and we have an equally important role in bringing arts education to Houston’s youth. Success in those two areas is our gift back to the community that has supported us so generously over the last 40 plus years.
MUSEUM DISTRICT DAY

Museum District Day is a fun-filled day of discovery for anyone who wants to know more about the myriad museums clustered amongst the oaks along South Main and Bissonnet and the surrounding blocks. And it’s free! That’s right; Museum District Day on September 12 offers free admission to 17 museums from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Explore the vast Museum of Fine Arts, Houston for a broad spectrum of art through the ages or the tranquil Menil Collection for an interesting mix of ancient, recent and contemporary art. Embrace various forms of contemporary art at Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, Houston Center for Photography, Lawndale Art Center and Rice University Art Gallery. Two small-scale, but quietly cosmic stops include the subdued Rothko Chapel, a spiritual sanctuary for all that features a stunning series of paintings by Mark Rothko, and the ethereal Byzantine Fresco Chapel Museum, which houses remarkable 13th-century frescoes.


Those in an intellectual mood can ponder the highs and lows, successes, failures and possibilities of humankind at places like the Holocaust Museum Houston and Jung Center of Houston, or reflect upon the military and cultural histories featured at the Buffalo Soldiers National Museum and the Czech Center Museum Houston.

Walk your own path of cultural discovery or ride the free shuttle buses available throughout the district as you delve into the diverse displays of art, science, nature and history.

www.houstonmuseumdistrict.org

UP CLOSE: HOLOCAUST MUSEUM

Why visit Holocaust Museum Houston? Sure it’s heavy stuff, but the resonating message is surprisingly uplifting and enlightening.

This unique museum is not home to splashy playscapes and whimsical art displays, but it does feature much more than the tragedies of the Nazi concentration camps. Its many exhibits depict the worldwide consequences of hate, prejudice and apathy. The museum also spotlights brave groups and individuals who chose to stand up for human rights.

Special exhibits this fall include Besa: Muslims Who Saved Jews During the Holocaust, which depicts the heroic stories of Albanian Muslims who showed a heart-melting kindness and righteous determination to save Jews – those of Albanian origin and refugees alike – from death despite great danger to themselves and Xavier University’s exhibit A Blessing to One Another: Pope John Paul II and the Jewish People, which details the Pope’s work to mend relations and attitudes between Catholics and Jews.

Holocaust Museum Houston’s permanent exhibit, Bearing Witness: A Community Remembers, features historic film footage, artifacts, photographs and documents that depict life in pre-war Europe, the Nazi move toward the Final Solution, and life after the Holocaust. The films Voices and Voices II give visitors personal accounts from Houston-area survivors. The museum’s permanent exhibit also includes an
authentic World War II rail car of the type used to carry millions of people to their deaths and a 1942 Danish fishing boat of the type used to save more than 7,000 Danish Jews from execution.

“Visitors to Holocaust Museum Houston end their visit with a better understanding of not just the history of 65 years ago, but with a renewed sense of how that history still impacts our world today,” says Susan Myers, executive director of the museum. “By understanding the evils that led to the Holocaust, students and adults alike can learn about and better understand their responsibilities – and their options – for combating similar injustices that continue around the globe even today.”

True, the realities of the Holocaust are harsh and horrifying, but from behind this tremendous dark cloud shines the light of hope. Holocaust Museum Houston also tells the stories of the courageous acts of whole countries and individuals who chose human kindness in the face of fear and widespread hatred.

“The Holocaust proved that there are only four roles each individual can play in society,” says Myers. “If we are not to be victims ourselves, then we must be either perpetrators of hatred, bystanders who allow it to go unchecked or upstanding citizens who confront it head-on. Our museum challenges people to make the right choice.”

**ART & ABOUT**

Located a few blocks off the iconic oak-lined thoroughfares of Main and Montrose, **The Menil Collection** reigns serene. The main museum building is surrounded by bungalow-style houses, park spaces, smaller museum buildings, related art spaces and the University of St. Thomas. The campus-like setting has been called a neighborhood of art and its sweeping green spaces – dotted with some 11 sculptures – provide an almost endless welcome mat to art-seeking Houstonians and visitors. The museum and gallery structures are all designed by award-winning architects, such as Renzo Piano and Philip Johnson.

Ever-present, yet hidden-to-some, the “the building is a portrait of a wonderful client – a portrait of Dominique de Menil.” – architect, Renzo Piano

Carlos Cruz-Diez, a pioneer of Kinetic art, has created an amazing street installation for the MFAH’s crosswalks along Bissonnet/ Binz Street.

Carlos Cruz-Diez, a pioneer of Kinetic art, has created an amazing street installation for the MFAH’s crosswalks along Bissonnet/ Binz Street.

**WHY VISIT HOLOCAUST MUSEUM HOUSTON?** SURE IT’S HEAVY STUFF, BUT THE RESONATING MESSAGE IS SURPRISINGLY UPLIFTING AND ENLIGHTENING.

RIGHT | The Holocaust Museum’s special exhibit, Besa: Muslims Who Saved Jews During the Holocaust, runs through February 2010.
trees, walls, lawns, and pavers that come together to form a brilliant frame for outdoor sculpture.

Noguchi’s artful creation serves as an outdoor gallery for more than 25 works from the MFAH’s collection, plus a few selected pieces on loan from other sources. Masterpieces always on view include sculptures by Henri Matisse, Alexander Calder, David Smith, Frank Stella, and Louise Bourgeois.

These days you can pick up a $5 sack lunch from the museum’s Café Express for your own art-full picnic. This inspiring mental breathing space allows you to unburden your mind and your wallet, as it is always free and open daily from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. Want to know more? Pick up the MFAH’s book, *Isamu Noguchi: A Sculpture for Sculpture*.

And if you’re still looking for enchanting outdoor spaces to explore, please cross the street and lose yourself in Hermann Park.

**BIGGER & BETTER: CHILDREN’S MUSEUM OF HOUSTON**

Opened in March of 2009, *The Children’s Museum of Houston*’s new building doubled the museum’s size. Now at 90,000 square feet, CMH offers seven new permanent exhibits – all bilingual – and a total of 14 exhibits.

“The Children’s Museum of Houston is not just a place for little children, and we’re not even a typical museum,” says Tammie Kahn, the museum’s executive director. “We’re finding that our new expansion and our all-new exhibits are wowing kids of all ages, including their parents, and that’s no surprise to us. The number one reaction when families walk in is ‘Wow!’ when they see the three-story climbing tower in PowerPlay, and ‘Awesome!’ when they walk into the giant Invention Convention lab with all of its moving parts.”

Here’s the lowdown on what’s new:

- **Cyberchase – The Chase Is On!** takes children on a virtual math adventure
- **FlowWorks** explores fluid dynamics
- **Invention Convention** encourages inventing and creative problem solving
- **Kidtropolis, USA** promotes financial literacy and civic engagement
- **Matter Factory** investigates the properties of matter and nanotechnology
- **PowerPlay** introduces kids to fitness as they climb, dance, jump, stretch and balance
- **Tot’Spot** is an interactive exhibit designed for children three years and younger.

Each new exhibit is created to help kids...
Develop lifelong learning skills. The expansion grew out of a necessity to accommodate the more than 750,000 families who visit the museum each year. Before the expansion, the museum operated at 160 percent capacity.

“By bringing families together with innovative thinkers in science, math, arts, commerce and engineering we really have achieved our goal of giving Houston a ‘Playground for Your Mind’, says Kahn. “We’re not about stationary exhibits, but rather changing opportunities to test and try on a daily basis in a one-of-a-kind environment that is unlike anything seen before. Including the grand opening week in March, when people from 44 states and eight countries visited, attendance is up 74 percent over this time last year.”

Today Children’s Museum Houston is rated a 5-star nationwide children’s museum by Citysearch.com, was voted “Ultimate Kid-Friendly Attraction” in a Houston Chronicle reader’s poll and tied for the nation’s best children’s museums No. 1 spot in Child magazine. The Children’s Museum is located at 1500 Binz in Houston’s Museum District. Find details at www.cmhouston.org.

All Ages Appeal
Including the Houston Zoo, the Museum District offers 18 different places for Houstonians of all ages to admire an endless variety of art, history, science and nature. Here are just a few of the experiences to be had.

Empower Youth With a Wealth of Health Knowledge
Young kids and teens dive into discovering how their own bodies work at The Health Museum. The larger-than-life Amazing Body Pavilion offers a 7,000-square-foot, walk-through tour of the human body. Kids can explore the workings of the mouth, study the 22-foot-long backbone (suspended overhead), and explore everything under the skin” You: The Exhibit uses multi-media and special effects technology to reveal how you’d look 30 years from now and curiosities such as how you would look as the opposite sex or with a different ethnic background.

Awe Even the Hippest Hipsters
Funky, cool and often ingenious, exhibits at Lawndale Art Center are never stodgy. This non-profit alternative space fosters contemporary works in all media and frequently focuses on Houston-area artists. With four galleries in its locally significant Art Deco building, Lawndale includes close to 500 artists annually in changing exhibitions. Lawndale’s annual events such as Día de los Muertos/Day of the Dead, the 20th Century Modern Market and The Big Show are full-tilt celebrations of art and culture.

Enlighten Cerebral Types
The Rothko Chapel is an intimate sanctuary available to people of every belief, where visitors are inspired by the mural canvasses of American abstract expressionist Mark Rothko. The chapel is alive with religious ceremonies of all faiths and diverse programs to engage audiences intellectually, artistically and spiritually. It is a place where the experience and understanding of all traditions and cultures are encouraged and made available. Support for human rights issues is central to the Rothko Chapel’s concern with peace, freedom and social justice throughout the world. In front of the chapel, Barnett Newman’s Broken Obelisk is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

—as a newcomer I’ve been very impressed in the way the Museum District makes it very easy to locate your activities in one area and how many venues are free or low cost. There’s nothing else like this in the country. It’s a great resource for the city, especially being linked to downtown by the rail line. Houston’s Museum District is a great place to live and be entertained. After living in Cambridge, so close to Boston and MIT, I find Houston to be equally stimulating and intellectually engaging.” —Bill Arning, now director, Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, formerly curator of the MIT List Visual Arts Center
When you’re planning that perfect special event, try thinking out of the box and explore some of downtown’s unexpected venues. From tying the knot in a sophisticated ballroom to taking your co-workers on a trip down Buffalo Bayou, everyone will be talking about your flair for the dramatic.

1 WORTHAM THEATER CENTER
Cool because... You can host an event in one of the city’s most beautiful performing arts landmarks. The Wortham can place your guests in the Grand Foyer, the theater or even on the stage.
Who celebrates there? Houston Ballet, Houston Grand Opera and Society for the Performing Arts have all held annual balls there. In fact, Qatar Airlines found it the perfect place for their extravagant launch party.
Just the facts: Capacity: 600 seated, 1,300 reception. 501 Texas, 713.237.1439 Debra.Ramon@cityofhouston.net worthamcenter.org

2 PONTOON BOAT ALONG BUFFALO BAYOU
Cool because... You can party on a boat in the middle of downtown. The Buffalo Bayou Partnership’s pontoon boat tours visit landmarks like historic Allen’s Landing (Houston’s birthplace) and slip past lushly landscaped Sabine Promenade before continuing west into the bayou’s wilderness. East of downtown, enjoy remnants of Houston’s industrial past.
Who celebrates there? From funky themed graduation parties to a post-wedding surprise breakfast cruise – the only limit is your imagination.
Just the facts: Capacity: 20.
3 VENUE
Cool because... You can choose how much of the lavish space you rent – including the whole shebang. The Red Room is sophisticated and secluded while the Mirror Lounge offers a darker, more intimate setting, with large circular mirrors. There's also a second story balcony with a remarkable partition designed by artist Francisco Castenada.

Who celebrates there? Big corporations like Microsoft, Microsoft Canada, Blackberry and the Produce Marketer Association have all put the space to good use. One big conference_OTC even held their casino night there.

Just the facts: Capacity: 720 people. 719 Main, 713.236.8130, venuehouston.com

4 CRYSTAL BALLROOM AT POST RICE LOFTS
Cool because... Presidents, dignitaries, royalty, oilman and even knights have walked the floors of this historic landmark. The covered wrap-around terrace overlooking Main Street, lounge, built-in stage and dance floor, elegant lobby entrance, intricate murals and crystal chandeliers all create an ambiance that is unique in Houston.

Who celebrates there? Corporate and media moguls. Clients often bring in celebrity entertainment like Bruce Hornsby, Brian McKnight and Jerry Lee Lewis. One holiday party featured celebrity impersonators like Jackie Kennedy, Clark Gable and Shirley Temple sharing their “personal reminencences” of the former hotel.

Just the facts: Capacity: 350 seated, 800 reception. 909 Texas, 713.227.7423 pforeman@sambucacatering.com crystalballhouston.com

5 ARCHITECTURE CENTER HOUSTON (Arch)
Cool because... The space occupies approximately 5,000 square feet carved from the old Albert Thomas Convention Center in Phase II of the Bayou Place renovation. Their outdoor patio looks out over Buffalo Bayou and it comes alive at night with the blue light underpasses and bridges. The contemporary space is surprisingly affordable and their rotating exhibitions and unique environment mean your event will be like no other.

Who celebrates there? Rice Design Alliance and Bayou Buddies have both used the space, along with the Memorial Park bridgebash and the 99K House Competition Exhibition Opening.

Just the facts: Capacity: 300. 315 Capitol, 713.520.0155, nicole@aiahouston.org aiahoustong.org

6 MAJESTIC METRO
Cool because... Who wouldn’t want to plan a party in the only historic theater left intact in downtown Houston? The Majestic Metro features beautifully appointed decor, a grand exterior building marquee to announce your event, and a state-of-the-art music and dance lighting system.

Who celebrates there? Plenty of corporate bigwigs have gathered in this architectural gem, including Starwood Hotels and Resorts Super Bowl Party, LUXE Magazine’s Texas launch party, the ASID annual award gala and PriceWaterhouseCoopers annual Academy Awards Party. They can also accommodate birthdays, wedding receptions and more.

Just the facts: Capacity: 450. 911 Preston, 713.224.7226, majesticmetro.com

7 MINUTE MAID PARK
Cool because... You’re in a Major League Baseball park for goodness sake. Arrange bat practicing on the field, run the bases or say “I do” at home plate. Minute Maid Park can host as many as seven large events at one time but they’re also able to make your small affair just perfect. A group can enjoy happy hour at the new FiveSeven or plan a formal affair surrounded by the grandeur of the columns and marble within the Union Station Lobby, originally constructed in 1911. The AT&T Conference Center features 16 rooms, in-house audio-visual and attentive staff. The Grand Slam Scavenger Hunt gives up to 100 coworkers the opportunity to take in the ballpark’s sites while learning about their teammates.

Who celebrates there? An anonymous A-list actress chose the ballpark for her birthday party and former President George Bush celebrated his 80th on the field. Rachel Ray hosted a grand wedding for people displaced by Hurricane Ike. Emirates Airlines’ held their launch party at Minute Maid and they’ve even played host to a live Angus and horse auction.

Just the facts: Capacity: Various locations – 400 seated, 3,000 reception. Field level receptions – 2,500 seated, 5,000 reception. 501 Crawford, 713.259.8800 conferencecenter@astros.com, astros.com

8 TREEBEARDS
Cool because... Housed in Houston’s second oldest building, the Baker Travis Building (circa 1870), Treebeards on Market Square is located in the heart of the downtown Historic District. The second floor features an inviting balcony that overlooks Market Square Park. Full bar service and dance floor make this room perfect for receptions and private parties.


Just the facts: Capacity: 200. 315 Travis, 713.228.8228, catering@treebeards.com treebeards.com.

9. THE CORINTHIAN
Cool because... Built at the turn of the century as the First National Bank, it is the largest remaining example of neoclassical architecture in the Historic District. The Corinthian provides full-service catering and event planning by Jackson and Company, one of Houston’s most outstanding caterers. The Corinthian will accommodate galas, weddings and other important social events and is perfect for distinguished corporate entertaining.


Just the facts: Capacity: 850 seated, 1,500 reception. 202 Fannin at Franklin, 713.523.5780, info@thechristinhouston.com thechristinhouston.com

10. FLYING SAUCER
Cool because... Their casual atmosphere and more than 250 different beers mean you can design a funky party or reception. The upstairs is semi-private, providing a secluded space that allows you to still watch all the action at the bar over the balcony.

Who celebrates there? Beer tasting events featuring some of the world’s most renowned brewers. They’ve also hosted a huge election night party where everyone comes in and picks their winners.

Just the facts: Capacity: 84 seated, 120 reception. 705 Main, 713.228.9472 houssymg@attglobal.net, beerknurd.com

11. THE DOWNTOWN CLUB
Cool because... Their three unique locations give you three very different options. The Plaza Club features a spectacular view of the city at sunset while the Center Club boasts a large, inviting lobby area and a beautiful, wood-detailed bar in the Grille Room. At the Met Club, smaller board rooms and conference rooms let you plan smaller events with the same great full-service catering. All are available to non-members for their private events.

Who celebrates there? Weddings, retirement parties, luncheons, all-day meetings, video conferences and more. At the Plaza Club they were able to create a reception just like Melissa River’s winter wonderland wedding while the Center Club pulled together a lavish party complete with a raised baby grand piano. The Met is home to a variety of sports tournaments because of their extensive athletic facilities.

Just the facts: Capacity: 4 – 400 The Downtown Club at Plaza 910 Louisiana, 49th Floor, 713.632.1554 The Downtown Club at Houston Center/The Met, 1100 Caroline, 11th Floor, 713.890.8815 thedowntownclubhouston.com

12. HERITAGE SOCIETY AT SAM HOUSTON PARK
Cool because... The Heritage Society is the custodian of some of the city’s oldest structures. Restored and authentically furnished, the buildings are open for guided tours upon request. This unusual outdoor facility in Houston’s first public park is available for weddings, receptions, cocktail parties, seated dinners or other special events. Connally Plaza can be easily tented or left open and will accommodate a very large crowd. The Museum Gallery and Tea Room offer beautiful photographs, paintings, and other decorative arts for your guests’ viewing pleasure. St. John Church provides an unforgettable location for an intimate wedding ceremony.


Just the facts: Capacity: Connally Plaza: 300 seated, 500 reception; Museum Gallery: 200 reception; Tea Room: 60 seated, 100 theater style, 100 reception; St. John Church: 65. 1100 Bagby, 713.655.1912 info@heritagesociety.org heritagesociety.org

houstondowntown.com
“One of the best ways to learn the city is to walk,” Tello says. By hitting the streets he found what he says is a prime spot for FOX Sports Houston at 4 Houston Center. It wasn’t an accident that Tello put the offices in the heart of downtown, with views of the George R. Brown Convention Center, Discovery Green and Toyota Center and within walking distance of Minute Maid Park.

“The largest corporations in the Houston area are based in a five- or six-block square that we can do business with,” Tello said. And being close to the sports venues allows his team to respond to the needs of its key partners, the Astros and the Rockets.

Tello says it is FSH’s job to be the liaison between the teams and the fans to bring the excitement of the games to television viewers.

Making the connection with Houston fans are on-air personalities Bill Brown and Jim Deshaies, who cover the Astros; Clyde Drexler and Bill Worrell, who cover the Rockets; and Kevin Eschenfelder, who hosts pregame and postgame shows.

“Being on the scene and interacting on a daily basis with the players is very crucial in our coverage,” Tello says. “Being able to interact with the players and the coaches and being familiar with them and building trust with them are very important things, and you can only do that if you’re in town.”

“The sweet spot is when we’re in sync with the team in reaching out to the fan base,” he says. When he met with the teams’ owners, he was encouraged by their keen focus on building a positive experience for the fans.

“These men are passionate about wanting their teams to be winners and celebrating that for Houston,” he says of Astros owner Drayton McLane, Rockets owner Leslie Alexander and Texans owner Bob McNair.

In addition to being the home for Astros and Rockets games and coverage, FSH works with the Texans on weekly shows during football season. With 24/7 programming, FSHouston can also expand its reach to include the Big 12 Conference, the Dynamo, the Aeros, local colleges, high schools, and features on the
FOx Sports channel has had its ups and downs this past year, Tello says. “This year has been a very challenging year in moving senior staff members to Houston all at once, enduring Hurricane Ike, then having this economic tsunami hit,” he says. “The challenge of bringing in ad dollars was a monster to take in at one time.”

But when he looks out his window at the new construction going on in downtown Houston, he is enthusiastic and optimistic. “There’s a resilience in Houston that is very refreshing,” Tello says. “There’s evidence in many ways downtown that projects are under way, and that’s a very good sign. The blue chip projects are getting funded, and it’s happening in Houston.”

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Daryl Morey’s first significant memory of Houston was a visit in February 2006 for the NBA All-Star Game. The city had just settled into the three-year-old Toyota Center. Morey attended as the senior vice-president of operations and information for the Boston Celtics, and the Houston Rockets were on pace to finish their ninth season without advancing past the first-round playoffs.

“\nI remember it was about 30 degrees outside,” recalls Morey. “I thought, ‘Okay, kind of a temperate climate here, maybe like San Diego.’”

Six weeks later, Morey would join the Rockets as assistant general manager. A few months later, he would discover that summers in Houston are anything but ‘temperate.’ And three short years later as general manager, Morey would help guide the Rockets farther than the team had been since 1997, to the Western Conference Semifinals and a seventh game against the 2009 NBA Champion Los Angeles Lakers.

Last season’s success seems remarkable given that All-Star guard Tracy McGrady played only 34 of 82 games and the Rocket’s All-Star center, Yao Ming, was sidelined with a foot injury after Game 3 of the Semifinals.

But such a season is not so remarkable once you understand Morey’s vanguard approach to the game and his well-informed management philosophy.

NUMBERS DON’T LIE

Born in 1972, Morey grew up near Cleveland where he took great interest in the Cavaliers, the Browns and the statistics that he believed held the key to championship

his own team.

That never happened, but he did earn the MBA and moved on to a position with the Parthenon Group, a Boston-based consulting firm specializing in business strategy, investing, and merger integration. Once at Parthenon, Morey landed an opportunity to assist with the sale of the Boston Celtics and after the deal went through his performance and keen analysis earned him a full-time position with the Celtics as well as a test lab for his thesis on quantifying sports intangibles.

Three years later, as Rockets owner Les Alexander went shopping for a new general manager with Wall Street smarts and an objective approach to the NBA, he found his man in Daryl Morey. After a year of learning the organization as assistant general manager under the guidance of 10-year veteran Carroll Dawson, Morey took over on May 10, 2007.

Since his hire, Morey has helped transform the Rockets into one of the deepest teams in the NBA. With go-to players like Shane Battier, Aaron Brooks and Louis Scola, the team’s success last season should come as no surprise. And while they might not rank as high on a traditional scouting report, Morey will tell you they anchor a team of basketball players, not headliners, but play makers who can do many things on the court and who go all out every night – intangible and yet quantifiable attributes often identified through analytics.

Results for the Rockets were immediate. After a losing 2005-06 season (34-48), the team went 630 or better the next three seasons in a conference that produced two of the last three NBA Champions. Moreover, the team under head coach Rick Adelman synchronized into a fearsome yet elegant machine that could hurt teams on both sides of the ball with a number of player combinations and unexpected fire and finesse from the bench.

Morey acknowledges that the Rockets surprised a lot of experts last season and says the team sets up very well for the future. What remains to be seen is whether his innovative brand of management can
"Another thing is the ingress and egress. From the worst parking spot you can find, it only takes 30-40 minutes to get to your seat. In most other places that’s more like two hours. People who have not been to other arenas don’t appreciate that aspect of the Toyota Center," he said, "but it’s a wonderful attribute."

Morey says his wife Ellen, daughter Karen and son Scott are well settled in the Memorial area and taking advantage of all that Houston has to offer. "My wife loves the shopping and the kids are knee-deep in sports. I’m very impressed with the youth programs here. They’re so well run, and I think that’s the reason so many great athletes come from Houston."

If it’s any insight into Morey’s personality, the one and only photo on his Facebook page is of the pinewood derby racer built by his son Scott that won a district race on April 4 this year. One could easily conclude that the photo reflects the pride any dad with a degree in computer science and an MBA from MIT might show in his son’s accomplishment.

The other conclusion is that for all his genius, Morey is as open to luck and the power of positive thinking as the next guy. As he notes in a caption under the photo, "...hopefully this good fortune will transfer to tomorrow’s game." That game on April 5 against the red-hot Portland Trailblazers would decide home court advantage in the playoffs. The Rockets won 102-88.

OFF THE COURT

For a city that prides itself on innovation, technology and go-get-it entrepreneurship, Morey fits Houston perfectly. And talking with the Midwestern man who moved his wife and kids here just three years ago, it’s clear in a matter of minutes that Morey is happy in Clutch City.

“I love the fact that Houston has no zoning,” he said. “I think that’s awesome. There are not so many restrictions, and that’s the best environment for innovation.

"You don’t remember anything in particular about the city," he says, “But that’s the thing about Houston, right? Wonderful restaurants, world-class shopping, sports, friendly people, great weather, very multicultural, tons of things to do and see, and yet there’s not that one thing you remember about it. It’s everything combined, the whole atmosphere, and you come away to realize it’s just an amazing place to be.”

Of his new workspace, Morey says most Houstonians don’t realize how good they have it in Toyota Center. “Relative to other arenas around the county, the Toyota Center to me is by far the best,” he said. “Houston is spoiled. The food, acoustics, seats, sightlines, it’s all superior to anywhere else we play in the country.

Since his hire, Morey has helped transform the Rockets into one of the deepest teams in the NBA.
When talking about analytics, Morey always insists that statistics represent just one tool used in conjunction with what the coaches, management and scouts see in a player. But one need only listen for the “intangibles” Morey uses to describe four new Rocket players to know that the data points add up:

Trevor Ariza, a 6’8” guard/forward, signed a multi-season contract with the Rockets on July 8 following a postseason in which he helped lift the Los Angeles Lakers to an NBA title. Originally selected by the Knicks in the second round of the 2004 NBA Draft, Ariza played two seasons in New York, three seasons in Orlando, and two in Los Angeles.

Said Morey, “We love defensive players and still think they’re underrated around the league. Trevor is, we think, one of the best wing defenders. Trevor also knows how to contribute within whatever offense he’s been in. That’s why we feel like he can take that next step forward. He does what the coach asks him and I think in our offense Coach (Adelman) feels like he can ask more of him, given his athleticism and his quickness. David is a versatile post player who should fit well in Coach Adelman’s system.”

Chase Budinger is a 6’ 7” forward from the University of Arizona that the Rockets acquired during the 2009 NBA Draft. As a junior, Budinger ranks 11th on the Arizona career scoring list with 1,697 career points – the highest total by a player at UA for three seasons or less.

Jermaine Taylor, a 6’ 4” guard from the University of Central Florida, also acquired by the Rockets in the 2009 NBA Draft, averaged 16.2 points during his career and made a school-record 251 three-pointers.

“We really like what both these guys are going to bring to us,” said Morey of Budinger and Taylor. “Both can shoot the ball, play up-tempo, attack the basket and pass. This is obviously a good team, and they’re going to have to fight to get on the court. But we like their talent, and we like their drive to succeed.”

Filling out the 2009-2010 roster is a 6’3” guard named Sergio Llull who will join the team in training camp after completing his second season with Real Madrid in the Euroleague. At just 22, Llull’s only significant stat is a 92 percent free-throw average. But you can bet that if he caught Morey’s eye, there’s an intangible somewhere in this player that will help the Rockets win.

Is there another surprise in the making for Rockets fans this year? With Yao Ming out for the 2009-10 season and McGrady questionable, no one can say for sure.

But as Rockets’ head coach Rick Adelman has said, Morey’s approach more often than not supports an old-school style of thinking about the game, a strategy that relies on all five guys working together to win, rather than a superstar with a supporting cast. Like Morey says, maybe it’s not any one thing, but the combination of everything, that will make downtown Houston and Toyota Center a great place to be this season.

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MERGING ART AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Take an easy walk to two downtown art exhibits – from colorful globes on Discovery Green to organic sensibilities in a makeshift urban gallery space. Houston’s artists are making a statement about the world in which we live – and ways we can change how we consume goods and create beautiful art while doing it.

1. A SEAT AT THE TABLE

A series of art tables created from recycled packaging and products manufactured and found in Houston’s East End. That’s Second Seating – the brainchild of local artist Mary Margaret Hansen. The show takes its name from the term used by restaurants when new diners replace those who have finished their meal.

Coffee cans, Clorox bottles, oil pipeline parts and beer cans mix seamlessly with reclaimed trash, vintage objects and natural items found in the community. The installation, with its offbeat and enigmatic text, invites viewers to take a metaphorical seat at the table, acknowledging that we can choose to reuse our trash and also renew our diverse urban communities. One table includes a sparkling base of compacted beer cans while another is swathed in a hand-stitched patchwork of fabrics salvaged from Hurricane Ike’s floodwaters. And still another is banked with discarded mounds of oyster shells and covered with brocade, discarded fishing nets and scalloped silver dishes.

Hansen invited other artists to collaborate in Second Seating by creating a chandelier, painted plates or a dinner table.

The exhibition, which will be on display from September 24 through November 1, can be found next to Irma’s Restaurant at 22 North Chenevert near Discovery Green and Minute Maid Park. And throughout the exhibition, the restaurant will offer a Second Seating lunch plate between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. weekdays.

secondseatinghouston.blogspot.com

2. cool globes

Hot Ideas for a Cooler Planet is just that – a display of 50 super-sized globes, each expressing a unique message about how ordinary citizens can combat global warming. The five-foot diameter, seven-foot-tall globes will be decorated by local, national and international artists and are sure to cause a stir when they make their appearance at Discovery Green starting October 8 through December 31.

Of course the globes will be as varied as the artists who create them and the ideas they want to convey. Green Fleet urges the use of environmentally friendly vehicles while Loteria Global suggests a home energy audit to reduce greenhouse gasses. The Comer Connection (Plastics, Metals and Cell Phones OH MY!) encourages recycling.

What they all have in common, is a sincere desire by the artists to be part of something important. coolglobes.com
GETTING EDUCATED DOWNTOWN

DOWNTOWN HOUSTON IS KNOWN FOR MANY THINGS: LOOMING BUILDINGS, BIG BUSINESS, CHIC EATERIES, LUXURY LOFTS AND COUNTLESS CULTURAL VENUES. BUT EDUCATION? BELIEVE IT OR NOT, DOWNTOWN HAS THE MEANS TO EDUCATE FROM THE CRIB TO A POST-GRADUATE DEGREE. FROM STATE-OF-THE-ART NURSERIES TO SCHOOLS OF HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE, THE BAYOU CITY HAS SOMETHING FOR EVERY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL.

JENNIFER SEGELKE
Leaving your child in the care of someone else is a big deal. Are they safe? Are they happy? Are they well cared for? Are they ... learning French? At Crème de la Crème the answer is always yes – or, perhaps, oui. A highly progressive pre-school, Crème is a weekday, home-away-from-home for children ages 6 weeks to 5 years. But if you think you’re dropping your child off at just any day care, think again. “Our motto is ‘The Adventure of Childhood,’ so we encompass fun and learning in a stimulating environment,” says Executive Director Brenda Rhodes, who has put her own children through the program. “Crème provides a positive, kid-friendly atmosphere that helps parents leave their most valuable possession in our care.” Kid-friendly, indeed. This whimsical wonderland is designed to look and feel like a Victorian village complete with pastel walls, a plush interior and semi-classical and Disney music pumped throughout the corridors. Music is even filtered into Crème’s level of the parking garage, proving that minutia matters. A large fish tank, an electric train and an indoor jungle play area also add to the “oooh” and “ahhh” factor.

Theme-park-like as it may seem, Crème isn’t all play time. Curriculum is varied and extensive, including lessons in science, social studies, gymnastics, art, music, math, reading and writing, as well as French and computers. Not limited to academics, students are also taught lessons on virtues and values, such as friendship, respect, responsibility, kindness, honesty and courage.

WHAT YOU’LL LOVE:

- Month-to-month commitment: No yearlong contracts here; and because the school is year-round, you can enroll your child at any time.
- Daily reports: Keeping parents up-to-date with their child’s progress is a top priority. Ask your tot what they did that day and get no response? Don’t fret. Daily reports are sent home with the children explaining exactly what that day at Crème entailed. For infants, feeding times, diaper changes, temperature and mood are all recorded. Reports for toddlers through kindergarteners detail academic progress and lesson participation, behavior and discipline, as well as additional information a teacher might want to pass on to an eager parent: reasons they were sent to the “thinking chair,” uniform issues and accident reports.
- Pop in any time: Crème has an open-door policy for all parents – whether they’re unable to cut the cord or they’re part of the downtown workforce looking to schedule lunch with their tyke. “Regardless of if a parent is dropping by to nurse their baby, visit a classroom or take their child to lunch, they are always welcome,” Rhodes says.
- Individual attention: With approximately 80 teachers on staff, the child/teacher ratio is 4-to-1 at the infant level and gradually increases as the child gets older.
- Après school care: Ensuring day care is not an added hassle to your day, Crème is open Monday through Friday, 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., and accepts children ages 6 through 12 for after-school and summer programs.
- One-stop shop: No time to drive back and forth to piano and ballet lessons after rush-hour traffic? Crème offers extracurricular classes in music and movement, gymnastics, Tae Kwon Do, piano, tap and ballet.

WHAT YOUR KIDS WILL LOVE:

- Fun in the sun: Don’t let the downtown locale fool you – this school is equipped with ample outdoor play space. There is even an onsite splash park for kids to keep cool during the hot summer months.
- Making (and keeping) friends: If your child becomes attached to his Crème friends, don’t be surprised; they’ve probably been in the same class together since before they could walk. Rhodes says 70 to 75 percent of the children that come to Crème as infants continue on through kindergarten together.
Since opening its doors on November 9, 1879, Trinity Lutheran School has not lost sight of its mission to educate and strengthen the whole child – spiritually, scholastically, physically, emotionally and socially. A school for children from 6 weeks to eighth grade, Trinity has maintained a family atmosphere for its 175 students through small classes and a caring staff. And it has to say something good about a school when generation after generation keeps attending. “We have been a growing and living school in downtown Houston for 130 years,” says Principal Amy Boatman. “We have had generations of families go through our school. This year 23 of our 175 students were second generation and one student was a fourth generation.”

With an eye on growth and the future, Trinity is set for expansion. A capital campaign in place, they are breaking ground on a new education facility that will initially double their infant through pre-kindergarten program, and once all phases are complete, will double the kindergarten through eighth grade programs. Every year Trinity picks a theme for the school based on a Bible verse that is incorporated into curriculum and service projects. This year’s theme is “Under Construction.” By the time all phases of construction are done, the school will operate out of 90,000 square feet – up from the 40,000 square feet it is now.

Because of its downtown location, the students of Trinity are afforded some exciting excursions. Throughout the school year, students go off-campus to explore destinations such as the Houston Zoo, the Museum of Fine Arts, The Houston Museum of Natural Science, the Downtown Aquarium, the Houston Public Library, the Theater District, the Livestock Show and Rodeo and the Children’s Museum. Primarily a commuter school, Boatman says Trinity is constantly re-evaluating what they do, why they do it and how they do it to better accommodate the needs of their families. One way they keep up with the needs of working parents is offering extended care hours from 6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. and camp throughout the summer.

In addition to academics, Trinity also offers a wide range of sports for fifth through eighth graders. For the girls, volleyball, soccer, basketball, track and cheerleading are available; for the boys, soccer, basketball and track.

GETTING INTO TRINITY LUTHERAN SCHOOL

As the school has only just begun expansion, space is still limited. Prospective students must come to an open house, fill out an application, meet with the principal and be tested on math and reading. Children already enrolled in the Children’s Center get first shot at kindergarten openings, then classes open to congregational members with children not enrolled at the school, and then to the public. Boatman suggests interested parents make sure to start the process early and turn in all necessary paperwork and required documents.

TRINITY FUN FACTS:

- Class enrollment caps at about 24 students.
- There are 15 teachers on staff.
- Of the 25 fourth-grade students, six have been together since infancy.
- In lieu of a traditional computer lab, Trinity has two “Computer on Wheels,” which contain 25 Mac Book laptops.
- The 2009 eighth-grade class scored “post high school” on the Stanford 10 Achievement test.
Neighbored up to downtown heavy hitters Minute Maid Park, George R. Brown Convention Center and Discovery Green, Incarnate Word Academy has stood its ground for more than 137 years – retaining foundations in the past while evolving with the city around it. Founded by the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament in 1873, IWA was the first permanent Catholic school in Houston and remains the only Catholic school downtown.

With the downtown skyline changing every moment, what’s the secret to IWA’s success? School President Sister Lauren Beck, C.V.I., believes it’s the love and stability the sisters and staff provide. They are dedicated to the school’s mission: “To provide young women with a college preparatory education, while helping them grow in their relationship with Jesus, the Incarnate Word, and live according to His values.”

“We strive to instill strong values and prepare them not only for further education, but for life,” says Sister Lauren. “It’s about investing in the present while helping to build the future.”

Ensuring students are well prepared for the collegiate road ahead, IWA offers a values-centered education focused on academic excellence. Honors and AP courses are available as well as dual credit courses through Houston Community College. In addition to academics, students are encouraged to join the school’s myriad sports teams – golf, swimming, soccer, cross country, track and field, softball, basketball and cheerleading – and a variety of student clubs.

Although a relatively small school of 280, Sister Lauren cites diversity as one of the school’s valuable assets. “Our downtown location also makes us unique. Our students come from 103 zip codes across Houston,” she says. “So in a way, all roads lead to IWA.”

CHAT WITH SISTER LAUREN
Do you think Catholic school can be intimidating to non-Catholics?
“...
DOWNTOWN BENEFITS

Because of its prime location, IWA girls get a unique high school experience that includes frequent interaction with downtown Houston. Astros games, speakers from local business and field trips are all part of the package. “The girls go to performances offered in the Theater District,” says Sister Lauren. “They have taken advantage of the METRORail to go to the Museum District.” Not only exciting for the girls, the location of the school is ideal for any parents working in the downtown area.

ALL-GIRLS, ALL GOOD

A recent UCLA study found that female students attending an all-girls’ school scored higher than girls attending coed schools in math confidence, computer skills, self-rated academic ability, self-rated intellectual self confidence, public speaking ability, writing ability, student club involvement and the SATs.

COLLEGES AND SCHOLARSHIPS

The 2009 graduating class received more than $2.5 million in scholarships to universities across the country, including Baylor University, Cornell University, Georgetown University, Tulane University, College of William and Mary, New York University, University of Texas, American University, Texas A&M University, Rice University, University of St. Thomas, Trinity University and Boston University.

University of Houston Downtown

ONE MAIN ST., 713.221.8000
UHD.EDU

UNDERGRADUATE AND MASTER’S DEGREES

You may have seen the new ad campaigns around town: “We’re Making a Name for Ourselves!” While the slogan has multiple meanings, one of the campaign goals is to clear up a misconception – the University of Houston-Downtown is not a University of Houston satellite campus. UHD is one of four separate universities in the University of Houston System. UHD has its own mission, admissions requirements, majors, graduate programs and tuition- and fee-structure. “The UHD Board of Regents voted to change UHD’s name earlier this year. This fall we will resume the name selection process,” says Sue Davis, UHD director of public affairs. “Our new ad campaign gives us the opportunity to build name recognition, signal that our name will be changing and highlight the outstanding accomplishments of our faculty, staff and students.”

With a new identity on the way and a new president, Dr. William Flores, in office, UHD is set to expand on its already impressive growth. The original building, formerly South Texas Junior College, opened in 1974 and within five years reached enrollment of 5,000. The campus now consists of four more buildings – Jesse H. Jones Student Life Center, Willow Street Pump Station, Commerce Street Building and the Shea Street Building, which sits just north of I-10 and is the new home of the College of Business.

UHD offers 43 undergraduate majors and four master’s degree programs throughout four colleges: Business, Science/Technology, Humanities/Social Science and Public Service. Some of the more popular degrees include accounting, criminal justice, finance, management, psychology and several science degrees. For those looking to log on for their degree, UHD offers “upper level courses for a bachelor of science degree in criminal justice online,” says Davis. “Students who have lower level courses completed or that transfer here with an associate degree can complete the bachelor’s online.”

While enrollment has reached an all-time high with more than 12,000 students, UHD still feels like a small school with a feeling of community. With a penchant for small classes, and despite the growth, the campus still only has two large lecture halls. Because of its proximity to downtown businesses, and its flexible day, night, weekend and online course schedule, part-time and non-traditional students are a major component of UHD.

WHO GOES TO UHD?

More than 12,000 students
48 percent full-time
52 percent part-time
78 percent of students under 30 years old
48 percent of students live outside Beltway 8
15 percent of students live inside the Loop
South Texas College of Law
1303 SAN JACINTO ST., 713.659.8040
STCL.EDU
POST-GRADUATE, LAW SCHOOL

Downtown Houston is a hotbed of activity in the worlds of business, law and government and amid the chaos sits Houston’s oldest law school. A perfect backdrop for South Texas College of Law, downtown provides the ideal learning environment for law students. And with hundreds of law firms mere blocks away, it’s not a bad place to start the job hunt after graduation.

South Texas opened in 1923 as part of the United YMCA Schools and at that time operated solely as a part-time law school meant to provide working people with the opportunity to obtain a legal education in the evenings and after work. By 1945, 99 students were enrolled at South Texas, making it larger than the University of Texas School of Law. By 1952 STCL had become the second largest law school in Texas.

Now a full-time law school, South Texas still has a strong presence of part-time students, many who work full time and are looking to enhance their careers with a law degree. And it’s this diverse mix of traditional and non-traditional students that makes the in-classroom experience so rich says incoming Dean Donald J. Guter. “The variety of age, sex, race and life lessons makes for a more desirable learning experience.”

Along with the diverse student body, Dean Guter finds the South Texas alumni a vital part of what makes the school special. The passion he’s seen from the alumni, of which there are 12,900 currently living in all 50 states and seven foreign countries, proves a great deal to him about their connection to the school, which should be a considerable factor for perspective students. “Not only is our faculty from all over, but our alumni are spread out across the country as well, making them an invaluable resource for networking and possible job placement,” he says.

Because South Texas is an independent school, all of the resources go to one purpose: making the law school better. “Students are going to get the best education they can because of the faculty,” says Dean Guter. “And the best care because of the staff. They won’t just get a classroom like any other school out there. They’re getting individualized attention.”

Enrollment at STCL is just over 1,200 students who are taught by 55 full-time professors and as many adjunct professors; the student/teacher ratio is 20-to-1, allowing for personal interactions with professors and a family feeling within the school. Dean Guter notes that if a student is looking to really be involved in a school, South Texas is the place for them. He adds, “You’re not going to get lost at South Texas.”

WHAT THEY’RE KNOWN FOR
With more than 100 national advocacy competition titles, the South Texas Advocacy Program is considered one of the best in the nation and is continually included in the nation’s top 10 by U.S. News & World Report.

THIS IS NO BOYS’ CLUB
STCL saw its first female graduate in 1928 (out of a class of nine) and now boasts a student body that is 45 percent female.

STCL’S OLDEST GRADUATE
In 2001, Harold Graham, then age 70, added a law degree to a resume that already included 22 years at Exxon, ordained minister, registered massage therapist, mayor of Seabrook and professor at Vanderbilt University.

NOTABLE ALUMNI
my HOUSTON

Even though I have traveled all over the world, on the Earth and above, I always return to the place I call home, Houston.

DR. BERNARD HARRIS
Former NASA Astronaut

EXPERIENCE MY HOUSTON

Houston was my launching pad to the stars! There are world-class educational institutions that rival other top cities around the nation, including the University of Houston where I received the foundation to become a doctor and eventually an astronaut.

Houston is the home to the world’s largest medical center, the energy capital of the world and a diversified array of other industries that makes Houston the place to be.

Houston’s best kept secret is its people.

Nowhere else can you find such a diversified population, representing people from all over the world. This provides a culture that is genuinely Texan, but with an international flare.

For the rest of Dr. Harris’ thoughts and to find out what others are saying, log on to VisitMyHouston.com

Photo courtesy of NASA
Perched atop 13-foot-high flexible poles, Strange Fruit delivers a sublime performance, bending and swaying in the air. You will be captivated and absolutely fascinated. See page 38 for all the details.
THEATER

GREASE
Sep 8–20 Nominated for a 2008 Tony Award for Best Revival of a Musical. The one that you want is back. Take a trip to a simpler time of poodle skirts, drive-ins, and T-birds. Bad boy Danny and girl-next-door Sandy fall in love all over again to the tune of your favorite songs. Throw your mittens around your kittens and hand jive the night away with the show that’ll make you want to stand up and shout, “A-wop-bop-a-loo-bop-a-wop-bam-boom!” Tickets start at $24. Hobby Center, 800 Bagby. 713.558.8887. tuts.com

THE BARTERED BRIDE BY BEDRICH SMETANA
Sep 17 & 18 The entire opera is performed by the Kingwood College Opera Workshop together with beloved arias. Tickets $15, seniors $12 and students $6, includes a wine reception. Czech Center Museum Houston, 4920 San Jacinto. 713.528.2060. czechtcenter.org

SING FOR HOPE – AN EVENING OF ART SONGS AND ARIAS
Sep 19 Native Houstonian and internationally-recognized American soprano Camille Zamora will once again bring some of the brightest young stars in the opera world to Houston for Sing For Hope. The evening features classic opera arias and popular showstoppers from favorite musicals followed by an on-stage champagne and dessert after-party that allows guests to mingle with the artists. Tickets $150–$250. Wortham Center, 501 Texas. 713.341.3763. teringomega.org

OLIVER
Sep 25–Oct 4 Tony Award-winning composer Lionel Bart’s vision of the classic Dickens novel Oliver Twist has been pleasing audiences since 1964. When kind, sweet orphan Oliver flees the tyrannical care of a series of ruthless masters, he finds himself pulled to a life of petty crime by Fagin and his army of youthful pickpockets. Hobby Center, 800 Bagby. 713.861.7045. masqueradetheatre.com

OUR TOWN
Oct 2–Nov 1 Winner of the Pulitzer Prize, Thornton Wilder’s Our Town follows the courtship and marriage of George and Emily, and in following the two, reveals the hidden mystery behind the everyday. Wilder’s portrait of life, love and death is set in Grover’s Corners, New Hampshire, a fictional New England town at the start of the 20th century. This play is an enduring American treasure and one of the greatest plays of world theater. Tickets $21–$100. Alley Theatre, 615 Texas. 713.220.5700. allytheatre.org

GRUESOME PLAYGROUND INJURIES
Oct 16–Nov 15 Gruesome Playground Injuries charts two lives, using scars, injuries and calamity as the mile markers. An imaginative tour de force for actors and audiences, the play explores why people hurt themselves to gain another’s love, and the cumulative effect of such damage, of such demands. Recommended for mature audiences. Strong language, profanity, violence. Tickets $21–$100. Alley Theatre, 615 Texas. 713.220.5700. allytheatre.org

MARY POPPINS
Oct 22–Nov 8 Produced by Disney and Cameron Mackintosh, the show includes such wonderful songs as Chim Chim Cher-ee, A Spoonful of Sugar, Let’s Go Fly a Kite and, of course, Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious.

MANON
Sep 10–20 A modern classic, Manon charts the romantic adventures of an irresistibly beautiful femme fatale and her one true love, the impoverished student Des Grieux, from the demi monde of Paris to the bayous of Louisiana. It’s a brilliant dance drama that explores the relationship between love, sex, and the corrupting power of money. The passion and danger of Manon’s central pas de deux have proven irresistible to audiences around the world, and have made it one of the most popular full-length ballets of the second half of the 20th century. Tickets $18–$160. Wortham Center, 501 Texas. 713.227.2277. AT&Ts. houstontoballet.org
OPENING NIGHT EMMANUEL AX’ BEETHOVEN
Sep 12 In Stravinsky’s Firebird, join with Prince Ivan as he suffers and soars with his magical golden bird in the kingdom of Katcheï. Tickets $40–$130. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. 713.224.7575. houstonsymphony.org

TCHAIKOVSKY’S FIFTH SYMPHONY
Sep 17–20 In Chopin’s Piano Concerto No. 2, pianist Ingrid Fliter “plays the second movement’s poetic utterances as if they were sent from heaven.” Tickets $29–$116. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. 713.224.7575. houstonsymphony.org

A MUSICAL OFFERING
Sep 20 A musical grand tour begins in the great halls of Europe, with Bach’s A Musical Offering for Frederick the Great, one of Telemann’s Paris Quartets and a Bach cantata for Prince Leopold of Cöthen’s birthday. Tickets $31.25–$41.25. Hobby Center, 800 Bagby. 713.315.2525. arslyricahouston.org

WITHOUT BOUNDARIES
Sep 24–Oct 4 Houston Ballet’s fall repertory program features a world premiere of Elements, by Stanton Welch to the music of Paul Hindemith alongside company premieres by two of the 20th century’s greatest choreographers. European master Jiří Kylián’s Falling Angels is a mesmerizing study in motion and minimalism showcasing eight female dancers. Set to a pulsating score by Philip Glass, In the Upper Room is a signature work for Twyla Tharp, contrasting the power and energy of modern dance with the speed and aerial dexterity of a more classical language. Tickets $18–$160. Wortham Center, 501 Texas. 713.227.ARTS.

DER ROSENKAVALIER – FILM & MUSIC
Sep 25–27 After seeing Wiene’s film Der Rosenkavalier, Richard Strauss adapted his sumptuous opera score for it. For decades the film was thought lost until recent painstaking reconstruction. See this charming gem of the silent movie era when Hans Graf and the Houston Symphony unite the classic film with Strauss’ dazzling orchestral score, filled with virtuosity and passion. Tickets $29–$116. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. 713.224.7575. houstonsymphony.org

13th VAN CLIBURN INTERNATIONAL PIANO COMPETITION GOLD MEDALIST RECITAL
Sep 27 Once every four years, a select few young pianists emerge victorious from the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition: “the most prestigious classical piano contest in the world” (Chicago Tribune). This summer, Nobuyuki Tsujii was named one of two Nancy Lee and Perry R. Bass Gold Medalists from the competition. Experience the virtuosity and passion. Tickets $29–$116. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. 713.224.7575. houstonsymphony.org

AIN GORDON: THE STORM SHOW
Oct 1–3 Aín Gordon, a recipient of such honors as the Obie Award, NYFA Playwriting Fellow and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, presents the world premiere of his new work The Storm Show, a piece based on one young woman’s account of the Galveston hurricane that decimated the Texas island in 1900. Pay-what-you-want. Tickets $29–$116. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. 713.224.7575. houstonsymphony.org

ODE TO JOY: BEETHOVEN’S NINTH SYMPHONY
Oct 1–4 With repeated hearings of the Ninth you go deeper and deeper into Beethoven’s courage, imagination and depth. Tickets $29–$116. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. 713.224.7575. houstonsymphony.org

MURAL IN CONCERT
Oct 1 Exclusive Houston engagement and first American performance of the international music trio composed of Kim Myhr and Ingar Zach from Norway and Jim Denley from Australia. Always free. The Rothko Chapel, 1409 Sul Ross. 713.524.9839. rothkochapel.org

VIRYSK UKRAINIAN NATIONAL DANCE COMPANY
Oct 2 For more than 70 years, the Ukraine’s professional dance company has won the hearts of audiences around the world with their passionate performances exhibiting the romance and exquisite charm of Ukrainian folk dancing. The color, beauty and folk tradition of the Ukraine are trademarks of this 85-member ensemble that celebrates the spirit of a culture through dance. Tickets $20–$55. Wortham Center, 501 Texas. 713.227.4SPA.

A LITTLE DAY MUSIC
Oct 7 A Little Day Music concerts fulfill an important aspect of Da Camera’s mission to develop the audience for chamber music and jazz by making it accessible to everyone and part of everyday life. Downtown workers, schools and day care centers are among the many enjoying Da Camera’s free lunchtime concerts. Bring your lunch and enjoy the wide variety of artists and ensembles presented this season. Free. Wortham Center, 501 Texas. 713.524.5050. dacamera.com

ROYAL FIREWORKS
Oct 10 Mercury Baroque lights a fuse to Handel’s Royal Fireworks. Tickets $20–$47. Wortham Center, 501 Texas. 713.533.0080. mercurybaroque.org

THE GREAT COLLABORATORS OF THE BALLET RUSSES
Oct 15–17 Dominic Walsh Dance Theater celebrates the 100th anniversary of the Ballets Russes. Under Sergei Diaghilev, this revolutionary company drew upon the genius of leading composers, artists, choreographers and dancers to produce groundbreaking productions that redefined classical dance. In this tradition, Walsh offers his 21st century take on classics from that era – The Dying Swan, The Firebird, featuring Paris Opera Ballet Étouille’s Marie-Agnès Gillot, and The Afternoon of a Faun with a revival of his breathtaking Le Spectre de la Rose. Tickets $34.25–$91.25. Hobby Center, 800 Bagby. 713.315.2525. dwdt.org

MORGAN THORSON: HEAVEN
Oct 15–17 Minneapolis dance maven, Morgan Thorson collaborates with the band, LOW (Alan Sparhawk and Mimi Parker), lighting designer Costume Dooce and visual and costume designer Emmet Ramstad to premiere Heavens, an exploration of the emotional and physical manifestations of ecstatic perfection. Pay-what-you-want. DiverseWorks, 1117 East Freeway. 713.223.8346. diverseworks.org

RICHARD ALSTON DANCE COMPANY
Oct 16 Richard Alston brings his phenomenal company to Houston for the first time. In a synthesis of extraordinary dancing, evocative lighting and lyrical music, Alston’s dances are unforgettable for their purity. Launched in 1994 to great critical acclaim, Richard Alston Dance Company has grown into one of Britain’s most avidly followed contemporary companies and is Britain’s largest independent company. Tickets $20–$55. Wortham Center, 501 Texas. 713.227.4SPA. spahouston.org

BROADWAY’S BRIAN STOKES MITCHELL – SOME ENCHANTED EVENING
Oct 16–18 Tony-winning Broadway leading man Brian Stokes Mitchell’s unmistakable baritone voice will catch your ears and hearts when he performs music from South Pacific, West Side Story, Sweeney Todd and Man of La Mancha. Tickets $29–$122. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. 713.224.7575. houstonsymphony.org

THE WIZARD OF OZ
Oct 17 Join Dorothy and her friends the Scarecrow, Tin Man and Cowardly Lion as they follow the Yellow Brick Road to the Emerald City. As part of their journey, they’ll explore the instruments of the Houston Symphony through Benjamin Britten’s Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra. Tickets $12–$19. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. 713.224.7575. houstonsymphony.org

houstondowntown.com 33
KENNY ROGERS
Nov 5 Hear this American icon with the Houston Symphony as he performs songs including *Lady*, *The Gambler* and *We’ve Got Tonight*. Tickets $35–$120. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. 713.224.7575.
houstonsymphony.org

KENNY GARRETT PRESENTS
Nov 6 Kenny Garrett is “one of the more imposing musicians of his generation,” writes the *New York Times*. “[H]is solos give the audience the sense of experiencing a natural event, of power and elegance in the form of music.” Known for his five years with Miles Davis, saxophonist Kenny Garrett’s music is roll-up-your-sleeves, in-your-face, hard-bop-blowing of rippling melodic songs. Tickets $30–$50. Wortham Center, 501 Texas. 713.524.5050.
dacamera.com

VILLAGE OF WALTZ
ho pestoneinc.org

ITALIAN ROMANTICS
Oct 30 Guitar virtuoso Elliot Fisk teams up with one of today’s most acclaimed young chamber ensembles, Enso String Quartet, for an Italian sojourn. Among other musical delights is rarely heard string music by two legendary opera composers, Puccini and Verdi. Tickets $24–$45. Wortham Center, 501 Texas. 713.524.5050.
dacamera.com

KAVALOKS PLAYS & CONDUCTS MOZART
Oct 30–Nov 1 Gramophone has written of Kavaloks: “... and Houston audiences have heard – that “the exquisite tenderness of his playing gives the music a sense of timeless, poignant beauty.” Now hear this extraordinary musician conduct your orchestra. Tickets: $29–$116. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. 713.224.7575.
houstonsymphony.org

A LITTLE DAY MUSIC
Nov 4 A Little Day Music concerts fulfill an important aspect of Da Camera’s mission to develop the audience for chamber music and jazz by making it accessible to everyone and part of everyday life. Downtown workers, schools and day care centers are among the many enjoying Da Camera’s free lunchtime concerts. Bring your lunch and enjoy the wide variety of artists and ensembles presented this season. Free. Wortham Center, 501 Texas Ave. 713.524.5050. dacamera.com

ITZHAK PERLMAN
Nov 4 The world falls in love with music when Itzhak Perlman takes up his violin. A superstar by any standard and a rarity in the classical field, Perlman has taken hold of the public imagination as few violin virtuosos ever have, bringing joy to millions with his playing. Join him as he conducts and plays with the Houston Symphony. Tickets: $45–$115. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. 713.224.7575.
houstonsymphony.org

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dacamera.com

HAIL! BRIGHT CECILIA
Nov 6 The glorious voices of the Houston Chamber Choir lift in song as they celebrate the 350th birthday of composer Henry Purcell with a collaborative musical trip to late 17th century London. This grandiose tribute to music’s patron saint features Purcell’s extravagant but seldom heard *Hail! Bright Cecilia*. Tickets $31.25–$41.25. Hobby Center, 800 Bagby. 713.315.2525.
arslyrica@houston.org

MARY WILSON OF THE SUPREMES
Nov 6–8 Mary Wilson, brought to life in the Oscar-winning film *Dreamgirls*, brings her sultry, smoky voice to the Houston Symphony stage for songs like *Baby Love*, *Come See About Me*, and *Stop! In The Name of Love*. Tickets $29–$122. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. 713.224.7575.
houstonsymphony.org

MARIZA
Nov 12 Having risen to even greater heights on the international music scene since SPA presented her in 2007, she represents the new face of Fado, the traditional music of Portugal. Supported by her impressive acoustic ensemble and plays with the Houston Symphony. Tickets: $20–$45. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. 713.227.4SPA.
spahouston.org

TREY MCYNTIRE PROJECT
Nov 13 Led by Houston Ballet’s former choreographic associate, this ground-breaking contemporary ballet company makes its Houston debut. What makes Trey McIntyre’s choreography unique is “in the rhythm” says the *Los Angeles Times*. He makes “brainless choices about a dance’s tempo, harmony and timbre.” Among other dances, the SPA program will include his latest work (set to the music of Henry Cowell. Tickets $20–$55. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. 713.227.4SPA.
spahouston.org

RACHMANINOFF’S FIRST SYMPHONY
houstonsymphony.org

MAHLER’S DAS LIED VON DER ERDE
Nov 19–22 Be both thrilled and touched by these songs of youth, wine, death and beauty. Mahler called *Song of the Earth* “my most personal creation.” While it’s an expansive work, its words based on ancient Chinese poems speak to us with intimacy and directness. Tickets $29–$116. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. 713.224.7575.
houstonsymphony.org

GENERATION PURCELL
Nov 20 Les Voix Baroques joins the ensemble to celebrate the birthday of English composer Henry Purcell. Tickets $20–$47. Wortham Center, 501 Texas. 713.533.0080. mercurybaroque.org

LEIF OVE ANDSNES
Nov 22 “The most accomplished pianist of the new generation” (*The New York Times*), Norway’s international piano star Leif Ove Andsnes debuts with Pictures Reframed, a fascinating, multimedia collaboration that is centered around Mussorgsky’s epic piano suite *Pictures at an Exhibition* with video installation by South African artist Robin Rhode. Tickets $20–$45. Wortham Center, 501 Texas. 713.227.4SPA.
spahouston.org

NEW MUSEUMS
NO ZONING: ARTISTS ENGAGE HOUSTON
Through Oct 4 Twenty–one Houston artists use the city as inspiration, material and site. Free. Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 5216 Montrose. 713.284.8250. camh.org

TERRA COTTA WARRIORS: GUARDIANS OF CHINA’S FIRST EMPEROR
Through Oct 18 One hundred objects from one of the most extraordinary archaeological finds of the 20th century from the tomb complex of China’s First Emperor Qin Shi Huang, considered by many to be the Eighth Wonder of the World. For more information and ticket prices, call the box office or visit the Web site. Houston Museum of Natural Science, One Hermann Circle Drive in Hermann Park. 713.639.4629.

OMAR ANGEL PEREZ: STILETT"O"S IMAGE
Through Oct 25 Omar Angel Perez is a Houston artist and woodworker who specializes in beautiful desks and sculptural objects. “As an expression of appreciation, I offer my gratitude to all women who endure the torture of wearing such heels. Your sacrifice does not go unnoticed. Thank You.” - Omar Angel Perez. Free. Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, 4848 Main. 713.529.4848. crafthouston.org

A BLESSING TO ONE ANOTHER: POPE JOHN PAUL II AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE
Through Jan 3 Photographs, video footage, documents and artifacts record the extraordinary contributions of Pope John Paul II to relations between the Catholic and Jewish faiths. Free. Holocaust Museum Houston, 5401 Caroline. 713.942.8000. hmm.org

POSTSCAENIUM AND INTERPRETATION
Sep 4–28 Challenging figurative art by Edwin Grat and West Texas landscape-inspired abstract forms
by Ronnie Queenan. Free. The Jung Center of Houston, 5200 Montrose. 713.524.8253. jungcenter.org

WAYNE WHITE: BIG LECTRIC FAN TO KEEP ME COOL WHILE I SLEEP  
Sep 10–Oct 18  “A roadside attraction, a museum relic of a lost world, and a big, weird toy still in its box” is how Wayne White, Emmy-winning creator and performer of many of the puppet characters in the hit, late-1980s television show, Pee-wee’s Playhouse describes this room-sized work of art. Free. Rice University Art Gallery, Sewall Hall, 6100 Main. 713.348.6066. ricegallery.org

JOAQUIN TORRES-GARCIA: CONSTRUCTING ABSTRACTION WITH WOOD  
Sep 25–Jan 3  The first major U.S. museum exhibition in nearly 40 years to focus on the artist revered today as one of the most influential of the early 20th century to emerge from Latin America. This Uruguay native exhibited with Pablo Picasso, Piet Mondrian and Marcel Duchamp. Free. The Menil Collection, 1515 Sul Ross. 713.525.9400. menil.org

THE MOON: “HOUSTON, TRANQUILITY BASE HERE. THE EAGLE HAS LANDED”  
Sep 27–Jan 10  This exhibition chronicles man’s enduring fascination over five centuries with our nearest planetary neighbor, from Old Masters and Impressionists to Ansel Adams and Apollo 11. Tickets $7 adults, $6 kids 2–12 and seniors. The Health Museum, 1515 Hermann Drive. 713.521.1515. thehealthmuseum.org

DAY OF THE DEAD/DIA DE LOS MUERTOS  
Oct 20–Nov 7  The 22nd annual celebration of the art, music and traditions of Mexico with retablos created by Texas artists and culminating with a Family Day Fiesta on November 7. Free. Lawndale Art Center, 4912 Main. 713.529.3858. lawndaleartcenter.org

LEARNING CURVE 3  
Sep 10–Nov 18  Student work juried by the Houston Center for Photography executive director and curator and the education coordinator. Free. Houston Center for Photography, 1441 W. Alabama. 713.529.4755. hcponline.org

CHILDREN’S MUSEUM OF HOUSTON  
All–new and now twice as big! The museum is packed with innovative, interactive bilingual exhibits for kids, ages birth to 12 years. There are a dozen daily activities and themed WonderWeeks. Tickets $7 and $6 seniors, children under one free. 1500 Binz. 713.522.1138. cmhouston.org

EXHIBITS & VISUAL ARTS
MILES AND MILES OF TEXAS: THE LONE STAR STATE THROUGH THE EYES OF BUCK SCHIWETZ  
Sep 8–Dec 31  The 22nd annual celebration of the art, music and traditions of Mexico with retablos created by Texas artists and culminating with a Family Day Fiesta on November 7. Free. Lawndale Art Center, 4912 Main. 713.529.3858. lawndaleartcenter.org

COOL GLOBES  
Oct 9–Dec 31  This public art exhibit will feature 50 super-sized Cool Globes that each convey a different message about what ordinary citizens can do to combat global warming. The five-foot diameter, seven–foot–tall globes will be decorated by local, national and international artists. See the Web site for related events. Free. Discovery Green, 1500 McKinney. 713.400.7336. discoverygreen.com or coolglobes.com

TIERNEY MALONE: THIRD WARD IS MY HARLEM  
Nov 7–Dec 19  Houston artist Tierney Malone transforms the DiverseWorks Main Gallery into a massive multi-media installation and community center with his latest work, Third Ward is my Harlem. Drawing from his own Southern roots and experiences, growing up in urban black American, Malone reframes American history and situates himself and his audience firmly in complex, non–linear narratives full of stoic nostalgia and sophistication. Free. DiverseWorks, 1117 East Freeway. 713.223.8346. diverseworks.org

SPEAKER SERIES
GLEN MCCARTHY’S RADIO EMPIRE BY RITA ZENZEN HECK  
Sep 17  Hill/Finger Lecture. Free. Thu noon–1, Heritage Society Museum. 1100 Bagby. 713.655.1912. heritagesociety.org

AN EVENING WITH JOSEPH O’NEILL AND MARYLYNE ROBINSON  
Sep 21  The Inprint Margaret Root Brown Reading Series kicks off its new season with Joseph O’Neill, the author of the bestselling Netherland, and the Pulitzer Prize–winning novelist Marylyne Robinson, author of Gilead and Home. Free rush tickets, if available, the night of the reading to seniors 65+ and students. Tickets $5. Hobby Center, 800 Bagby. 713.315.2525. inprinthouston.org

BRIAN GREENE  

AN EVENING WITH KAREN ARMSTRONG  
Oct 8  Karen Armstrong, one of the world’s foremost commentators on religious affairs, is discussing her latest book, The Case For God. Moving from the Paleolithic age to the present, her book details the great lengths to which humankind has gone in order to experience a sacred reality. Tickets $14–$74. Wortham Center, 501 Texas. 832.251.0706. progressiveforumhouston.org

HISTORIC PHOTOS OF TEXAS OIL BY MIKE COX  
FREE FAMILY EVENT WITH THE TALE OF DESPEREAUX
AUTHOR KATE DICAMILLO
Oct 18 Inprint Cool Brains! Reading Series for Young People kicks off its new season with Newbery Award–winning children’s writer Kate DiCamillo, author of Because of Winn-Dixie, The Tiger Rising and her latest, from which she will read, The Magician’s Elephant. Free. Location TBD. 713.521.2026. inprinthouston.org

AN EVENING WITH E.L. DOCTOROW
Oct 21 The Inprint Margaret Root Brown Reading Series presents one of America’s most celebrated authors, literary lion E. L. Doctorow, winner of the National Book Award and three National Book Critics Circle Awards. Doctorow, the author of Ragtime, Billy Bathgate, and many more, will read from his newest work, Homer & Langley. Tickets $5; free rush tickets, if available, the night of the reading to seniors 65- and students. Alley Theatre, 615 Texas. 713.521.2026. inprinthouston.org

AN EVENING WITH STEPHEN SONDHEIM
Oct 25 In 2008 composer and lyricist Stephen Sondheim agreed to accept a limited number of “rare” appearances with New York Times “rare” appearances with Stephen Sondheim with Sondheim agreed to accept a limited number of “rare” appearances with New York Times "rare" appearances with Sondheim and Sondheim agreed to accept a limited number of "rare" appearances with New York Times “rare” appearances with Sondheim and will offer solutions to the public. During his career, he has composed some of the world’s most recognized and beloved musicals, including Company, Follies, and Company. His works have been celebrated with numerous awards, including three Tony Awards, two Academy Awards, and two Pulitzer Prizes. Free. Location TBD. 713.437.5249. kuhffilmnight.com

CONCERTS
VERIZON WIRELESS THEATER
Sep 16 Chickenfoot
Sep 19 Guitars and Saxes
Sep 20 John Legend
Sep 24 Rob Thomas
Sep 26 Celtic Thunder
Oct 1 Verison’s concert calendar is continuously being updated. Check online for more info and to purchase tickets.

HOUSE OF BLUES
Sep 1 Collective Soul w/Black Stone Cherry and Ryan Starr
Sep 5 D-12 w/Potluck
Sep 6 The Cult
Sep 9 Secondhand Serenade w/Parachute and Evan Taubenfeld
Oct 10 Umphrey’s McGee
Oct 12 Lupillo Rivera
Oct 23 Co-Star of Disney’s Hannah Montana: Michel Musso w/KSM
Sep 25 Every Time I Die and Bring Me the Horizon w/Oh, Sleeper and the Architects

TOYOTA CENTER
Sep 16 Britney Spears
Sep 19 How Sweet the Sound Gospel Choir Competition
Sep 24 Pink

FILM
FIRST THURSDAYS AT DEAN’S
Sep 3, 10 & Nov 5 Every first Thursday of the month you can check out the screening of award-winning, Texas-made short film entries from the Houston Film Commission’s Texas Filmmakers Showcase or from other film festivals. Free. Thu 8-10. Dean’s Credit Clothing, 316 Main. 713.437.5249.

KUHF FILM NIGHT: THE GENERAL
Sep 4 Golden Arm Trio performs Buster Keaton’s 1926 classic The General. Free. Fri 8. Discovery Green, 1500 McKinney. 713.400.7336. discoverygreen.com

DOWNTOWN & A MOVIE: THE HOUSE OF YES
Sep 18 Presented by Downtown Magazine, Saint Arnold Brewing Company and Houston Young Professionals for the Arts (HYPA). A well-done film adaptation of a play, The House of Yes gives us an amazing and very funny performance by Parker Posey who is a bit unbalanced (she thinks she is Jackie Kennedy) and flips into a murderous rage when her brother returns home to reveal he’s engaged. Adult content. Free. Fri 7:30. Discovery Green, 1500 McKinney. 713.400.7336. discoverygreen.com or houstondowntown.com

COOL GLOBES FILM
Oct 9 Co-sponsored by Museum of Fine Arts, Houston Film Department, Fresh celebrates the farmers, thinkers and business people across America who are reinventing our food system. Fresh is an award-winning documentary film that features the most inspiring people, ideas and action. Free. Fri 7. Discovery Green, 1500 McKinney. 713.400.7336. discoverygreen.com

KUHF FILM NIGHT: THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI
Oct 16 Back by popular demand. Two Star Symphony performs the 1920 silent modernist classic film The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari. Free. Discovery Green, 1500 McKinney. 713.400.7336. discoverygreen.com

DOWNTOWN & A MOVIE: BEST IN SHOW
Oct 24 Presented by Downtown Magazine, Saint Arnold Brewing Company and Houston Pavilions. A colorful array of characters compete in a national dog show – and in the hands of master mock-documentarist Christopher Guest, the results are hilarious. Part of the weekend’s Barkitecture Houston festivities, see page 38. Pet photos, puppy adoptions by Pup Squad and more prior to the show. Free. Sat 6:30, movie 7:30. Discovery Green, 1500 McKinney. 713.400.7336. discoverygreen.com or houstondowntown.com

THU noon–1. Heritage Society Museum, 1100 Bagby. 713.655.1912. heritagesociety.org

DR. JAMES HANSEN
Oct 29 Premier climatologist James Hansen was the first to make the public aware of global warming in Congressional testimonies in the 1980s. He’s directed NASA’s Goddard Institute for Space Studies. He says atmospheric CO2 already exceeds safe levels and will offer solutions in a rare public appearance just prior to the Copenhagen Climate Conference in December. Tickets $14–$74. Wortham Center, 501 Texas. 832.251.0706. progressivforumhouston.org

$20–$70. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. 713.227.4SPA. spahouston.org

TOYOTA CENTER
Sep 16 Britney Spears
Sep 19 How Sweet the Sound Gospel Choir Competition
Sep 24 Pink

Oct 6 Kings of Leon
Oct 11 Vicente Fernandez
Nov 13–14 Women of Faith

TOYOTA CENTER’s concert calendar is continuously being updated. Check online for more info and to purchase tickets. Toyota Center, 1510 Polk. 713.4HOU.TIX. toyotacentertix.com

RUUTHIE FOSTER
Nov 21 Ruthie Foster HOB’s concert calendar is continuously being updated. Check online for more info and to purchase tickets. House of Blues, Houston Pavilions, 1204 Caroline. 888.402.5837. hob.com

36 FALL 2009 downtown
and Dorothy Vogel; new green films; and moon-themed movies along with much more. Go to the Web site for the complete screening schedule. Tickets $7, $1 discount for members, seniors and students, kids under 5 free. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Brown Auditorium Theater, 1001 Bissonnet. 713.639.7300. mfah.org

FAMILY FICKS
The first Sunday of every month, the MFAH hosts Target Free First Sundays, free days when families and museum guests can discover art by exploring the galleries and creating their own art, hearing a story, watching a performance, or catching a family flick.

IMAX FILMS
For show times and ticket prices, call the box office or visit the Web site. Houston Museum of Natural Science, One Hermann Circle Drive in Hermann Park. 713.639.4629. hmns.org

Through end of year SHARKS 3D Presented by Jean-Michel Cousteau, Sharks 3D is a breathtaking new 3D IMAX theater film experience that offers audiences an astonishing up-close encounter with a multitude of shark species, including the Great White, Hammerhead and Whale Shark.

Through end of year UNDER THE SEA 3D Under the Sea 3D will transport audiences to uniquely exotic locations in the Asia-Pacific region, including The Great Barrier Reef, Southern Australia, Papua New Guinea and Indonesia, to experience face-to-face encounters with some of the ocean’s most mysterious and unusual creatures.

FRESH FEST
Sep 11 Presented by Fresh Arts Coalition. Explore Houston’s alternative art scene with poetry, performances, instrument petting zoo, film screenings and more. Free. Fri 6–9. Discovery Green, 1500 McKinney. 713.400.7336. discoverygreen.com

MUSEUM DISTRICT DAY
Sep 12 See page 12 for all the info on this year’s Annual Museum District Day. Free general admission to 17 museums with free bus shuttles to every museum. For information go to houstonmuseumdistrict.org

ACADEMY FILMS
Ongoing Academy Film Center: Downtown is a co-presentation of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and the MFAH. The series is presented at the MFAH and Academy Film Center: Downtown, 601 Travis, 713.639.7300

ANGELIKA FILM CENTER
Ongoing Stylish cinema playing an eclectic mix of art films and commercial movies from major studios. Tickets $9 adults, $7 matinee, $6.25 kids, $6.5 seniors (note: if you park in the Theater District garage, they will deduct from your ticket price but you must bring parking ticket with you). Call or go online for list of films and showtimes. Bayou Place, 510 Texas. 713.225.1470. angelikafilmcenter.com

PLANET YOU 3D
Ongoing A film journey into a world you’ve never seen before, a microscopic adventure into the alien landscape that is your own skin. Tickets $8, $6 kids 2–12 and seniors. The Health Museum, 1515 Hermann Drive. 713.521.1515. healthmuseum.org

FESTIVALS & SPECIAL EVENTS
HOUSTON BRAZILIAN FEST
Sep 5 “Discover Brazil” is Houston’s first and only festival dedicated to exploring and celebrating the art, history and life of Brazil. Created and hosted by the Brazilian Arts Foundation. Tickets $10. Sat 4–10. Jones Plaza, 601 Louisiana. houstonbrazilianfest.org
It’s a dog’s life

For years architects, designers and builders have been using their creative talents to design and build both over-the-top and functional doghouses for their four-legged friends – a phenomenon that has come to be known as “Barkitecture.”

This spring Houston Pavilions, The Downtown District and Pup Squad join forces to bring Barkitecture Houston to the greater Houston area. The project will give local architects and designers a chance to display their creative skills to a wide audience; and to help raise funds for Pup Squad, an animal rescue group that takes orphaned puppies, kittens and nursing litters from the streets or other life-threatening situations and matches them with permanent homes. The festivities kick off on Friday, October 23 with a Yappy Hour from 6–8 p.m. in the Center Court at Houston Pavilions. A $10 donation is suggested. Then on Saturday, October 24 from 10–6 p.m., bring the whole family (yes, we mean Rover) to Houston Pavilions and celebrate your best friend in style with a festival, doghouse contest, silent auction and more. Barkitecture Houston is free and open to the public. The party continues at Discovery Green with a viewing of Best In Show, starting at 6:30 p.m. with pet adoptions, pet pics and more. Parking is available in the Houston Pavilions’ garage on Clay between Main and Fannin and a doggone good time is sure to be had by all.

FAB 40: ABBEY ROAD
Sep 12 Forty musicians bring The Beatles to life, performing Abbey Road and other fab favorites. Free. Sat 7. Discovery Green, 1500 McKinney. 713.400.7336. discoverygreen.com

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER MUSICAL SING-A-LONG
Sep 19 SWAMP presents a night of all things Buffy. Join cast member Amber Benson for sing-a-long, Buffy-oke, trivia and more. Free. Sat 7:30. Discovery Green, 1500 McKinney. 713.400.7336. discoverygreen.com

EAT.DRINK.CHILL.CHEER
Sept 24 A mixed drink and food pairing event … think wine and food festival without the wine. Guests will stroll through the participating venues at Houston Pavilions, such as House of Blues, McCormick & Schmick’s Seafood Restaurant and others, sampling and learning how to make signature drinks, tasting food paired perfectly with the cocktails and seeing, hearing and, in some cases, touching art performances from various local groups. An arts and culture crawl benefiting Houston Young People for the Arts (HYPa) and Fresh Arts. Tickets $30. Thu 7. Houston Pavilions, 1201 Fannin. 832.320.1201. downtownhouston.org

STRANGE FRUIT
Sep 25–27 From Australia comes Strange Fruit, a fusion of theater, dance and circus for their first Texas appearance. Check the Web site for performance times and be amazed. Free. Fri–Sun. Discovery Green, 1500 McKinney. 713.400.7336. discoverygreen.com

RALLY ON THE GREEN: DISCOVERING HOUSTON’S LEADERSHIP
Oct 4 Presented by the League of Women Voters and Central Houston. Meet your neighbors and potential city leaders at this forum for city controller and mayoral candidates. Free. Sun 2–5. Discovery Green, 1500 McKinney. 713.400.7336. discoverygreen.com

HERITAGE FAMILY DAY

BAYOU CITY ARTS FESTIVAL
Oct 9–11 More than 200 artists from around the U.S. and world hit the streets of downtown for one of the premiere art festivals in the country. Tickets $10 and free for kids 12 and under. Sat and Sun 10–6. Hermann Square at City Hall and Sam Houston Park, 901 Bagby @ Walker. bayoucityartfestival.com

TAKE ME OUTDOORS, HOUSTON
Oct 10 Presented by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. This first-time outdoors extravaganza gives the public an up-close and personal look at hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation. Learn more about the wildlife and natural resources of Texas, preservation and conservation. Free. Sat 9–4. Discovery Green, 1500 McKinney. 713.400.7336. discoverygreen.com

19TH ANNUAL TURKISH FESTIVAL
Oct 10 & 11 Celebrate the culture of Turkey with the Turkish Festival. You’ll have the chance to sample authentic Turkish food and pastries and Turkish beer and wine will be on hand along with Turkish tea and coffee. Live local bands, belly dancers and folk dancers will entertain the crowd. Learn about the biblical sites of Turkey. Tickets $5. Jones Plaza, 600 Louisiana. atahouston.org

15TH ANNUAL HOUSTON WOMEN’S FESTIVAL
Oct 24 A celebration of music featuring women-fronted bands as well as art, culture and community that has been held annually since 1995. Tickets $16–$23. Jones Plaza, 600 Louisiana. hwfestival.org

OSCAR ROMERO AWARD CEREMONY AND RECEPTION HONORING DR. MURHABAZI NAMEGBE
Scream on the Green


Tricks, Treats & T-Rex
Oct 31 Come in costume to observe chemistry that will blow your mind and enjoy freshly cooked bugs. For more information and ticket prices, call the box office or visit the Web site. Houston Museum of Natural Science, One Hermann Circle Drive in Hermann Park. 713.639.4269. hmns.org

Annual Puerto Rican & Cuban Festival

Feast with the Beasts
Nov 6 It’s civilized cuisine gone wild. The 4th annual Feast with the Beasts promises exotic fare from dozens of Houston’s hottest restaurants and live music with Big Bad Voodoo Daddy. Call or go to the Web site for schedule and prices. Houston Zoo, 6200 Golf Course Drive. 713.533.6500. houstonzoo.org

Dino Days
Nov 7 Fun filled fossil festival with dozens of interactive displays and programs including fossil preparation, fossil casting and more. For more information and ticket prices, call the box office or visit the Web site. Houston Museum of Natural Science, One Hermann Circle Drive in Hermann Park. 713.639.4269. hmns.org

Life is Living with Marc Bamuthi Joseph

Cinema Arts Festival Houston
Nov 11–15 Cinema Arts Festival Houston is the only U.S. festival centering on films by and about artists working in the visual, performing and literary arts. The festival will surround its theatrical screenings with live music and film performances, outdoor projections, media installations and more. Detailed info can be found on the Web site. Multiple locations throughout the city, including Angelika Film Center, Miller Outdoor Theatre, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Rice Media Center, University of Houston, Warehouse Live and more. cinemaartsociety.org

10th Annual Restaurant Crawl
Nov 10 Presented by Emerging Leaders. This year’s Crawl features four top–shelf stops on Main Street that are sure to make your mouth water – Mia Bella, Cielo Mexican Bistro, Collin’s Chop House and Cava Bistro. Event chairs Michelle Bramblett and James Simone have carefully selected the menu. You won’t want to miss this celebration of haute cuisine. Tickets $50. Fri 6–9. 60 Non–Member. 713.658.8938. downtownto.png

2009 Veterans Day Parade: Houston Salutes American Heroes
Nov 11 Join the City of Houston as they honor, thank and support our veterans and our servicemen and servicewomen. Wed 11:30. Smith between Texas and Lamar. houstonmva.gov

Enrichment Day
Nov 14 Would a grizzly bear prefer a watermelon or a coconut? Who is faster – a cheetah or their exhibit mates the Anatolian shepards? Find the answers to these and many more intriguing questions on Enrichment Day. Call or go to the Web site for schedule and prices. Houston Zoo, 6200 Golf Course Drive. 713.533.6500. houstonzoo.org

Food for Thought … or Just for Fun!
Nov 21 Presented by Houston Grand Opera and Recipe for Success. Explore food and culture, including chef demonstrations, samplings (of course) and performances of Hansel and Gretel and How Nanita Learned to Make Flan by HGO to Go. Free. Sat 10–2. Discovery Green, 1500 McKinney. 713.400.7336. discoverygreen.com

Via Colori
Nov 21 & 22 A very cool street painting festival that benefits the Center for Hearing and Speech. More than 175 artists will create original masterpieces on the streets surrounding Sam Houston Park. Free. Sat and Sun 10–8. houstonviacolori.com

Every Week at Discovery Green
– Always FREE
Pilates in the Park
Tuesdays Victoria Arzipe of TUTS’ Humphrys School leads the way to stretch and balance. 6–7. Discovery Green, 1500 McKinney. 713.400.7336. discoverygreen.com

Sundays In the Park
Sundays Inspired movement led by TUTS instructor and yoga legend Jerry Randall. Say ahhh. 9:30–10:30. Discovery Green, 1500 McKinney. 713.400.7336. discoverygreen.com

Zumba!
Wednesdays Zumba master Oscar Sajche shows you how to make your workout a party. 6–7. Discovery Green, 1500 McKinney. 713.400.7336. discoverygreen.com

Sundays
Downtown kicks off the season with their annual Holiday Spectacular and spectacular it most certainly is. It all gets going with the H + E + B Holiday Parade on Thanksgiving Day, but that’s just the tip of the proverbial iceberg. Don’t miss the nighttime Art Car Parade on Saturday, November 28 and be sure to take a spin on the Ice at Discovery Green. Of course the Theater District goes strong throughout November and December with some classic performances you won’t want to miss. Houston Ballet presents The Nutcracker starting Friday, November 27, Theatre Under The Stars has the family favorite Sound of Music on tap, Houston Symphony’s A Very Merry Pops always pleases audiences, Masquerade Theatre and Alley Theatre offer up their own takes on A Christmas Carol and Society for the Performing Arts wows with Bowfire: Holiday Heart Strings. Enjoy the twinkle decorations, great shopping deals and dinner and take advantage of the free trolleys running every weekend through January to make it all super easy to celebrate the holidays downtown. houstondowntown.com


Oct 15 Ian McLagan and the Bump Band – Ian McLagan rocked with the Faces in swinging ’60s London and rolls as an honorary Texan today. Don’t miss Mac, the quintessence of rock ‘n’ roll.

Oct 22 Blaggards and The Flying Fish Sailors — The Blaggards shake, shock, and rock traditional Irish music to give it a Texas–tinged flavor all its own. Thursdays 6:30–8:30. Discovery Green, 1500 McKinney. 713.400.7336. discoverygreen.com

EXPOS

HADA FALL ANTIQUE SHOW
Sep 18–20 Founded in 1964 by three local dealers, the first HADA antiques show was held at the infamous Shamrock Hilton Hotel. The show now consists of 150 dealers from across the country and around the world displaying virtually every type of antique. Tickets $10 valid for all three days. George R. Brown Convention Center, 1001 Avenida de las Americas. 713.869.5661. hadaantiques.com

HIGH CALIBER GUN & KNIFE SHOW
Nov 7 & 8 See hundreds of displays of new and old guns, ammo, gun parts, books, knives, sharpening tools, coins, camouflage and related items at discount prices. Tickets $8. George R. Brown Convention Center, 1001 Avenida de las Americas. 281.331.5969. highcalibergunshow.com

THETA CHARITY ANTIQUES SHOW Nov 19–22 This year’s Theta Charity Antiques Show is proud to present more than 50 premier antique dealers from around the globe, selling the finest in antiques from the 17th through 20th centuries. Tickets $10 at the door, $9 in advance. George R. Brown Convention Center, 1001 Avenida de las Americas. 713.622.3560. thetaantiqueshow.com

SPORTS

HOUSTON ASTROS
For schedule info and tickets, call or check the Web site. Minute Maid Park, 501 Crawford. 877.927.8767. astros.com

HOUSTON DYNAMO
For schedule info and tickets, call or check the Web site. University of Houston Robertson Stadium, 4800 Calhoun. 713.726.7500. houstondynamo.com

HOUSTON ROCKETS
For schedule info and tickets, call or check the Web site. Toyota Center, 1510 Polk. 866.4HOU.TIX. rockets.com

HOUSTON TEXANS
For schedule info and tickets, call or check the Web site. Reliant Stadium, Two Reliant Park. 832.667.2002. houstontexans.com

RICE OWLS
For schedule info and tickets, call or check the Web site. Rice Stadium, 6100 S. Main. 713.522.OWLS. riceowls.com

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON COUGARS
For schedule info and tickets, call or check the Web site. University of Houston Robertson Stadium, 4800 Calhoun. 713.GO.COOGS. uhcougars.com

TOURS

BAT TOUR BY PONTOON BOAT
Sep 11 & 25, Oct 9 & 23 You’ll enjoy an amazing view of the Mexican free-tailed bat colony’s emergence and learn more about these magnificent flying mammals that share the city with us. Reservations required. Tickets $20 for kids 4–12, $35 adults. Dusk. Allen’s Landing, Main and Commerce. 713.752.0314. buffalobayou.org

SECOND SATURDAY BUFFALO BAYOU BOAT RIDE
Sep 12, Oct 10 & Nov 14 These 30–minute pontoon boat cruises are a great way to spend the afternoon with your family and friends. First come, first serve, no reservations. 20 person max per trip. 10–2. Tickets $5 for kids 4–12, $7 adults – cash only. Sabine Promenade, Sabine Street bayou dock. 713.752.0314. buffalobayou.org

KAYAK TOUR ON BUFFALO BAYOU
Sep 13, Oct 18 & Nov 22 Celebrate Houston in a whole new way and join the Buffalo Bayou Partnership for a kayak adventure through Houston’s stunning urban wilderness. All equipment is supplied, including a tandem (two-person) sit-on-top recreational kayak. Reservations required. Tickets $60 per person, 9–1. Start: Shepherd Street, end: Allen’s Landing. 713.752.0314. buffalobayou.org

LOOKING BACK HISTORY BOAT TOURS WITH LOUIS AULBACH
Sep 26, Oct 3 & Nov 7 Learn about Houston’s rich history from local historian Louis Aulbach while cruising down the bayou. Reservations required. Tickets $50. 10–noon & 1–3. 713.752.0314. buffalobayou.org

BITES AND BATS ON BUFFALO BAYOU
Oct 3, 10, 16, 18 & 24 Sink your teeth into nibbles, suck down refreshments, and show your fangs to the bats on a 1 ½–hour pontoon boat tour hosted by the Buffalo Bayou Partnership. Tickets $50 includes pre-board reception and pontoon boat tour with bites, refreshments and bat knowledge. 713.752.0314. buffalobayou.org

DISCOVER HOUSTON TOURS
Ongoing Ghost tours, tunnel walk and rail tours, architecture tours and more are available. Tour guide Sandra Lord is the resident expert and has been...
HERITAGE SOCIETY HISTORIC HOMES TOUR
Nestled among 19 acres in the heart of downtown Houston, the Heritage Society boasts eight historic structures dating from 1823 to 1905. Each historic structure is authentically restored to reflect its original magnificence. $6 adults, $4 seniors and free for kids under 18. Tue–Sat 10, 11:30, 1, 2:30 and Sun 1, 2:30. 1100 Bagby. 713.655.1912. heritagesociety.org

MINUTE MAID PARK TOUR
Get a behind-the-scenes look at Minute Maid Park, including the historic Union Station, broadcasting booth or press boxes, Astros’ or visitors’ dugout, luxury suites and much more. $9 adults, $7 seniors and $5 for kids 3–14. Mon–Sat 10, noon, 2. Minute Maid Park, 501 Crawford. 713.259.8687. astros.com

TOYOTA CENTER’S BACKSTAGE TOUR
The one-hour backstage tour will take you behind the scenes of Houston’s premier destination for sports and entertainment. $7 adults, $5 for kids 12 and under and seniors. Toyota Center, 1510 Polk. 713.758.7715. houstontoyotacenter.com

FREE SELF-GUIDED AUDIO WALKING TOURS
Put on your headphones, hit play and let local insiders, captivating voices and an original soundtrack envelop you in stories of Houston’s past and present. No need to worry about which way to go or what to look for, we’ll point out everything along the way. Three tours are available: The Ultimate Downtown Tour, Museum District Walk & Roll and A Walk in the Park: Discovery Green Walking Tour. Tours are free and available to download to your iPod or MP3 player at houstondowntown.com or as a podcast on iTunes. Be sure to also download the accompanying map for reference.

Whether you’ve been a part of the International Quilt Festival for years or you’re gearing up for your maiden trip, remember that this fall the show begins several weeks earlier than its traditional Halloween weekend. The 35th annual festival at the George R. Brown Convention Center kicks off Wednesday, October 14 and runs through Sunday, October 18 with some classes and events getting an early start on Tuesday, October 12. Show veterans know that this is the big enchilada of quilting shows – in fact the festival is the largest event at the convention center, with 50,000 people attending annually. If you’re a newbie, plan to be awestruck by the sheer magnitude of offerings that are all things quilts (and crafts and sewing). With so much to see and do, take along some non-quilting friends so they can see what all the fuss is about.

Tickets $10. George R. Brown Convention Center, 1001 Avenida de las Americas 713.781.6864. quilts.com

Sew Fantastic
1001 Avenida de las Americas
713.781.6864. quilts.com
Edited by Angie Bertinot

Culinary convenience

Café Express has long been known for delivering on its promise of fresh handmade food in a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere. Last month, they trumped their longstanding traditional method of ordering by introducing new online capabilities. With this new service, customers make their selections through the Web site and pay for their food before arriving to pick it up.

In addition to online ordering, Café Express also has recently introduced a completely new breakfast service. Their A.M. Express menu includes a variety of options, from ciabatta breakfast sandwiches, to Southwestern tacos and fresh baked pastries. The menu items are grouped into complete breakfasts, starting at just $3.99, including your beverage of choice. 650 Main, 713.237.9222. cafe-express.com
17 Restaurant New American Found in the lobby of the luxurious Alden Hotel, this luscious and lavish destination oozes elegance. Detailed American cuisine and smart service make this a restaurant of note. aldenhotels.com. Alden Hotel, 1117 Prairie, 832.200.8800. L by reservation only; D Daily. $$$$

a+ bar and grille American Casual The Alden Hotel’s relaxed dining option where you’ll find a breakfast buffet and a great bar menu with tasty appetizers, salads, burgers and sandwiches every day of the week. A good spot for a fast lunch or a bite before the ballgame, you’ll also love their happy hour and cocktail offerings. aldenhotels.com. Alden Hotel, 1117 Prairie, 832.200.8800. B, L & D Daily. $$

Angelo’s Italian Drafthouse With a menu inspired by traditional Southern Italian cuisine, the specialty of the house is their hand-tossed pizzas baked in the brick oven located behind the 50-foot bar. From the pasta to the sauce to the bread, everything is made fresh to order. With over 50 beers on tap this bistro-meets-tavern concept will surely become a local favorite. angeloshouston.com. 711 Main, 713.225.3500. L, D & LN Daily. $$

Artista American Artista offers inspirational contemporary American cuisine and theatrical ambience with high ceilings, glass walls and sweeping views of the Houston downtown skyline. cordua.com. Hobby Center, 800 Bagby, 713.728.4782. L Mon–Fri; D Mon–Sat (Open for L & D on Sunday only if a theater performance is scheduled). $$$$

Atrium Lobby Lounge Contemporary Located inside the DoubleTree Hotel overlooking Allen Center courtyard. Relax after a busy day and enjoy your favorite beverage or a bite to eat while you catch up on the day’s news on the wide screen TV. DoubleTree Hotel, 400 Dallas, 713.759.0202. L, D & LN Daily. $$

Azuma Sushi & Robata Bar Japanese/Sushi Voted “Best sushi in Houston” by Citysearch.com, this new-age Japanese restaurant is anything but typical. The ambience is terrific, the sushi is innovative and fresh and the outside seating area provides great people watching. azumajapanese.com. 909 Texas, 713.223.0909. L Mon–Fri; D Mon–Sun; LN Fri & Sat. $$

Ballpark Café American Enjoy the all-American cuisine and a nostalgic atmosphere for breakfast, lunch or dinner. Just across the street from Minute Maid Park, Ballpark Café is a great place to have a pre/post-game meal. innatheballpark.com. Inn at the Ballpark, 1520 Texas Avenue, 713.228.1520. B & L Daily. $ 

Bangkok Room Thai/Sushi During the week be sure to stop in for their lunch specials including sushi lunch bento boxes and a healthy version of fried chicken teriyaki. Lunch combos start at just $8 and you can receive 10 percent off your bill with a theater ticket for that night. Bayou Place, 550 Texas, 713.225.1167. L & D Daily; LN Fri & Sat. $$$

Benihana of Tokyo Japanese While some restaurants allow their guests to view the kitchen, this Japanese grill brings the kitchen to you. Benihana chefs set up shop right in front of your table. The meal is made from scratch, and you can witness the entire session. The show is amazing and the food is excellent. benihana.com. 1318 Louisiana, 713.639.8231. L & D Daily. $$$$

Birraporetti’s Italian This Italian restaurant/Irish bar is a Theater District staple. Their delicious pizzas continue to hit the spot, while items such as the chicken picatta and La Dolce Vita have become standouts. Enjoy a signature dessert to finish the meal. birrarestaurant.com. 500 Louisiana, 713.224.9494. L, D & LN Daily. $$

Bistro Lancaster New American Located in the historic Lancaster Hotel, this cozy getaway is a great place to dine before catching a show in the Theater District. Their new seasonal menu continues Bistro Lancaster’s commitment to local, fresh ingredients of the highest quality. You’ll find hearty soups, steaming steaks and savory seafood. thelancaster.com. Lancaster Hotel, 701 Texas Ave, 713.228.9502. B, L & D Daily. $$$$ 

Bon Jour Café Deli Offering soups, sandwiches and salads. 945 Capitol , 713.237.0419. B & L Mon–Fri. $ 

Bouray’s Burrito Bar Fast Food A burrito bar with tons of ingredients and sides that allow you to create the burrito of your dreams. bourays.com. 609 Clay, 713.652.5999. L Mon–Fri. $$

Brazos Restaurant American Upscale seafood and casual American fare come together in a Texas–chic atmosphere. Newly refurbished, black booths and white tablecloths offer elegance and décor not typically found in hotel restaurants. Crowne Plaza Hotel, 1700 Smith, 713.495.7854. B, L & D Daily. $$$$ 

Brown Bag Deli Fast Casual Located in the former Antone’s space in the Houston Club building, Brown Bag Deli serves up tasty, fresh sandwiches “just like you like it.” Known for their fluffy, soft bread you won’t be disappointed and neither will your wallet. thebrownbagdeli.net. 810 Capitol, 713.224.7000. L Mon–Fri. $ 


B.U.S. Sports Grill and Bar American The ultimate hangout spot before or after a ballgame. Come and enjoy your favorite cold beverage or bite to eat while cheering the home team to victory. B.U.S. is also a great place to catch the latest sporting event on the big screen! Two locations. Before/after Rockets games, 1410 Bell. Before/after Astros games, 1800 Texas. $ 

Cabo Mexican The “Mix-Mex” grill is a spicy blend of South and Central American flavors. A fun downtown spot with the ultimate outdoor balcony for dining overlooking the streets of downtown. caborandomex.com. 419 Travis, 713.225.2060. L & D Mon–Sun; LN Mon–Sat. $$ 


Cafe Express Fast Casual Need to grab a quick lunch? Cafe Express is an informal yet sophisticated choice. One of the originals in the fast casual restaurant category, you can always find a variety of delicious entrees, salads and sandwiches. cafeexpress.com. 650 Main, 713.237.9222. B & L Mon–Sat; D Mon–Fri. $ 

Cava Bistro American Bistro Enjoy a diverse menu when dining at this rustic eatery situated on Main Street in downtown’s Historic District. Menu items include escargot, leek tart, ahi tuna, short ribs, gnocchi and whole red snapper. An impressive wine list, great service and affordable prices make this bistro unique. bellarestaurants.com. 301 Main, 713.223.4068. L Mon–Fri; D Mon–Sat. $$

China Garden Chinese A popular Chinese restaurant, China Garden has been serving downtown for more than 30 years. Their egg rolls and lemon chicken have become favorites. Friendly service and a nice atmosphere are additional reasons this spot is a must. 1602 Leeland, 713.652.0745. L Mon–Fri; D Daily. $ 

Chipotle Mexican Known for their large portions, this Mexican fast casual spot offers a variety of wholesome menu items. Chipotle is an affordable choice and with patio seating available, guests can enjoy their meal al fresco. chipotle.com. 909 Texas, 713.225.6633. L & Early D Mon–Fri. $$

Cielo Mexican This new upscale Mexican bistro offers patrons Latin American favorites in a sophisticated, urban setting. Cielo has a fantastic bar and happy hour menu for late nights, also a large patio for al fresco dining. Tequila and wine tasting dinners will be offered monthly. bellarestaurants.com. 300 Main, 713.229.9500. L & D Mon–Sat; LN Fri & Sat. $$

KEY TO SYMBOLS

These listings are not reviews but are a guide to downtown dining spots. “Recommended” restaurants are selected by Downtown Magazine editors and are based on food quality, menu selection, service, ambiance and value. 

$ RECOMMENDED

NEW JUST OPENED

AVERAGE PRICE OF AN ENTREE

$ – $10 or less

$ $11–$19

$ $20–$29

$ $30+$

B: Breakfast

L: Lunch

D: Dinner

LN: Late Night

For a searchable database of downtown Houston restaurants by cuisine, location and price, visit houstondowntown.com and click on Dining.
Collin’s Chop House & Whiskey Bar American
An upscale, intimate dining experience in an elegant environment evokes the memory of a private supper club where you dine while enjoying the sounds of Sinatra and Fitzgerald. Chop house favorites include steaks, rack of lamp, ceder plank salmon and double pork chops. A cozy bar features an array of high-end whiskeys and a wide assortment of wines. collinshophouse.com. 304 Main, 713.229.9500. D Mon-Sat. $$$

Corner Bakery Fast Casual A bakery cafe, offering fresh breads, salads, sandwiches, soups and sweets in a casual atmosphere. Located right on Main Street Square, you can’t beat the people watching or just relax and watch the rail line and Main Street Square’s jumping fountains. cornerbakery.com. 1000 Main, 713.651.0673. B & L Mon-Fri. $

Craiganales Italian Deli Italian Deli A family-owned Italian-styled deli located close to Minute Maid Park and the Courthouse District. Craiganales features a tasty and affordable selection. craiganalesdeli.com. 415 Caroline, 713.237.0000. L Mon-Fri. $

Decafe Fast Casual Located in the lobby of the Hyatt Regency, visit this marketplace cafe anytime, day or night, when you are craving something delicious. Decafe offers brick oven pizza, deli sandwiches, salads, homemade pastries and, of course, an entire selection of your favorite coffee beverages. Hyatt Regency Hotel, 1200 Louisiana, 713.654.1234 x 4088. B, L, D & L Daily. $ 

Domino’s Pizza 804 Main, 713.227.3030. $

Don Diego Coffee House/Columbian/Wine Bar This quaint neighborhood spot features Columbian breakfast specials served with plantains and rice. They have 100 wines by the bottle – all under $20 and feature Katz’s coffee. Desserts include pears soaked in wine with mascarpone cheese, warm chocolate cake and Italian cream cake. Its cozy atmosphere and free WIFI make it the perfect hang-out spot. 208 Travis, 713-228-3560, L & D Mon-Sun; L & D Fri & Sat. $

Don Patron Bar & Grill Mexican Good Mexican food and margaritas, Don Patron is great for lunch and a good spot for an after-work happy hour. Available on weekends for private parties donpatron.com. 500 Dallas, One Allen Center. B, L & D Mon-Fri. $$

The Downtown Aquarium Seafood The menu features a huge variety and offers something for everyone. While dining, guests are surrounded by a 150,000 gallon aquarium. Enjoy the sights and a great meal at this family-friendly spot. aquariumrestaurants.com. 410 Bagby, 713.223.3474. L & D Daily. $$

DownTown Donuts Bakery This little shop puts out a large assortment of breakfast goodies. Daily fresh baked choices include glazed, iced or filled donuts, bear claws, cinnamon rolls and turnovers and they also have kolaches – be sure to try the spicy boudin kolache. 1207 Prairie, 713.236.0500. B & L Mon-Fri. $

Downtown Hunan Café Chinese Fast casual spot offering all your Asian favorites. 613 Clay, 713.759.0515. L Mon-Fri. $

Droubi Bro. Mediterranean Grill Mediterranean This authentic Mediterranean grill offers up a quick and satisfying spot for lunch. Pita sandwiches are popular. 507 Dallas, 713.652.0058. L Mon-Fri. $

Eats Mesquite Grill Classic American Craving a burger downtown? Popular for their juicy burgers and great-tasting fries, Eats makes for a great lunchtime stop. Guests can make their burgers exactly how they like them. 804 Milam, 713.223.3287. L & Mon-Fri. $

El Rey Taqueria Cuban/Mexican This fast casual Cuban and Mexican eatery is home to tasty plantains and juicy roasted chicken. El Rey opens early for those craving breakfast tacos and is open late on weekend nights for night owls craving a Cuban sandwich. elreytaqueria.com. 233 Main, 713.225.1895, B & L Mon-Fri; D & L Fri & Sat. $

The Grove American Rustic This two-story, ultra-urban restaurant is found at Discovery Green, downtown Houston’s newest park. The menu features rustic American cuisine such as Gulf Coast seafood, steaks and signature rotisserie dishes. The Tree House roof deck bar features classic bar snacks and a see-and-be-seen atmosphere for cocktails. grovehouston.com. Discovery Green, 1611 Lamar, 713.337.7321. L & D Daily. $$$

Grum Bar & Grill Classic American A casual dining and nightlife spot with a traditional bar and grill menu including pizzas, sandwiches, burgers and steaks. Comfortable atmosphere with walls featuring work by local artists, a wide selection of beers, good food and friendly staff make this a place you want to check out. 306 Main, 713.224.6448. L Mon-Sat; D Thu-Sat. $

Under the same ownership as Barnaby’s Café, Brown Bag Deli’s welcoming counter-service concept is a great addition to downtown’s bustling lunch scene. Open only for lunch Monday–Friday, prepare for a line. It’s worth the wait. When you first walk in pick up a clipboard with a brown lunch scene. Open only for lunch Monday- Friday, be prepared for a line. Check off what you want – all sandwiches are made-to-order with top quality meats and cheeses with a choice of fresh bread and toppings.

Recommendations: The chicken salad is fantastic and they’ve got some good sides too, but the chocolate chip cookie is heaven. Take it from an expert – this is a really good, gooey, chocolately cookie. Mmmm.

Falafel Frenzy Mediterranean This quaint spot serves up all your Mediterranean favorites, including beef and chicken kabobs, hummus and of course falafel. 914 Prairie, 713.237.8987. L Mon-Fri. $

Flying Saucer Pub Fare Offering more than 200 beers, almost half on draft, Flying Saucer is a beer-drinker’s paradise. Excellent staff and tasty eats give the place an identity all its own. beerkurd.com. 705 Main, 713.228.7468. L, & D L Daily. $

Frank’s Pizza Pizza Home of the “late-night slice,” Frank’s Pizza has built a quality reputation for itself serving up delicious food in a great atmosphere. Not only can you grab a slice of pizza, Frank’s also serves up darn good hamburgers, Philly cheesesteak sandwiches, Buffalo wings, lasagna and salads. frankspizza.com. 417 Travis, 713.225.5656. L & D Daily; L Fri & Sat. $

The Grove American Rustic This two-story, ultra-urban restaurant is found at Discovery Green, downtown Houston’s newest park. The menu features rustic American cuisine such as Gulf Coast seafood, steaks and signature rotisserie dishes. The Tree House roof deck bar features classic bar snacks and a see-and-be-seen atmosphere for cocktails. grovehouston.com. Discovery Green, 1611 Lamar, 713.337.7321. L & D Daily. $$$

Guadalajara del Centro Mexican This family-owned restaurant consistently serves up tasty food in a welcoming, authentic hacienda environment. It’s the perfect place to bring the family or a large group of co-workers or friends. Great happy hour specials. guadalajarahacienda.com. Houston Pavilions, 1201 San Jacinto, 713.650.0101. L & D Daily. $$

Hard Rock Café Classic American What do you get when you mix a music-themed diner with an All-American menu? Hard Rock is a great family-friendly spot serving up items such as burgers, nachos and chicken varieties. hardrock.com. Bayou Place, 570 Texas, 713.227.1392. L, & D & L Daily. $$

Home Plate Bar & Grill Classic American A great hangout spot before or after an Astros ballgame. Enjoy American food with all menu items (except for sampler platters) less than $10. homeplategrill.com. 1800 Texas, 713.222.1993. L, & D Daily (may close earlier during off-season so call first). $
Hong Kong Diner Chinese A favorite of downtown locals, Hong Kong Diner will not disappoint with its expansive menu and delicious chef’s specials. Be sure to try their dumplings. $909 Franklin, 713.236.1688. L & D Mon-Sat. $

House of Blues Southern Classic HOB serves Southern-inspired signature classic dishes such as voodoo shrimp, Tennessee baby back ribs and the Cajun classic, Creole jambalaya. Praise the Lord and pass the biscuits, you can’t miss House of Blues’ famous Sunday Gospel Brunch. hob.com, Houston Pavilions, 1204 Caroline, 888.402.5837. L & D Daily. $5

**DE** Houston Tamales Factory Mexican Family recipes made with fresh ingredients. Great breakfast tacos and of course the tamales are the specialty of the house. houstontamalesfactory.com. 1205 Travis. B & L Mon-Sat. $


Humble Cafe American The Humble Cafe is a full-service restaurant serving up breakfast and dinner in a casual atmosphere. Courtyard by Marriott, 916 Dallas, 832.366.1600. B & D Daily. $

**$$** Hunan Downtown Chinese You’ll be impressed by the elegant décor and their Chinese cuisine is as impeccable as the restaurant itself. Guests can indulge in traditional favorites or try new creations. 812 Capitol, 713.227.8999. L & D Mon-Sat. $5

**$$** Irma’s New Southwest Grill Mexican Irma’s second location is a hip spot to satisfy a Mexican food craving. Enjoy tasty foods and great drinks for lunch or dinner. Only a few short blocks from Minute Maid Park. irmasmallwest.com. 1314 Texas, 713.247.9651.B & L Mon-Fri. Open on Astros baseball game days and nights three hours before first pitch. $5

James Coney Island Fast Food This local favorite has been serving delicious hot dogs to downtown Houston patrons since 1923. The chili recipe has stayed the same, but new menu additions include Polish sausage, a Chicago-style dog and a New York-style dog jamesconeyisland.com. 815 Dallas, 713.652.3819. B, L & D Mon-Sat. $

Jason’s Deli Deli Order to please, Jason’s will make your sandwich or salad exactly how you like it. jasonsdeli.com. 901 McKinney, 713.650.1500. B & L Mon-Fri. $

Jimmy John’s Gourmet Sandwiches Deli Try the tasty 8-inch subs starting at $3.50 for a “Plain Slim” (meat, cheese and bread only) or $7.75 for the “J. J. Gargantuan” which has five different meats. All subs are served on your choice of fresh baked French bread or thick sliced 7-grain bread or try the Low Carb Lettuce Wrap: all the regular sandwich ingredients without the bread. jimmyjohns.com. 820 Main, 713-222-9995. L Mon-Sat. $

Josephine’s Ristorante Italian Enjoy traditional favorites made from scratch at this family-owned eatery. Great service and a cozy, casual atmosphere make you feel right at home. josephinesitalian.com. 1209 Caroline, 713.759.9323. L Mon-Fri; D Mon-Sat. $5

The Lake House Fast Casual The Lake House offers family-friendly food, featuring burgers, Kobe beef hot dogs, salads, shakes, wine and beer. Located on Kinder Lake, there is a large patio where you can watch model boats race across the water or listen to some live music from the nearby amphitheater stage. thelakehousehouston.com. Discovery Green, 1611 Lamar. L & D Daily. $

**$$** La Palapa Fast Food A Courthouse District favorite, there’s always a line at this free-standing pink concession stand for breakfast tacos and hamburgers. 1110 Preston, 713.228.9620. B & L Mon-Fri. $

**$$** Last Concert Cafe Mexican Tucked away in the Warehouse District, this Tex-Mex cafe was born in 1949 and still supplies tasty food and local music today. Spend some time on the leafy back patio and you’ll swear you’re in your neighbor’s backyard throwing back a cold one. Insiders know that to get in you have to knock on the red door. lastconcert.com. 1403 Nance, 713.226.8563. L Mon-Fri; D Mon-Sun; LN Fri-Sat; Bar & Live Music Tue-Sat. $

**$$** Les Givral’s Kahve Vietnamese Winner of the 2006 “City’s Best” award for Vietnamese restaurants in Houston, Les Givral’s offers up a delicious menu and great service. Located in downtown’s historic Market Square. lesgivrals.com. 801 Congress, 713.547.0444. B Mon-Fri; L Mon-Sat; D Fri & Sat. $

The new face of 17

Chip Hight is the fresh face behind the culinary offerings at Alden - Houston’s award-winning restaurant, *17. “We’ve been very fortunate in recognizing aspiring chefs who very early in their careers have made a culinary mark in the Bayou City,” said Susan Ward Freeman, general manager for the hotel. “Chip is eager to bring our diners on a culinary journey, revealing unexpected combinations of progressive flavors that are certain to become *17 favorites.”

Houstonians are likely to find the up-and-coming chef at farmers markets each Saturday, sourcing products for the restaurant. His greatest culinary inspiration: Rick Moonen, the critically-acclaimed chef and owner of RM Seafood. “Rick’s a strong advocate of sustainable fishing and seafood, which I have a great appreciation and respect for,” said Hight. He has quickly forged partnerships with top local farmers and livestock ranchers and plans to give credit where credit is due, touting their names on his new menus.

One of the first changes Hight has planned for *17 is the introduction of three-course private luncheons for groups of eight or more. “We’re rolling this out in response to our customer’s requests for a leisurely, fine dining option during the noon hour,” explained Hight. The restaurant is also planning to debut a box lunch program later this summer, targeted to business groups who can’t take a break from the office. Included on the menu are “lox in a box,” with house-made smoked salmon, bagel, crème fraiche, capers and pickled red onion, and the “tea party box,” featuring a smoked pimiento cheese sandwich, chicken salad sandwich and spicy stuffed olives.
Little Napoli Italian Offering southern Italian items in a casual setting, you can opt for indoor seating or take a spot on their large patio right on Main Street. Their healthy options, such as whole wheat pizza crust and low-fat cheeses are a nice touch. littlenapoli.net. 1001 Texas, 713.225.3900. L, D & LN Daily. $$

Mandarin Hunan Restaurant Chinese This upscale eatery gives its guests an engaging experience in Chinese cuisine. Located in the Skyline District, Mandarin’s floor-to-ceiling glass windows provide a great view of the streetscape. 777 Walker, 713.224.1212. L & D Mon–Fri. $$

Mingalone Italian Bar & Grill Italian A dedication to authentic Italian cuisine makes Mingalone a special place. Just seconds away from all the major theaters, Mingalone is the perfect spot to enjoy dinner before or after a show. mingalone.com. Bayou Place, 540 Texas, 713.223.0088. L & D Mon–Sun. $$

Molly’s Pub Pub Fare A good ol’ Irish bar with tasty food to soak up the beer. Your standard pub fare — sandwiches, dogs and pretty much anything that’s not good for you. mollyspubs.com. 509 Main, 713.222.1033. L, D & LN Daily. $$

Monsoon Wok & Lounge Asian Fusion Monsoon features a unique combination of Asian–Fusion cuisine, a chic cocktail lounge and appealing architectural design. Always busy at lunch but a great happy hour spot. Try it for dinner before or after a downtown event. The Shops at Houston Center, 1200 McKinney, 713.571.7253. L & D Mon–Fri. $$

Morton’s The Steakhouse Steak House This award-winning steakhouse offers an outstanding menu. The downtown location features their new bar concept, bar 12-21, which includes an impressive wine and martini menu along with their specially priced “bar bites.” mortons.com. 1001 McKinney, 713.659.3700. D Mon–Sun. $$ $$

Muspy’s Deli Deli Indulge in a variety of sandwiches and salads. Hot or cold, Muspy’s specializes in creating your sandwich any way it’s ordered. 601 Jefferson, 713.652.4939. 1021 Main, 713.275.1912. 440 Louisiana, 713.247.9122. B & L Mon–Fri all locations. $

New Orleans Cajun Po-Boy Fast Food A great place to grab a fried shrimp or crawfish po’ boy. 648 Polk, 713.750.0007. L, Mon–Fri. $$

New York Pizzeria Pizza 604 Polk, 713.759.9800. L Mon–Fri; D Tue–Fri. $ $

Pappas BBQ Barbecue Voted one of Houston’s best year after year, this barbecue joint offers an excellent selection with Texas-sized portions. Traditional favorites such as brisket, ribs, sausage and ham are served with Pappas’ flare. Delivery and take-out are available. 1217 Pierce, 713.659.1245. L & D Daily. 1100 Smith, 713.759.0018. L & D Mon–Fri. $ $$

Paul’s Snack Shop Deli Sandwiches, salads and snacks to-go. 1213 Prairie, 713.224.4701, B & L Mon–Fri. $$

Perbacco Italian An adorable little spot located at street level of one of Houston’s skyscrapers, Perbacco serves up Italian cuisine in a modern and fresh atmosphere. Catering to downtown workers and the theater crowd, you always get quick and friendly service and tasty food. 700 Milam, 713.224.2422. L Mon–Fri; D Thu–Sat. $ $


Plaza Bistro Fast Casual Kick back at Jones Plaza and enjoy a quick bite to eat. Plaza Bistro also serves up treats during scheduled Jones Plaza events. 600 Louisiana, Jones Plaza, 713.236.8850. L & Mon–Fri. Also open for plaza events. $ $

Ponte Vecchio Ristorante Italiano Italian Don’t let the cafeteria–style service at Ponte Vecchio fool you, everything is prepared from scratch. You’ll find many delicious, healthy selections on the menu at this luncheon eatery, all at a reasonable price. alpontevecciohi.com. 507 Dallas, 713.659.9400. L, Mon–Fri. $$$

Popeye’s Fast Food 1116 Travis, 713.571.8600. L. & D Mon–Sat. $ $ $

Quattro Contemporary Italian Vivid colors, creative lighting and a unique design create a sophisticated and inviting ambience for guests. Located in the Four Seasons Hotel, Quattro is one of downtown’s best restaurants. Four Seasons Hotel, 1300 Lamar, 713.652.6250. B. L. & D Daily. $$ $$


Rachel’s Sandwich Shop Deli A great little sandwich shop. 421 San Jacinto, 713.223.3913. B & L Mon–Fri. $$

Red & White Bistro International A Chef’s Table buffet features a variety of world cuisines and an assortment of delectable desserts. Complement your meal with a selection from Red & White’s two 1,500 bottle wine towers. houstontoyotacenter.com. 1510 Polk, 713.758.7534. Open 90 minutes prior to the start of Toyota Center events; call ahead for reservations. $ $$

Red Cat Jazz Cafe Cajun Cajun style blends with Houston flavor at the Red Cat. Indulge in the distinct ambiance, cuisine and sounds offered at this laid-back spot. Live music nightly. redcatjazzcafe.com. 924 Congress, 713.326.7870. D & LN Daily. $$

Sambuca New American A hip, trendy and upscale restaurant right in the mix of Main Street. The menu includes a wide variety of favorites and combined with the live music, Sambuca is Houston’s ultimate supper club. sambucarestaurant.com. 909 Texas, 713.224.5299. L, Mon–Fri; B & LN Daily. $$ $$

SG’s Express Vietnamese Vietnamese You’ll find all your Vietnamese favorites here: vermicelli bowl, the sandwich, egg drop soup, egg rolls and many different smoothie flavors. 1225 Travis, 713.659.0200. L Mon–Fri. $ $ $

Shay McElroy’s Pub Fare This authentic Irish pub offers up a menu of appetizers, sandwiches, salads and soups. mcelroypub.com. 909 Texas, 713.223.2444. L Mon–Fri. $ $$


Shula’s American Steak House Steak House Dark wood, sports memorabilia and menus hand-painted on official NFL game balls makes Pro Hall of Famer Don Shula’s Steak House stand out from the rest. Become a member of the 48oz Club by finishing a 48-ounce Shula Cut. donshula.com. Hyatt Regency Hotel, 1200 Louisiana, 713.375.4777. B. L. & D Daily. $$ $$
Skyline Deli Deli
With their freshly baked bread, Skyline makes a great deli sandwich. 717 Texas, 713.571.0509. B & L Mon-Fri. $

★ Spaghetti Warehouse Italian
Making its home in an old warehouse, this Italian-American eatery offers up large portions for lunch and dinner. Traditional menu items such as spaghetti and meatballs, lasagna and pizza allow the Spaghetti Warehouse to cater to all ages and appetites. 901 Commerce, 713.229.0009. L & D Daily. $$

Spencer’s for Steaks and Chops
Steak House
An ideal location to enjoy a great steak. Spencer’s offers top-quality beef and boasts an extensive wine list. The atmosphere is light, engaging and conducive to conversation. Hilton Americas, 1600 Lamar, 713.577.8325. L & D Daily. $$$$  

State Bar Pub Fare
Located on the second floor of Post Rice Lofts with a beautiful balcony overlooking Texas Ave., this upscale lounge also serves appetizers and hearty sandwiches with your martinis and margaritas. thestatebar.com. 909 Texas, Suite 2A, 713.229.8888. Mon-Sat. $

★ Strip House Steak House
Only minutes from the convention center and Toyota Center, Strip House’s mouth-watering steaks are accompanied by a seductive ambiance. Red walls and carpet give this steak palace a unique interior. An international collection of wines puts the finishing touches on the restaurant. striphouse.net. The Shops at Houston Center, 1200 McKinney, 713.659.6000. L Mon-Fri; D Daily; LN Fri & Sat. $$$$

Subway Fast Food
405 Main, 713.227.4700. 805 Dallas, 713.651.1311. Daily. $

FELX Table 7 Bistro American
With their classic American menu, the eatery is the perfect place to enjoy everything from salads and burgers to blackened mahi mahi and turkey meatloaf lasagna. The best part—every item on the menu costs $11 or less. district7grill.com. 720 Fannin, 713.227.4800. B Mon-Sun; L & D Mon-Sat. $

Thepthidas Thai Thai
A traditional Thai restaurant located at the ground level of the loft residence Hogg Palace. The warm and cozy atmosphere offers a great setting for a dinner escape and is a local favorite. 401 Louisiana, 713.225.4900. D Daily. $

Travis Chinese Restaurant Chinese
All your favorites at affordable prices. 1122 Travis, 713.655.8787. L Daily. $

★ Treebeards Cajun Homestyle
A downtown institution for more than 30 years, Treebeards offers tasty Cajun dishes that are sure to satisfy. Favorite menu items include the chicken and shrimp gumbo, red beans and rice and étouffée. For dessert, try their famous butter bar. treebeards.com. 315 Travis, 713.228.2622. Cloisters at Christ Church Cathedral, 1117 Texas, 713.229.8248. L Mon-Fri. $

Trotf Restaurant Continental
Trotf’s menu is described as Continental with a Mediterranean and Latin flair and the ambience is casual simple yet sophisticated. Lunch buffets are available Monday through Friday. 400 Dallas, Doubletree Hotel, 713.759.0202. B, L & D Daily. $$

★ Vic & Anthony’s Steak House
This world-class steak house is one of the most elegant dining locations in Houston. It boasts rich mahogany woodwork and one-of-a-kind hospitality. Located in the heart of the Ballpark District and across from Minute Maid Park, Vic & Anthony’s is the ideal spot for entertaining business clients, a special celebration or for a pre/post-game dinner. vicandanthony’s.com. 1510 Texas, 713.228.1111. L Fri; D Daily. $$$$  

★ Voice Restaurant & Lounge Modern American
A fine-dining experience located in the historic lobby of Hotel Icon’s landmark bank building. The intimate dining room is extravagant, and the exquisite dishes from the Gulf Coast and South Texas emphasize fresh ingredients. A contemporary lounge with a modern setting for cocktails and an elegant after-work meeting place. hotelicon.com. Hotel Icon, 220 Main, 832.667.4470. B Daily; D Mon-Sat. $$$$

Warren’s Inn Fast Casual
The good times roll with a killer jukebox, excellent drinks, and a fun, bohemian environment. Quick sandwiches and other items are served during the day; you can order in from nearby restaurants at night if you have the munchies. 307 Travis, 713.247.9207. L Mon-Fri; LN Daily $

Wimpy’s Hamburgers Fast Food
Wimpy’s serves up a pretty good burger but they also have many other down-home favorites. 632 Polk, 713.652.0123. B & L Mon-Fri. $

★ Yatra Brasserie Indian Fusion
Indian dishes as well as some new recipes are found at downtown’s new Indian-fusion restaurant. Sample everything from Indian-inspired burgers to curried chicken at this atmospheric hotspot. yatrabrasserie.com. 706 Main Street, 713.224.6700. L Mon-Fri; D Mon-Sat. $$

Zero’s Sandwich Shop Deli

Zula New American
This eclectic restaurant is memorable with its 25-foot ceilings, mirrors and elaborate color scheme. The menu offers traditional favorites along with new, innovative items. zulahouston.com. 705 Main, 713.227.7052. D Mon-Sat. $$$

Zydeco Louisiana Diner Cajun
This cafeteria-style Cajun joint brings Louisiana dishes to the Hospital District of downtown Houston. Traditional Cajun items such as po-boys, jambalaya and gumbo make Zydeco a great lunch stop. A casual atmosphere adds to the enjoyment. 1119 Pease, 713.759.2001. L Mon-Fri. $

abc13.com | houstondowntown.com
With a fusion of culture, lifestyles and commerce, life around here is anything but typical. Look up and discover soaring skyscrapers designed by icons like Philip Johnson and I.M. Pei. Turn a corner and bump into Houston’s historic past or uncover a piece of contemporary public art. Enjoy major league sports, world-class theater, innovative chefs, funky hotspots, movies in the park, sidewalk cafes, outdoor festivals, pontoon boat tours and more. Welcome to Downtown Houston!
We offer a great line-up of restaurants, stores and services within walking distance for the Downtowner on-the-go. Whatever you’re after — the latest best seller, techno-gadgets, filet mignon, you can find it and more at the Shops.