SUMMER 2019
THE RIGHT STUFF
THE PEOPLE AND EVENTS THAT HAVE SHAPED HOUSTON
MEET DOWNTOWN.

Where sharp-sided skyscrapers stand tall over a whirr of industry, but below the surface something gleams. Moments and memories build into a synchronized dance. This is what the Houstonian hustle looks like. Not as the world sees it, but as it truly is.

Filled with people. Filled with moxie. Filled with warmth and drive and optimism. THIS is where it thrives and YOU make it thrive. This is our moment to show who we are. The inside of the HEART of Houston.

You are a part of our history. You see something in Downtown that no one else sees.

Tell us what you love about #DowntownHouston and your story may just show up around here.
A BANNER PROGRAM
Middle schoolers Lila Mankad and Caoilin Krathaus saw a problem and a way to solve that problem. Their desire to reduce plastic garbage bag waste has evolved into a thriving business that turns Downtown banners into reusable shopping bags. 

BY HOLLY BERETTO

OUR ECONOMIC ENGINE
As the region’s chief business development arm, the Greater Houston Partnership ensures the City of Houston maintains its status as a global, economic powerbase. Whether it’s hosting trade delegations, supporting small businesses, or advising stakeholders, the Partnership plays a critical role in keeping Downtown’s business environment robust. 

BY HOLLY BERETTO

STILL REACHING FOR THE STARS
It’s been 50 years since we put a man on the moon. What better reason to reflect on how Space City, and in particular, Downtown, has changed since that July day in 1969. We look at the events, both good and bad, that helped shape the Houston we know today.

BY LAUREN PATTERSON, LAUREN MCDOWELL AND AMBER AMBROSE
Moonstruck

Five decades ago, Neil Armstrong uttered the sentences that would forever cement this city’s place in history—“Houston, Tranquillity Base here. The Eagle has landed.”

With those eight words, Houston’s path was set. We would be a city known for big dreams and big dreamers. Downtown has been the epicenter for many of those dreams, and our feature starting on page 16 takes us through some of the people and events that have gotten us this far, especially the dramatic evolution we’ve seen this past decade. We don’t know exactly what the next 50 years will bring but we do know this: Downtown is ready for any challenge!

As we think about our past and our future, one thing is apparent. Downtown’s greatest strength has always been its commitment to economic development, and the Greater Houston Partnership is the primary driver of that engine. Part chamber of commerce, part world trade organization; the Partnership is this region’s primary business advocate. More than 1,200 businesses are members, and they are as diverse as the city in which they operate. The Partnership supports them all—from Fortune 500 behemoths to small startups. Read more about the work they’ve done and will continue to do starting on page 12.

We like to remind our readers that Downtown has a bright future. We’re sure of that in part because we’ve had a front-row seat to the growth of our city’s center. We’ve also been privileged to see the passion brought about by change-makers, including the two amazing young people featured on page 4. Middle schoolers Lila Mankad and Caoilin Krathauser want to make the world a cleaner, healthier place. They’ve taken action with an innovative program that turns our Downtown banners into reusable tote bags. Their initiative not only reduces waste. It also provides vital income to the gifted artist (an immigrant from Afghanistan) who sews the bags. They are an inspiration!

This issue is full of the best Downtown has to offer. Plate, our rundown of restaurants, starts on page 34 and you’ll find our extensive calendar of events and activities in datebook on page 44.

Be sure to visit us online at downtownhouston.org, where we always keep you up to date on what’s happening. And thank you for reading downtown!

Bob Eury
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
DOWNTOWN DISTRICT

Angie Bertinot
DIRECTOR OF MARKETING
DOWNTOWN DISTRICT

ON THE COVER
No one image could ever completely define our wonderfully eclectic city. So we decided not to try!
How do you like living in Downtown?
I’ve lived in Downtown all my life. Although I enjoy seeing my grandparents out in the country, there is nothing like Downtown. I love strutting through the streets, having everyone pet me and give me treats.

What’s a perfect day look like for you?
My humans take me to Discovery Green for yoga, where I practice my downward dog and make new friends at the dog park. After that, we get a snack together at The Lake House.

Tell us the weirdest thing you do.
Bark in my sleep.

How did you and your human parents meet each other?
After moving to Downtown, our city was hit by Hurricane Harvey. My mom went to the Harris County Animal Shelter and found me. We think I was born on August 23rd, 2017, just two days before the hurricane. When she picked me up, I placed my head on her neck, and she fell in love.

Who’s your celebrity spirit human?
NBA superstar James Harden. “The Beard” and I both rock some pretty distinctive facial hair.

Describe your parents.
They love to travel and take me along everywhere. We rang the Liberty Bell, rolled in the grass at Central Park, ate barbecue in Memphis and swam in the ocean at South Beach. They always have a warm spot on their bed just for me.

Describe a perfect day in Downtown.
Our mornings begin at Market Square Park. We make sure to stop at the dog park, where everyone knows each other and I can play with all my friends. After the park, we cruise over to Minuti Coffee for a doggie latte—the baristas there are the best and always give me two.

Is there a story behind your name?
When my mom was young and lived in Peru, she watched Brazilian telenovelas, and there was an actor who always caught her attention: Reginaldo Faria. Mom calls me Reggie for short.
On a rainy Saturday morning, Lila Mankad and her best friend Caoilin Krathaus stand outside the open garage doors of CORE Design Studio on Aurora Street in the Heights. Strewn across the sidewalk are myriad banners in various states of disarray. Some are dusty with grime from being outside for so long. Others have their edges curled up, casualties of wind and wear and tear. Amid the piles, their messages still speak.

`Thin as hibiscus petals, our skirts swirl up as we swing and turn` reads one credited to Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni.

`A shelter of live oaks ... a dark billowing ceiling held up by tortuous beams,` this from Brad Hipps.

And then, with the grinding whirr of an engine starting and a hiss of water, the girls begin power washing the words, the water spattering with a staccato rhythm against the banners lying on the sidewalk on an overcast Houston spring day.

Until recently, the banners they’re cleaning flew from poles all over Downtown, part of the Figurative Poetics banner program, which uses words and phrases from writers, celebrities and citizens to help tell the story of their personal experiences of the city. There may be commentary on what it’s like to be an Astros fan, or how hot the summers can get. There are whimsical looks at the lives of the well-loved dogs living Downtown, and there are thoughtful expressions of Houston’s place in a global world.

But on this day, those banners are headed for a different life. Caoilin and Lila are upcycling them into reusable shopping bags.

“The process takes a lot longer than we thought,” muses Lila, moving her dark hair out of her eyes.

“We get the banners from Downtown Management District and then we have to power wash them,” echoes Caoilin, wearing a straw fedora and flashing a bright grin.

“Yes, we clean them,” clarifies Lila.

“And so do brothers, sisters, friends and parents,” teases Alan Krathaus, Caoilin’s dad, as the girls nod, grinning at his tone.
Lila and Caoilin met at a Writers in the Schools Camp when they were in the second grade. Now, seventh graders at Hogg Middle School, they are four years into a project that began if not exactly on a whim, certainly not without a defined plan. The girls and their families live a few streets over from each other in the Heights, a Houston enclave long known for its tree-lined boulevards dotted with Craftsman homes and reimagined townhouses, a place where artists and entrepreneurs live side by side, united by their love of the neighborhood's funky past and gentrified present. The girls would often play in Woodland Park along Little White Oak Bayou. They loved that it was a cool, green oasis in Houston's hot, busy sprawl. “We were walking in the park, and Little White Oak Bayou runs right through it and we noticed there was a lot of trash,” says Caoilin. “And we noticed a large amount of the trash was plastic bags,” breaks in Lila. “It’s packed in the ground like a layer in the earth. It’s spongy like a mattress. We love playing there and seeing the animals splash around, but it was really sad about the plastic bags.”

So, the two then-fourth graders decided to take action. The started a petition that would encourage the City of Houston to ban the use of plastic bags, and generated hundreds of signatures on it. The number of signatures increased even more after a report about the girls’ efforts aired on KPRC-TV. But they realized that even as they were asking people to join their cause, that banning plastic might not be enough. What if they could show people another alternative?

Two years after their petition campaign, when they were in the sixth grade, the idea to encourage people to use reusable bags was born. “We thought it would be really cool to upcycle the old poetry banners” says Lila who goes on to explain, “Upcycling is when you use something for something else, when you make it in to a new product.”

The pair tried to sew the bags themselves, but Caoilin admits with a laugh “that didn’t work out so well.” They enlisted the help of The Community Cloth, a Houston nonprofit and microenterprise initiative that encourages refugee women to start their own businesses as artists. They receive training and peer support, and their efforts help them and their families find their financial footing in their new home. The women create scarves and shawls, bags, home goods and knitted items to sell online and at area fairs. That’s where they met Khatera Khorushan, originally from Afghanistan, who now sews their bags.

“She has such a good eye for color and design,” says Caoilin. “She cuts the banners in weird ways to make the bags.”

“the world was looking to hear young people's voices"
Once the girls give her the raw materials, she stitches them into shopping bags that measure about 14 inches by 14 inches. Each is unique, with different words and photos from the Figurative Poetics banners making their way onto the bags.

The bags are available for sale on Caolin and Lila’s website, bagfreebayous.org. They maintain the site, writing descriptions of each bag and taking photos of it. They also give each one a unique name. There’s Mango Sunrise, an orange bag with splashes of pink, and Infinite Jester, a blue bag with pink handles that shows the image of smiling guy in a striped shirt. Once bags are purchased, they can either be picked up at CORE Design Studio, or the girls will ship the bags to their new owners.

The whole effort is a lot of work, and it’s not all that Caolin and Lila do. They’ve gone to Austin to testify in front of the Legislature about the need for banning plastic bags (to date, there is no law in Texas banning the use of plastic bags in any city). They’ve received grants from the Pollination Project, which awards monies to changemakers around the globe tackling problems to make the world a better place. Caolin and Lila put that grant money back into their business. Neither girl takes a fee for her work—it’s strictly volunteer—so the cash paid for supplies for Khatera (who is paid for her work and keeps the earnings from bag sales as well). Another Pollination Project grant will go to the girls’ newest initiative, a website that will rank Houston restaurants based on how environmentally friendly they are.

Neither Caolin or Lila set out to be leaders in the sustainability movement. Caolin likes riding her bike around her neighborhood; Lila enjoys reading and playing Dungeons and Dragons. But, Lila notes, “the world was looking to hear young people’s voices,” about how to change things for the future.

The pair figure they’ve logged about 500 hours so far, and with all the banners outside the design studio (which is owned by Caolin’s parents and also does the design work for this magazine), that number is set to increase. They juggle their sustainability efforts with their school work, and don’t have any plans to stop. They’ve sold 160 bags so far and are nearly sold out of their current stock.

“I love how much they support each other,” says Miah Arnold, Lila’s mom, of the girls’ partnership. “And seeing how they’ve learned to be cooperative to make something strong you couldn’t make yourself.”

And even as the pair continues to push for the elimination of plastic bags, and take part in bayou cleanups, they will continue to collect banners past their prime, clean them up and give them to Khatera.

“With every batch, we’re just more amazed at how she can put together a bag into a piece of art,” says Lila.

And while bag owners may not realize it, they’re carrying a little piece of Downtown with them—and helping to save the bayous.
backstage.
Theater District Houston
Open House

Sample the season and get the best ticket deals!
Sunday, August 25, Noon–5 p.m.

Downtown Houston boasts seven world-renowned performing arts organizations that bring drama, laughs and inspiration to more than two million theatergoers yearly. Spanning 17 Downtown blocks and four performance venues, exploring the offerings of each resident company can seem like a daunting task. Cue Theater District Houston’s annual Open House, a cultural festival that gives performing arts lovers from across the city the opportunity to experience Houston’s world-class performing arts organizations in one afternoon. Equally exciting, attendees will find attractive discounts on single performances and packages.

Staged with fun for the whole family, Theater District Open House offers everything from ballet classes for beginners to demonstrations and tips on the theatrics of stage fighting and face painting to mimic the elaborate makeup for onstage performances. The goal is to provide an engaging experience for attendees of all ages, giving each a taste of the wide array of creativity and talent that is synonymous with Houston’s performing arts scene.

“Every year, the Open House is a great reminder that we’re all creative beings, whether we use that creativity daily or just on special occasions,” said Kathryn McNeil, CEO of Theater District Houston. “We try to engage the community in activities that not only expose them to the tremendous performing arts organizations right here in Houston, but also give them a chance to express their own creativity and carry it in to their daily lives.”

For theater enthusiasts looking to find the best deal on a season subscription or a coveted performance, the Theater District Open House is the largest day of discounted sales for both individual and season tickets from Houston’s major performing arts organizations. Reviewing the lineup for the 2019–2020 season, there are plenty of great choices and memorable moments ahead.
HOUSTON GRAND OPERA
Houston Grand Opera’s 65th season features a repertoire of operas in productions that have never been seen by Houston audiences, including several family-friendly performances. Highlights include:

- The company’s 67th world premiere of Javier Martinez and Leonard Foglia’s *El Milagro del Recuerdo/The Miracle of Remembering*. Set during the Christmas season in Mexico, the opera lovingly explores the themes of holiday traditions, familial bonds, and the dream of something more while contemplating life-changing decisions.

- Verdi's timeless *Aida*, directed by Phelim McDermott and featuring international star and Houston Grand Opera alumna Tamara Wilson singing the title role, along with rising star Russell Thomas making his role debut as Radames.

- Barrie Kosky and Suzanne Andrade’s wildly inventive production of Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*, which evokes a silent-film style by incorporating an animated world created by artist and illustrator Paul Barratt.

ALLEY THEATRE
Another timeless favorite, the Alley Theatre presents Agatha Christie’s *Murder on the Orient Express* during the annual ExxonMobil Summer Chills series. This plot-twist masterpiece also serves as the directorial debut of the Alley’s new Artistic Director Rob Melrose.

THE HOUSTON SYMPHONY
The Houston Symphony’s Bank of America Summer Sounds series melds symphony music and captivating concert experiences, such as animated feature films and orchestral arrangements of music by iconic artists. Highlights include:

- *Virtual Reality in Concert: Music Illustrated*, the first full-length orchestra concert of its kind featuring Austin-based artist and dancer Topher Sipes creating life-sized 3D images via virtual reality in real time onstage, choreographed to iconic works of classical music.

- An homage to the Queen of Tejano Music, the Houston Symphony performs Selena’s influential songs with a live orchestra.

The goal is to provide an engaging experience for attendees of all ages giving each a taste of the wide array of creativity and talent that is synonymous with Houston’s performing arts scene.
MEMORIAL HERMANN BROADWAY AT THE HOBBY CENTER
Memorial Hermann Broadway at the Hobby Center’s upcoming season is anchored by the Tony Award and 2018 Grammy Award-winning Best Musical and pop-culture phenomenon Dear Evan Hansen; followed by Cats, the beloved musical filled with treasured songs; Hello Dolly!, winner of four Tony Awards including Best Musical Revival; The Band’s Visit, a breathtaking production having won 10 Tony Awards making it one of the most Tony-winning musicals in history; Come From Away, the true story, based on actual events that took place September 11, 2001 and the days that followed; Fiddler on the Roof, the heartwarming musical filled with hits you know and love; Roald Dahl’s Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, a delectable treat of toe-tapping music and incredible inventions; Jersey Boys, the Tony, Grammy and Olivier Award-winning hit musical; and returning to Houston—Hamilton.

With eight performing arts organizations and hundreds of shows throughout the year, there truly is something for everyone interested in a world-class experience in the heart of Houston. There are also an unprecedented number of new food and beverage choices to make the pre- or post-theater experience an adventure as well. The best way to find the show for you? Mark your calendars for this year’s Theater District Houston Open Houston on Sunday, August 25 from noon–5 p.m. Experience all that these groups have to offer and sign yourself up for the cultural experience of a lifetime!
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HOW HOUSTON'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ENGINE POWERS THE CITY

BY HOLLY BERETTO

When Bob Harvey looks out his window from the glittering glass of Partnership Tower, he sees a city that’s moving relentlessly toward the future. Harvey is the president and CEO of the Greater Houston Partnership, and he says his offices in Partnership Tower, adjacent to the George R. Brown Convention Center in Downtown are at Houston’s front door.

“I can look out and see Minute Maid Park and Discovery Green, the Toyota Center and BBVA Compass Stadium,” he said, with no small degree of excitement. “It’s a great feeling. There’s such an energy to this city.”

The organization Harvey leads is charged with harnessing that energy. The Greater Houston Partnership is the 11-county Houston region’s primary business advocate. It does the work of a chamber of commerce, economic development organization and a world trade center, promoting Houston as a business destination to companies across the U.S. and around the globe. The Partnership offers a wide variety of programming and networking opportunities and engages members in a number of committees to make a positive impact in the community. The organization researches and advances policy issues impacting Houston at the local, state, and federal levels. Partnering with economic development organizations across the metro area, the Partnership seeks to tell others what Houstonians have known all along: the Bayou City is great for business.

Houston-based businesses realize that, of course, and their confidence in both the city and the Greater Houston Partnership is reflected in the Partnership’s membership. More than 1,050 companies belong to the Partnership, from Fortune 500 firms with thousands of workers, to smaller companies backed by start-up entrepreneurs. They represent multiple industries, including the ones Houston is known for, like energy and medical technology, but also construction, transportation, food wholesaling and retail. Members serve on committees, network with each other, develop business partnerships, and have access to events and seminars that help them grow their companies.
THE REGIONAL PLAYER

From its offices Downtown, the Greater Houston Partnership’s reach extends far across the region. The entity is responsible for driving Houston’s growth as a business destination, and its representatives not only prepare data reports on the city’s economic viability, they travel the world talking to heads of corporations—and host foreign delegations here at home—to convince them to come to Houston. Harvey estimates he and his Partnership colleagues make more than a dozen trips a year to other cities. He’s got a trek to the Middle East planned for next year; over the last nine months, the team has visited India and China, as well as cities across Europe and Mexico.

“The work we do shows just how international [Houston] has become,” says Harvey. “We spend a great deal of time and effort marketing and promoting Houston, not just in the U.S. but around the world. Many of the companies we work with already understand that we’re a global city, but we’re helping them become more informed about just how global we are.”

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS MUCH MORE OF A MARATHON THAN A SPRINT.

That work is paying off for Houston. Mitsubishi’s Heavy Industries moved its North American headquarters to Houston, a significant move, says Harvey. The engineering and manufacturing giant recognized Houston as a thriving ecosystem for those fields and knew its operations would grow. Meanwhile, Daikin, a Japanese corporation that manufactures HVAC equipment moved its North American operations to the region as well. Nearly 6,000 employees work for the company at its 4-million-square-foot facility in Waller County.

“That move took about seven years from our first conversation,” said Harvey, underscoring the idea that economic development is much more of a marathon than a sprint. Discussions and proposals can take years to put together. But once they do, the result is increased capital investment in the region. And when companies relocate their headquarters—or parts of their operations here—it becomes a scenario where a rising tide lifts all boats. Employees need places to live, so they buy homes. Neighborhoods grow. Businesses like restaurants and retail outlets open to serve them. Growth becomes a ripple effect.
BUILDING A STRONG, DIVERSE, 21ST CENTURY ECONOMY

Anyone familiar with Houston’s past knows that the city has always been one that pushed and pursued growth. From its earliest days as a sleepy bayou outpost, business owners saw its potential as a place where trade could flourish. Then came oil, and the Ship Channel, and Houston became a global power in the energy industry. It’s never stopped being that (its nickname is The Energy Capital of the World for a reason), but Harvey says the city learned a hard lesson during the oil crash in the early 1980s: putting all its eggs in the energy basket wasn’t the best way to continue improving its economy. The city made strides to diversify, building on the foundation of the Texas Medical Center, the largest in the world. Research, new developments and new treatments were TMC hallmarks, and that reputation as an incubator helped bring more life science companies to the Bayou City.

Harvey says the city continues to push for a diverse economy. While energy, manufacturing and medicine will continue to power the engines of Houston’s economy, Harvey says future economic development will also come from digital technology.

“We’re looking to show Houston as a place that is an integral part of a rapidly evolving world,” he says. “We don’t just mean consumer technologies, like things coming out of Silicon Valley or even Austin. Houston is rightly positioned to be a place where businesses that are working on industrial applications of technology can grow. Think plant or operations optimization.”

The Partnership has been working with key stakeholders in the region to develop the 4-mile long Innovation Corridor, that stretches northward from the Texas Medical Center, up through Hermann Park, the Museum District and Midtown, culminating in Downtown. Following the METRORail Red Line, Harvey says the Corridor has, “the right mix of amenities: housing, bars, restaurants, parks and museums alongside top-flight academic institutions and corporations, to present an attractive live, work, play option for companies seeking to hire young digital talent.”

Announcements of major projects such as Rice Management Company’s 16-acre innovation district in Midtown, anchored by The Ion innovation hub in a former Sears building, the Texas Medical Center’s TMC3 translational research campus, and MassChallenge, a global accelerator in Downtown, are all helping the city make a name for itself in the innovation space.

Harvey wants businesses to see Houston as a major player on the global stage. The city can sometimes be overlooked in the shadow of its coastal cosmopolitan rivals, but Houston has got game. In the past, Harvey says, much of Houston’s growth happened organically. A company would open and it might begin doing business with a firm in another state. That firm would see its partner’s success and decide to set up shop here as well. Now, Harvey says, the Partnership is pushing for a different model of economic growth.

“We are presenting ourselves more overtly as a competitive city,” he says. “In the past, we were largely reactive. An organization would ask us for statistics or data about a certain business sector and we’d prepare a report and share it with them. Now, we’re switching to a much more proactive hunter model. We’re going out and talking to companies who may not even think about Houston as a place for operations. We’re looking to target specific sectors.”

“The Greater Houston Partnership is like the glue that holds the region together,” says Robert Pieroni, director of economic development for Central Houston. “When companies look to move to Houston, they’re looking for consistent information about the region. And the Partnership provides that.”

Pieroni says that Houston’s rapid—and continuing—growth is part of what makes it appealing as a place to do business. Even when other cities saw economic slowdowns, Houston continued to thrive, both in the city core of Downtown and across the wider metropolitan landscape. During the first quarter of 2019, major leasing deals, renovations and new construction dotted the city from end to end. In Downtown alone, according to Pieroni’s April report to Central Houston’s board of directors, Two Houston Center signed leases with heavy hitters such as Direct Energy, Gensler and LyondellBasell Industries N.V. When it opens officially on June 1, Capitol Tower, located adjacent to the Theater District and taking up the block abutted by Capitol, Rusk, Milam and Fannin streets, will be 81 percent leased. Motiva Enterprises plans to add 300 employees to its Houston operations, and Quorum Business Solutions is looking to add 600.

“This really shows the strength of the Houston market,” Pieroni says. “It’s energized. And people want to be around all this energy.”

Harvey loves seeing the ever-changing landscape of the region, and he recognizes that the growth in Downtown helps present Houston in a strong light to the world.

“When you have dynamic growth centers, like we’ve seen in Downtown, it shows that we are a vibrant economy,” he says. “We’re a place where people want to be. We can attract top talent because we are a dynamic city.”

WE'RE A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE WANT TO BE. WE CAN ATTRACT TOP TALENT BECAUSE WE ARE A DYNAMIC CITY.

REDEFINING A HOUSTON “LOCAL”

That dynamism and energy can be seen in Houston’s makeup. Harvey says that in the greater Houston region, nearly one in four people living here is from outside the United States. The presence of more than 90 consulates in the city, coupled with the more than 145 languages spoken here, are tangible reminders that being a global city is about more than just having worldwide headquarters. Those statistics speak to the day-to-day of living in Houston, where people from around the world have come to live and work. The city’s many international cultural centers provide spaces for the newly arrived and expats not only to find familiar pieces of their homelands, but also to share their experiences with fellow Houstonians. As the country...
“We’re redefining what it means to move to Houston from elsewhere,” says Harvey. “People can come here from anywhere and feel at home. They can immediately feel welcome and see that there are places where they can get involved socially. I think part of that is the concept of southern hospitality, but it’s also the nature of Houston. Our first founders came here from somewhere else.”

He says the idea that people relocating and being able to find things as simple as the foods they loved at home is a huge consideration for companies that want to relocate or expand operations.

“We can make those kinds of promises to businesses, because Houston is so dynamic,” says Harvey.

Pieroni echoes Harvey’s statements and points out that Houston’s international culture isn’t only attractive to foreign nationals. He’s seeing a paradigm shift in how workers decide where to live, and Houston’s reputation as a place with a growing economy, an established international culture and somewhere that top talent gathers makes it an attractive center for would-be employees.

“It used to be you’d graduate college, you’d get a job and you’d move to wherever that job was,” he says. “Now, the trend is much more that young people in these highly skilled professions graduate and they look at a map. ‘Where do I want to live?’ The same thing happens when they want to change jobs. People are looking for experiences.”

Pieroni says that Houston provides all of that. With its temperate climate, access to global destinations via both airports, and a host of entertainment options like the city’s professional sports teams, craft breweries, theater, and any number of other quality-of-life factors, the Bayou City is definitely a place that’s highly ranked for relocation.

“Everyone’s definition of quality of life is different,” he says. “But in Houston, whatever your definition is, odds are you can find it. When it comes to the character of a place, Houston has a kind of energy that people want to be around.”

That energy is attracting talent across multiple sectors, and the Partnership is working to bring in more. He says the city will always be a hub for energy, but the organization is actively pitching Houston for what he calls “Energy 2.0.”

“The energy industry is changing, it’s not just about pulling oil from the ground and distributing it anymore,” he says. “We’re talking about renewables, about the technologies that allow traditional energy practices like drilling to be more efficient. We have the infrastructure in place here to help companies succeed.”

The Partnership is also continuing to promote the region in terms of headquarters recruitment. Yes, it’s home to nearly two dozen Fortune 500 headquarters, but Harvey wants businesses to also consider the idea of having their North American or other regional headquarters here. To that end, the Greater Houston Partnership has the support of CEOs from Houston companies. The Partnership, as a business representation organization, has always had multiple committees and advisory councils on which its members can serve. Having those members share their own experiences about doing business in Houston carries a lot of weight with corporation heads considering a move.

“It’s a good time in Houston,” says Pieroni, as he looks at several projects in the works for Downtown, noting that as companies on the fence about Houston see their peers succeed here, it moves them closer to bringing operations to the city. “We’ve got 12 projects underway [in Downtown] and five more planned.”

That kind of economic development may not be something that’s front of mind for people, but whether they know it or not, it affects their daily lives. An industrial tech company that moves into a Downtown office space obviously brings employees with it. But those employees need places to eat, which means restaurants take a new look at a location. Residential real estate is helped by companies expanding in or coming to Houston. The snowball effect for the region is largely positive. And, as the Greater Houston Partnership collaborates with other regional economic development organizations and Central Houston, it continues its clarion call of Houston as a place that is not only open for business, but ready with the talent, infrastructure and supply chains to make a company a success.

“We tend to take for granted this idea that because we’ve always grown, we are going to continue to grow,” says Harvey. “But we’ve realized that we need to do outreach and really ensure that we share the message that Houston is a terrific business center.”

Harvey knows that the Greater Houston Partnership plays an essential role in sharing that message. And it’s definitely getting out. The organization hosts more than 150 trade delegations from around the globe in its offices, and he sees the way people from outside the city react when they see the hive of activity outside his windows. The city core is vibrant with activity, as people head from work to entertainment options or back home. And more than any data point or what fellow business leaders have to say, that very vibrancy becomes a visible marker for what business life in Houston could be like if companies opened here.

“This tells the story of Houston,” Harvey says. “And it says that things are going well, but we have to keep evolving. We’re always moving ahead.”
Humans walked on the surface of the moon for the first time in history, and it was cause for celebration. What better way than an epic ticker tape parade in NASA’s hometown of Houston? Close to a quarter million people lined the streets of Downtown to cheer on the nation’s new heroes, astronauts Neil Armstrong, Edwin “Buzz” Aldrin and Michael Collins. It was the summer of 1969, and everything seemed possible.

This July marks a full half-century since that fateful Apollo 11 mission put the first man on the moon—a milestone that calls for reflection on where we’ve been and where we’re going; what events—good and bad—were pivotal in shaping what Downtown is today.

From the 1970s through present day, take a stroll through the last 50 years of Downtown’s evolution.
Disco was in, Nixon was out, and the oil and gas industry was fueling more than Camaros, Datsuns and Pintos—it was a huge time of growth for Houston and Downtown. Louie Welch ushered in the decade as the city’s mayor, serving the last of his five consecutive terms, followed by Fred Hofheinz (’74–’78) and Jim McConn (’78–’81).

The Astrodome was only five years old when 1970 rolled around and an architectural marvel of the day. A marvel of its own kind, the non-denominational Rothko Chapel opened in Montrose in 1971, featuring a series of 14 canvases painted by abstract artist, Mark Rothko, for whom the space was named.

Equally memorable was Elvis’ 1970 performance at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, as was the fact that the organization also launched its inaugural barbecue cook-off in 1974. Other notable performers gracing the famous HLSR stage in the ’70s included Johnny Cash, Freddy Fender, Eddy Arnold and Loretta Lynn.

Houston’s strong economy was pulling in people from across the country and the world looking for jobs and opportunity. Momentum built for the city, with a population explosion of almost half a million people between 1970 and 1980. And Downtown was at the center of it all.

1971
ONE AND TWO SHELL PLAZA OPEN TO MUCH FANFARE
Shell Oil Company hires Gerald Hines to construct a new headquarters, Hines’ first office tower in Downtown. At 50 stories tall, One Shell Plaza becomes the tallest reinforced concrete structure in the world.

1975
PENNZOIL PLACE OPENS TO ARCHITECTURAL ACCLAIM
Designed by Philip Johnson and John Burgee, the building’s two 36-story towers creates an optical illusion so that its appearance varies depending on a viewer’s location. The building forever changes the Houston skyline and architecture itself, as Pennzoil Place is credited with ushering in an era of postmodernism.

1976
U.S. BICENTENNIAL IS CELEBRATED AT TRANQUILLITY PARK, WHICH HONORS MOON EXPLORATION
Neil Armstrong’s first words from the moon change history: “Houston, Tranquility base here. The Eagle has landed.” In 1976, the park that would commemorate the occasion is designed as part of the U.S. bicentennial celebration. Three years later, it is dedicated to the 10th anniversary of the Apollo 11 mission. Architect Charles Tapley designs the park to represent the lunar landscape, with pronounced topographic changes in the form of mounds and depressions throughout the space.
1978
VOTERS APPROVE METRO CREATION
Years of business and population growth lead to a need for a regional—rather than a city-only—transit plan. Houston-area voters vote to create METRO and approve a one-cent sales tax to support its operations. The new transit system replaces the bus service owned by the City of Houston known as HouTran.

1979
METRO PARK & RIDE SERVICE BEGINS
METRO officially opens for business in January 1979 and begins its Park & Ride service to ease transportation for Downtown workers. Park & Ride provides direct nonstop service to Downtown from Park & Ride lots throughout Harris County.

FUN FACT
Tranquillity Park is spelled with two Ls, as it’s named for the moon’s Sea of Tranquillity.
Computers got personal thanks to IBM and Apple. MTV created a culture rebellion and Sally Ride was the first American woman in space. The 1980s had arrived. While everyone was watching to find out who shot J.R. on *Dallas* and envying the opulence on *Dynasty*, Houston’s oil bubble was starting to burst.

Leading the city through the roller coaster of a decade was its first female mayor, Kathy Whitmire, who was elected in 1981 and served 10 consecutive years through five terms.

In contrast to the extravagance of the previous decade Houston saw a period of austerity. Oil prices fell drastically, and 225,000 jobs were lost before it was over. The Offshore Technology Conference fell in attendance from more than 100,000 to 25,000 in the span of five years. Foreclosures were peaking and banks were failing. The Challenger disaster left a nation and a city in grief and disbelief. Houston was changing once again.

But it wasn’t all doom and gloom. Major celebrations marked the 150-year anniversary of the State of Texas and the City of Houston, NASA entered its 25th year, the Houston Press launched and the city saw a record-breaking performance (more on that later). Also of note: the birth of Beyoncé Giselle Knowles in 1981.

While times were often tough, the events of the 1980s acted as a necessary catalyst in the diversification of the city’s economy, with Downtown playing a vital role.

**1982–1983**

**HOUSTON’S DOWNTOWN SKYLINE BEGINS TO TAKE SHAPE, WITH 10 MILLION SQUARE FEET OF OFFICE TOWERS CONSTRUCTED**

The JPMorgan Chase Tower becomes Houston’s tallest building with 75 floors, followed by the 52-story Fulbright Tower and the Wells Fargo Bank Plaza, the second-tallest building in Houston and in Texas.

**1983**

**PLANS FOR HARDY TOLL ROAD ARE APPROVED**

Harris County voters approve up to $900 million in bonds to construct the Hardy Toll Road and the Sam Houston Tollway. The infrastructure project, which aims to improve regional transportation and ease traffic congestion to and from Downtown, is widely supported by the public.
1984

OIL BUST CURTAILS THE BUILDING BOOM

Houston’s economy, heavily dependent on oil, takes a hit. As the city grapples with the consequences of being dependent on a single industry, Houston is forced to begin to diversify its economy.

1986

TEXAS SESQUICENTENNIAL MARKS 150 YEARS OF THE LONE STAR STATE

On March 2, 1836, Texans declared independence from Mexico through a Texas Declaration of Independence, signed at Washington-on-the-Brazos. Documented in newspapers across the U.S., Texas’ Sesquicentennial Anniversary is celebrated with local parades, a statewide chuck wagon trail ride, and even a state-sanctioned 3,200-mile walk around the state’s perimeter.

1986

RENDZ-VOUS HOUSTON: A CITY IN CONCERT

French composer Jean-Michel Jarre draws a crowd of 1.3 million people on April 5 with a concert accompanied by a laser light show and fireworks display set against the backdrop of Houston’s Downtown skyscrapers. For a time regarded as the Guinness Book of World Records’ Largest Outdoor Rock Concert & Largest Crowd to Witness a Sound-and-Light Display, Rendez-vous is immortalized in the collective Houston consciousness as a tribute to the astronauts of the space shuttle Challenger disaster.

Astronaut Ron McNair, tragically killed in the Challenger disaster, was a friend of the composer and was originally supposed to play the saxophone from space during the track Last Rendez-Vous.

1987

WORTHAM THEATER CENTER OPENS

Seeking to shed its oil town persona in favor of a more cultured reputation, the City of Houston welcomes the $66 million Gus S. Wortham Theater Center. The Inaugural Gala Concert features performances by Houston Grand Opera and Houston Ballet and signals Houston’s ascent as one of the leading American cultural centers.
1987
GEORGE R. BROWN CONVENTION CENTER OPENS
After construction costs totaling $104.9 million, 30 months of construction and the labor of more than 1,200 workers, the George R. Brown Convention Center is unveiled as Houston’s premiere event center with the capacity to host large-scale national events.

1988
HARDY TOLL ROAD IS COMPLETED. TRANSIT WAYS GREATLY IMPROVE
Started in 1984, the toll road spans 21.6 miles upon completion in 1988. The route, which runs parallel to I-45, makes Downtown more accessible to the growing population north of Houston.

1989
SESQUICENTENNIAL PARK OPENS
After three years of construction, Sesquicentennial Park opens in 1989, commemorating the 150th anniversary of Houston’s founding. The 22-acre park costs an estimated $19 million and becomes one of several urban parks along Downtown’s Buffalo Bayou, adding to Houston’s green space.

After expansions in recent years, GRB has cracked the list of the top 10 largest convention centers in the country and was recognized as the first convention center in the world to have a permanent Bitcoin ATM.
The World Wide Web was still in uncharted territory, *Cheers*, *ER* and *Seinfeld* were reasons to get excited on weeknights, and there was a Houstonian (President George H.W. Bush) in the Oval Office. It was the 1990s, ushering in an alternative music revolution and a war in the Middle.

Houston’s population growth had pushed it from the fifth- to the fourth-largest city in the United States, and there were big changes afoot for city government. Mayor Bob (Lanier) ushered in the ’90s along with citizens voting to limit elected officials to three two-year terms, including council members and mayors. Plus another big milestone: the city’s first African American mayor, Lee. P. Brown, was elected in 1997.

Space Center Houston opened to the public, drawing tourists from across the world. That global spotlight also shone during the 16th G7 Summit, hosted at Rice University in 1990, bringing with it dignitaries and leaders from all corners of the world.

Meanwhile, Bagwell and Biggio had us captivated on the baseball diamond and KTRK’s Marvin Zindler kept us informed with his Rat and Roach report, helping us all steer clear of any slime in the ice machines.

And what was in store for Downtown? A whole heckuva lot.
1992

REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION COMES TO TOWN

As Houstonians enjoy an uncharacteristically cool August, the city plays host to the Republican National Convention. Delegates gather at the Astrodome, but the event attracts political groups and nonprofits, whose members participate in demonstrations around the city. One such group, the Women’s Action Coalition, joins with 75 Houston artists to organize a slideshow on a Downtown parking garage wall for three nights, accompanied by open mic sessions in support of women’s rights.

1995

DOWNTOWN DISTRICT IS CREATED AND BEGINS SERVICE

Created by the Texas Legislature, the Downtown District is championed by Sen. Rodney Ellis and Rep. Garnet Coleman. Government leaders know a vibrant city center is key to Houston’s success, and a concerted effort to accelerate area improvements beyond the level provided by local government or voluntary effort is necessary. The Downtown District’s mandate is daunting, but simple: transform the area into a vital core for living, working and leisure.

1994 & 1995

ROCKETS CLAIM THEIR TITLE AS NBA CHAMPIONS

After 27 years of league play, the Houston Rockets bring home their first NBA championship in June 1994. Led by coach Rudy Tomjanovich and center Hakeem ‘The Dream’ Olajuwon, the Rockets defeat the New York Knicks 90–84 in the seventh game of the series. The parade that follows sees more than 200,000 people line Downtown streets to celebrate.

The Rockets repeat their championship performance again in 1995, helped by new trade and former University of Houston Olajuwon teammate Clyde Drexler. The team proves its “Clutch City” bonafides by sweeping the Orlando Magic in four games, becoming the lowest-seeded team in NBA history to win a championship title.

1997

BAYOU PLACE OPENS, BEGINNING A TRANSITION OF DOWNTOWN TO AN ENTERTAINMENT AND DINING DESTINATION

The opening of Bayou Place creates an exciting family-friendly entertainment destination in the former Albert Thomas Convention Center. At the heart of Downtown’s Theater District, the complex includes restaurants, a live music venue and the largest private event venue in Downtown.

Note: The Downtown District is the publisher of downtown. THANK YOU!
The Women’s National Basketball Association (WNBA) begins play in June 1997 with eight original teams, including the Houston Comets. The stellar Comets go on to win the league’s first championship and become the league’s first dynasty, with four subsequent championships and the WNBA’s first MVP, Cynthia Cooper.

The Rice Hotel, opened in 1913, was known for hosting dignitaries and politicians throughout its existence. The night before President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, he stopped by the presidential suite after a speaking engagement.

Developer Randall Davis and Atlanta-based Post Properties convert the historic Rice Hotel building at 909 Texas Avenue into 312 apartments after a 20-year vacancy. The building is re-opened in 1998 as Post Rice Lofts.
The roof is operated about 80 times each year and takes about 12 minutes to fully open or close. The ballpark was awarded the National Honor Award for Engineering Excellence by the American Consulting Engineers Council (ACEC), which named the park one of the top 24 engineering projects in the U.S in 2000.

### 2000

**THE ASTROS MOVE THEIR HOME TO DOWNTOWN**

Houston, ever innovative, unveils the city’s first retractable roof sports stadium. The Astros move from their previous home at the Astrodome (aka The Eighth Wonder of the World) and play their first game in the new ballpark (then dubbed Enron Field) on March 30 to a crowd of more than 40,000. The Astros play the Yankees—just like they did to kick off their stint in the Astrodome in 1965. Jeff Bagwell claims the first hit and the Astros go on to win 6–5.

### 2001

**THE ENRON COLLAPSE SHOCKS HOUSTON, LEAVING MANY UNEMPLOYED**

In what comes to be known as one of the biggest corporate scandals in U.S. history, Enron Corporation, a Houston-based energy trading company, files for Chapter 11 bankruptcy on Dec. 2. At one point climbing to No. 7 on Forbes’ Fortune 500 list and posting a revenue of $111 billion, Enron stock prices plummet to $0.26 as those in-the-know scramble to dump shares while investors and employees are encouraged to buy more. All told, billions of dollars in investments, pensions and retirement savings as well as around 5,600 jobs are lost.
2002

HOBBY CENTER IS COMPLETE
Replacing the former Houston Music Hall and Sam Houston Coliseum, the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts is the first major performing-arts complex to open anywhere in the U.S. in the 21st century. Private donors fund the $88 million construction, which spans 248,000 square feet and features a lobby with 60-foot glass walls and a main hall with a dome ceiling fitted with fiber-optic lights designed to look like twinkling stars.

2003

TOYOTA CENTER OPENS
Toyota Center, new home to the Houston Rockets, stretches across six city blocks and costs $235 million. In its first year, the arena hosts more than 1.5 million sports fans and concertgoers. Many credit Toyota Center’s opening, along with Houston’s bid to host the Super Bowl the following year, with the surge of hotels and hospitality growth in Downtown, including the addition of the Hilton Americas—a 24-story four-star hotel connected to the George R. Brown Convention Center.

1000 MAIN JOINS THE DOWNTOWN SKYLINE
A formidable 518 feet tall with 800,000 square feet of space, 1000 Main Street (or as it was originally called, Reliant Energy Plaza) helps spark the revitalization of the Downtown corridor. The state-of-the-art steel and glass structure, which quickly becomes a recognizable landmark in the Houston skyline, helps draw larger companies to lease space and more developers to build in Downtown.

The playing surface is set nearly 32 feet below ground level, making Toyota Center the arena with the largest lower level of any in the U.S.
The METRORail carries around 48,000 passengers daily and is now one of the nation’s most traveled lines based on passengers per track mile.

2004

**METRORAIL RED LINE CONNECTS DOWNTOWN**

Originally called the Main Street Line, the Red Line is the first METRORail route in Houston. The 7.5-mile stretch from Fannin South to UH-Downtown opens January 1, giving Houstonians a fast, reliable public transit option to commute to their jobs Downtown. (Remember the 10 million square feet of office space built in the ‘80s?) The northern extension from UH-Downtown to Northline Transit Center/HCC opens December 21, 2013, bringing the Red Line’s total length to 13 miles terminal to terminal.

2006

**COTSWOLD PROJECT LEADS DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT**

The Cotswold Project is a Historic District revitalization and place-making initiative focused on pedestrian-friendly enhancements, landscaping, street improvements and beautification in northeast Downtown. A collaboration between the City of Houston and the Downtown District, the project costs around $68 million.

2008

**DISCOVERY GREEN BRINGS WIDE OPEN SPACES TO DOWNTOWN**

A 12-acre green space once just a few empty paved lots next to the George R. Brown Convention Center, this public–private partnership between the City of Houston, Houston First Corporation, and other stakeholders, is completed on April 13 and serves nearly 250,000 visitors during its first two months open to the public. The total cost of purchasing the land is approximately $57 million, plus an additional $125 million to build, landscape, and complete the project.

2009

**ONE PARK PLACE BRINGS RESIDENTIAL LUXURY**

A mixed-use property with dining and retail as well as luxury apartments, One Park Place is one of the first new residential high rises in Downtown. With Discovery Green close enough to claim as a “front yard,” residents at One Park Place are some of the first to enjoy the convenience of Downtown living.

Super Bowl XXXVIII is also notable for its controversial halftime show, during which Janet Jackson endures what comes to be known as a “wardrobe malfunction.”
Nine years into the decade, and it’s clear the Digital Age is upon us. No one goes anywhere (maybe even the bathroom) without a smartphone, selfies are as admired as they are ridiculed, and influencers are taking over Instagram—a platform that didn’t hit the internet until this decade, btw.

Same-sex marriage is legal in all 50 states while the space shuttle program has shuttered. Expressions and emotions have been digitized into the now-ubiquitous emojis. Gifs have made a comeback, and hipsters are making fashion statements, man buns were (are?) a thing and yoga pants aren’t just for yoga.

Welcome to the 2010s.

In Houston, Mayor Annise Parker breaks barriers as the first openly lesbian mayor from 2010-16 with Mayor Sylvester Turner taking the reins on into present day as the city’s second African American to hold the office. Floods from Memorial Day in 2015, Tax Day in 2016 and the record-breaking deluge from 2017’s Hurricane Harvey bring heartache and destruction, but the city continues to soldier on, with recent population estimates hovering around 2.3 million.

What does that mean for Downtown? Continued improvements, big plans and celebrations of what’s to come.

2010

MARKET SQUARE PARK REOPENS

Historic Market Square Park reopens as a destination for residents and visitors following the renovation efforts of the Downtown District, Downtown Redevelopment Authority/TIRZ #3 and the City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department. Its new iteration includes a cafe and dining trellis, performance stage and plaza, tribute garden, and dog run, along with new works of art.

Lauren’s Garden is named for Houstonian Lauren Catuzzi Grandcolas, a passenger aboard United Flight 93 on September 11, 2001. The garden offers a respite for meditation and remembrance with seasonal plantings, flowering trees, a plaza and fountain. The garden is a gift to the city from the Lauren Catuzzi Grandcolas Foundation.
HOUSTON BALLET CENTER FOR DANCE JETÉS INTO DOWNTOWN

Houston Ballet celebrates a new chapter with the opening of its six-story, 115,000 square-foot home called the Center for Dance. Located across the street from the Wortham Theater Center, the $46.6 million building houses nine dance studios and a dance lab that seats 200, along with artistic, administrative and support facilities for Houston Ballet and its academy. The new center allows Houston Ballet to significantly expand its education and dance training programs.

BBVA COMPASS STADIUM BRINGS SOCCER TO THE HEART OF THE CITY

The country’s first Downtown soccer-specific stadium opens to the public, hosting Houston’s professional female and male soccer teams, the Dash and Dynamo. The state-of-the-art venue is built to showcase the “world’s sport” as well as any European stadium with seating proximity and pitch positioning fans close to the action.

DOWNTOWN LIVING INITIATIVE PROGRAM LAUNCHES

The Downtown Living Initiative (DLI) program launches to incentivize developers to create homes or multifamily projects close to the George R. Brown Convention Center, Minute Maid Park and Toyota Center, in addition to the southwest corridor of Downtown Houston. The initiative requires developers to comply with essential guidelines that aid in creating supportive urban design with residential streets featuring street trees, enhanced lighting, active ground floor uses and appropriate sidewalk design.

“A thriving Downtown needs several things: new world-class office development, active retail leasing, expanded entertainment and dining spots and most importantly, a growing residential community.”

—Bob Eury on the need and objectives of the Downtown Living Initiative
2013
MACY’S CLOSES, MARKING THE END OF AN ERA
Originally opened as a Foley’s in 1947, the 10-story, 791,000-square-foot building at the time was called “the most radical and practical store in America,” by Newsweek. Rebranded as a Macy’s in 2006, the store closes along with five others across the country.

2015
BUFFALO BAYOU PARK OPENS, BRINGING PLENTY OF OUTDOOR RECREATION
Following a $58 million renovation, Buffalo Bayou Park reopens to the public in October. Historic Allen’s Landing, located at Commerce and Main streets, and the Sabine Promenade benefit from the bayou improvements. New innovative lighting along the paths provides safety to walkers and joggers even after sundown, and a new pedestrian bridge provides a spectacular view of Houston’s skyline, along with access to both banks of Sabine Promenade.

2017
SUPER BOWL LI
In preparation for hosting Super Bowl LI, a newly renovated Avenida de las Americas (now called “The Avenida”) creates a pedestrian-friendly area adjacent to nearby Discovery Green park, blending the park and the Convention Center seamlessly. On game weekend, Houston hosts an estimated 150,000 visitors, with Downtown at the center of the action. Discovery Green is the site of fan festival Super Bowl Live, a multiday event with food, music, and entertainment that allowed everyone—even those without tickets—to participate in the excitement.

ASTROS FINALLY BRING HOME THE WORLD SERIES
In a city reeling from Hurricane Harvey, the hometown baseball team becomes a symbol of hope. With the world—and more importantly, their city—looking on, the Astros compete in seven hard-fought games to eventually emerge victorious over the Los Angeles Dodgers. An estimated one million fans attend the Downtown parade held for the Astros’ victory in November.
THE KINDER HIGH SCHOOL FOR THE PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTS OPENS ITS NEW CAMPUS SPANNING 168,000 SQUARE FEET ACROSS FIVE STORIES

Designed by Terry Newell of Gensler’s Houston office, the sleek new site offers a canvas for artists of all mediums – with literal state-of-the-art facilities. The 800-seat Denney Theater sits at the heart of campus, surrounded by classrooms meant to inspire. In the new building, students have access to five performance spaces, studio art gallery space, dance studios, a recording studio, a ceramics studio, soundproofed practice rooms, a print-making lab, and a creative writing wing.
plate.

THE GUIDE TO EATING DOWNTOWN

KULTURE

Crispy Fish with wilted cabbage slaw and potato pave.

photo by Ralph Smith

Andalucía Restaurant & Bar Tapas/Spanish Dim lighting, large wooden tables and heavy iron accents provide for a cozy, rustic atmosphere. The menu features large dishes, such as paella for up to 16 people, and tapas that range from the traditional such as gambas al ajillo (shrimp cooked in olive oil and garlic) and empanadas, to veal tongue and oxtail. Lamar, 713.739.8000. L & D Mon–Fri, D Mon–Sat. $5

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. Azumedowntown.com 909 Texas, 713.223.0095. L & D & LN Mon–Sat. $5

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. Westin.com/Houston-Downtown. The Westin Houston Downtown, 1520 Texas, 713.228.1520. B, L, D Daily. $5

Barnaby’s at Market Square American A local favorite, Barnaby’s serves up oversized sandwiches, salads and burgers, putting a Southwest spin on traditional deli dishes. Colorful murals adorn the walls of the restaurant along with large windows for a perfect view of the park. Barnabyscafe.com 801 Congress, 713.226.8787. B & L Mon–Sat; D Fri–Sat. $5

Batanga Tapas + Drinks Latin This tapas joint whips up delicious dishes inspired from Spain, Brazil, Mexico, Chile—anywhere that sangria is served. The spacious patio is as good as it gets when it comes to outdoor dining with its festive twinkle lights, great music and stellar views of the Historic District and Market Square Park. Batangahouston.com 908 Congress, 713.224.9500. L & D Daily; BR Sat & Sun. $5

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 show. Benihana.com 1318 Louisiana, 713.659.8231. L & D Daily. $5

Bigojo’s American Biggojo is not your average Houston sports bar. The two-story sports haven named after Houston baseball legend Craig Biggio, boasts a large drink selection, upscale bar food, and seats that come with views of flat screen TVs as far as the eye can see. 1777 Walker, 713.654.1777. L & D Daily. $5

BirdDog Saint American The spacious two-story bar is a great place to enjoy live music, sports, and mingle with friends. Opt for any of their savory gourmet pizzas, the BirdDog Burger, or sit at the raw bar and indulge in fresh ceviche. Birddogsaaint.com 711 Main, 832.767.5574. L, D & LD Mon–Sat. $5

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. $5

The Bistro American The Bistro 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. $5

Blue by Massa Seafood This upscale and elegant restaurant offers up a fine selection of American and Seafood cuisine. Among the esteemed list of favorites, the Lobster Bisque is a standout. Superior service and a great dining atmosphere allow guests to enjoy a memorable dining experience. Blue also offers occasional live entertainment and dancing is highly encouraged! Massas.com 1160 Smith, 713.650.0837. L Mon–Fri; D Mon–Sat. $5

Blue Fish Sushi Japanese Not your typical Japanese restaurant. Don’t expect small, minimal décor. Be prepared for innovative sushi in a high-energy atmosphere at Bayou Place. Thebluefishshushi.com, 550 Texas, 713.225.3474. L Mon–Fri; D Mon–Sat. $5

Bombay Pizza Co. Indian Fusion Posing the cuisines of India with pizza, innovative creations are served on a homemade, dense, thin and crispy crust. Try the saag paneer, which is topped with fresh spinach and four cheeses or the Gateway to India topped with cilantro, tandoori chicken, garlic and artichoke hearts. Bombaypizzaco.com 914 Main, 713.654.4444. L Mon–Fri; D Mon–Sat. $5

Boo’s Coffee House American Part coffee shop, part bar, Boo’s menu includes everything from specialty coffees and cocktails to healthier options like Kombucha. Satisfy your appetite day or night with their breakfast, lunch, dinner or brunch options. Booscoffee.com 609 Clay, 713.652.5999. L Mon–Fri. $5

Bouray’s Burrito Bar Fast Food Bouray’s offers made-to-order Mexican and Vietnamese food using ingredients that are prepared fresh daily. Bourays.com 609 Clay, 713.652.5999. L Mon–Fri. $5

Bovine & Barley American Bovine & Barley is a beautifully designed urban bar and eatery with a heavy focus on beef and beer. The space has an industrial feel which is complimented by warm wood accents and huge HTX letters that hang illuminated on an exposed brick wall. Highlights from the menu include brisket tacos, meatloaf muffins on top of jalapeno mash, 1836 beer can chicken and a variety of burgers. Not to mention over 42 beers and six hand-crafted cocktails on tap! Bovineandbarley.com 416 Main, 832.742.5683. L Sat–Sun; D, LN Daily. $5

Brasserie du Parc French Located in the luxury high rise, One Park Place, the interior design and the menu at this beautiful French restaurant were inspired by classic Parisian brasseries and offers including classic dishes like rosotto, steak frites and crêpes, along with delicacies such as escargots and chicken liver pâté. BrasserieDuparc.net 1440 Lamar, 832.879.2802. L & D Daily. $5

Burger Theory American Located at street-level of Downtown’s Holiday Inn, Burger Theory specializes in gourmet burgers, casual American fare and boasts a beer-centric bar. They also serve a mean breakfast! 1616 Main St. B, L, D & LN. $5

Buzz Barista Coffee House This full-service espresso bar offers much more than caffeinated beverages for a morning fix. People on the go can grab fresh-baked pastries, Naked juices, yogurt parfaits and fruit cups along with their brewed delights. 811 Main, 713.228.3033. B & L Mon–Fri. $5

The Cafe American Located in the lobby of the Hilton Americas. An elaborate buffet is offered for breakfast, with a la carte selections from the menu available for lunch and dinner. Hilton Americas, 1600 Lamar, 713.739.8000. B, L, D & LN Daily. $5

Cafe Cosmopolita Coffee House Inspired by the cultural and gastronomical diversity in European cafes, this local coffee shop offers a surplus of coffee, pastries made from scratch, breakfast items, and natural smoothies. CafeCosmopolita.com 1625 Main Street, Suite A-1. 708.890.2041. B Daily. $5

Cafe Express Fast Casual Need to grab a quick lunch? Cafe Express is an informal yet sophisticated choice. You can always find a variety of delicious entrees, salads and sandwiches. Cafeexpress.com 650 Main, 713.237.9222. B & L Mon–Sat. $5

Caffe Di Firenze Coffee House Inspired by the ideals of the iconic cafe culture in Florence, Caffe Di Firenze brings gelato, espresso, teas, pastries, paninis and an authentic Italian environment to the historic Henry Beshare building. Cafedifirenze.com 910 Prairie, B & L Daily. $5

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. 1602 Leeland, 713.652.0745. L Mon–Fri; D Daily. $5

Chipotle Mexican Known for its large portions, this Mexican fast casual spot offers a variety of wholesome menu items. Chipotle.com 909 Texas, 713.225.6633. L & Early D Mon–Fri. $5

Christian’s Tailgate American Christian’s Tailgate has arguably one of the best burgers in town and now you can enjoy them Downtown! The notable Houston burger joint in Downtown’s Historic District boasts daily food specials, 30 beers on tap, 40+ TVs, a pool table, shuffle board, video games and an awesome outdoor patio! christiantailgate.com 1012 Congress, 281.556.1010. L, D & LN. $5

Conservatory Beer Garden & Food Hall Conservatory Beer Garden & Food Hall is the first food hall in Houston to showcase a curated list of food vendors, including Moku Bar, Arte Pizzeria, Eazy Does It, Noble Rot Wine Bar, Treacherous Leches, The Ph Spot, and El Burro and The Bull each of which serve elevated yet casual cuisine. The food hall also features pop-up food carts serving specialty items every week and a beer garden with 60 beers on tap serving an eclectic mix of local craft breweries, foreign imports, and wine. Conservatoryhxl.com 1010 Prairie, 713.398.7697. L, D & LN Daily. $5
KULTURE

Downtown’s Urban Comfort Kitchen

Avenida Houston presents a melting pot of cultures to enjoy as you eat, sip, and stroll through the heart of Downtown. So it comes as no surprise that Marcus Davis, creator of Midtown staple The Breakfast Klub, opened his “urban komfort kitchen” right in the center of it all.

“We really care about the freshness, quality, and ingredients we use, and that’s what I teach my team.”

—Executive Chef Dawn Burrell
Kulture sits on the ground floor of Avenida Houston’s Partnership Tower and features the cuisine of the African diaspora. Executive Chef Dawn Burrell heads the kitchen, adding a creative spin to Caribbean-Southern dishes like her cabbage wedge, a quarter-cut cabbage braised and seared in butter, soubise sauce, and bacon-shallot vinaigrette, and her fried poussin (chicken)—a dish that’s almost too pretty to eat. Dishes are made from scratch, down to the bread used in the exquisite bread pudding. Burrell prides herself on having a good palate when building flavors or trying to replicate those that she may have only tasted once.

Guests can pop in for lunch and dinner Monday through Saturday, find comfort in the menu and trust that Burrell’s dishes will evoke happy food memories with every bite. “What we’re doing here is re-imagining these dishes so that they can be elevated to higher dining experiences,” says the former Olympic athlete turned acclaimed chef. “We really care about the freshness, quality, and ingredients we use, and that’s what I teach my team.”

Complementing Burrell’s culturally elevated menu is the equally elevated décor at Kulture. Tall glass windows illuminate the space with plenty of natural lighting, and vibrant furniture invites guests to lounge. Local art by acclaimed Houston artist, Robert Hodge, hangs tastefully on the walls, and it’s hard to miss the dedicated art display nestled in the corner showcasing ingredients, details, tools and artifacts that are representative of African culture. In addition to the rotating art, weekly musical performances by local jazz and R&B artists set the mood as guests relax at the bar and salon dinners take over the restaurant twice a month as an added form of culinary art expression.

“Kulture is a culinary art museum,” comments Burrell. “That’s who we are culinary speaking and what I try to mirror when I’m making dishes.”
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. $ Coterie American
Coterie brings a café-style dining experience right to the Historic Market Square neighborhood. The luxurious cafe is located on the ground floor of Market Square Tower and offers on-the-go pastry favorites, Neapolitan-style pizzas, burgers and other tasty menu items. coteriehouston.com. 737 Preston. B, L, D Daily. $$

Diana American Grill
A nestled inside the Hobby Center, this upscale restaurant is an ideal place for pre-show dining and Downtown lunches. Menu items include a lobster cocktail, red snapper with gulf crab, ribeye steak and other delectable dishes created by James Beard Award-winning chef Robert Del Grande. hobbycenter.com. 800 Bagby, 713.315.2562. L & D Tue–Sun. $$

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. $$

Eats Mesquite Grill
Classic American

El Big Bad Mexican
Brought to you by the El Gran Malo crew, this casual Tex-Mex restaurant brings hand-crafted tequila infusions, specialty margaritas and craft beers to the table. The gastrocantina-inspired menu is chock full of tasty tacos with fresh toppings like pomegranate salsa, charred scallions, pumpkin seeds and more. elbigbad.com. 419 Travis, 713.229.8181. L, D & LN Mon–Fri; D & LN Sat & Sun, BR Sun. $$

Fabian’s Latin Flavors
Looking for dinner with a side of salsa dancing? If so, Fabian’s Latin Flavors is the place for you! From carne asada tacos and empanadas to popular Salvadorian beer and salsa nights, you’ll get a taste of Latin America at this Downtown hotspot. fabianslatinflavors.com. 301 Main, 713.227.0440. L & D Daily. $$

Finn Food Hall Food Hall
The upscale food hall serves delicious cuisine from 10 independently operated eating establishments including Craft Burger, Oddball Eats, Goode Co. Taqueria, Dish Society, Yong, Amaya Coffee, Malá Sichuan Bistro, Sit Lo and Low Tide. Come eat your heart out during breakfast, brunch, and dinner or enjoy a cocktail at either of Finn Hall’s elevated bars during happy hour. 712 Main, 713.357.5115. B, L, D, LD Daily. $$

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. beerkund.com. 705 Main, 713.228.7468. L, D & LN Daily. $ 

Foundation Room American
Escape, indulge and elevate your nightlife in Foundation Room at House of Blues, Houston’s hub downtown hideaway. Foundation Room features an elegant private dining room and plush lounge perfect for after-dinner drinks and socializing. From starters like seared jumbo shrimp in a Cajun lemon beurre blanc to the 16oz. cowboy ribeye, the inspired menu draws from seasonal and international flavors with a distinctively Texas twist hob.com. GreenStreet, 1204 Caroline, 888.402.5837. D Wed–Sat. $$

Frank’s Pizza Pizza
Home of the “late-night slice,” Frank’s Pizza has built a 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; LN Fri & Sat. $$

Grotto Ristorante Italiano
This trendy Italian eatery is conveniently located on Downtown’s restaurant row—Avenida Houston! Enjoy spectacular views of nearby Minute Maid Park and Discovery Green as you experience a revolutionized take on Italian cuisine from small and shareable plates, to fresh salads and traditional dishes like Neapolitan thin crust pizzas and house made pastas. grottorestaurant.com. 1001 Avenida de las Americas, 713.658.0752. L & D Daily. $ $$$

The Grove American Rustic
This two-story, ultra-urban restaurant is found at Discovery Green. The menu features rustic American cuisine such as Gulf Coast seafood, steaks and signature rotisserie dishes. 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 new, very cool environment. It’s the perfect place to bring the family or a large group of coworkers or friends. Great happy hour specials. guadalajarahacienda.com. GreenStreet, 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 & LN Daily. $$

Hearsay gastro lounge New American
Located in a beautifully refurbished historic building, this upscale restaurant and lounge serves up delicious salads, sandwiches and entrees. They feature an extensive wine list, numerous beers on draft and bottle and premium liquors with a focus on Scotch whisky. hearsayhouston.com. 218 Travis, 713.225.8079. L Daily; D Mon–Sat; LN Fri–Sat. $$

Hearsay on the Green American
Located inside the Enthusiast Suites in Downtown’s Convention District, this upscale restaurant and lounge serves up the finest craft cocktails, New American dishes and a chic dining experience. The drink menu features an extensive wine list, numerous bottle and draft beers and premium liquors. hearsayhouston.com. 1515 Dallas, 832.377.3362. L & D Daily (may close earlier during off-season so call first). $$

Home Plate Bar & Grill Classic American

House of Blues Restaurant and Bar American
From daytime to playtime, House of Blues Restaurant & Bar draws inspiration from across the South, including iconic dishes, signature Southern-inspired recipes, as well as a wide range of burgers, sandwiches and salads. Enjoy live music most nights and don’t miss Houston’s best Jazz ‘n Blues Brunch every Saturday! hob.com. GreenStreet, 1204 Caroline, 888.402.5837. L & D Daily. $$

Hubcap Grill American
Small but packs a punch. One of the best burger joints in town. 1111 Prairie, 713.223.5885. L Mon–Sat. $$

Irm’s Mexican
Irm Galvan has been crowned Houston’s Tex-Mex goddess. This authentic spot is a longtime favorite among Houston politicos and downtown business people. Traditional, home-cooked Mexican cuisine is served for breakfast and lunch on weekdays. 22 North Chenoweth, 713.222.0767. B & L Mon–Fri; D Thu–Sat. $$

Irm’s Southwest Grill Mexican
Irm’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. irmassouthwest.com. 1475 Texas, 713.247.9651. L & D Mon–Sat. $$

The Isles Eatery & Rhum Bar Caribbean
The restaurant offers flavorful Caribbean dishes including Mogongo and Ensalada Calamari de Pulpo, along with an astonishing collection of 56 plus island rums used to create custom cocktails rooted in the regional rhythms of the islands. isleseateryandbar.com. 1515 Pease, 713.739.9039. L, D, LN Tue–Sun. $$

Jackson St. BBQ Barbecue
This laid-back spot by renowned Houston chefs Bryan Caswell, Bill Floyd and Greg Gatlin offers smoked brisket, ribs, chicken, sausage and classic southern fixins like potato salad, baked beans, collard greens and cole slaw! Conveniently located across from Minute Maid Park, stop by this Downtown favorite before or after Astros games! jacksonstbbqhouston.com. 209 Jackson St, 713.224.2400. L & D Sat–Sun. $$
Jason’s 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 is a Gourmet Sandwiches Deli
All subs are served on your choice of fresh-baked French bread or thick-sliced seven-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. $  

Kulture Caribbean
Dubbeld an “urban comfort food,” the restaurant explores food, spirits, art and music through cultural contributions of the African diaspora, including Caribbean and Southern cuisine and daily happy hour specials in a casually elevated, yet comfortable dining atmosphere. 701 Avenida De Las Americas, 713.528.8561. B & D. $$

The Lake House
Fast Casual
Offering 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 stage. thelakehousehouston.com. Discovery Green, 1500 McKinney, L & Early D Mon–Sun. $$  

La Calle Mexican
Located in Downtown’s historic Market Square, this cozy restaurant serves authentic Mexican street tacos, tortas and tostadas. Your visit isn’t complete without an Agua Fresca or pit stop at the funky digs’ lucha libre themed bar, La Cantina! In addition to the savory tacos, you’ll find plenty of Mexican beers, drafts, and frozen margaritas. lcalletacos.com. 909 Franklin, 832.735.8226. L, D & LN Daily. $  

La Palapa
Fast Food
A Courthouse District favorite, there’s always a line at this free-standing pink building. Fresh seafood, 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 stage. thelakehousehouston.com. Discovery Green, 1500 McKinney, L & Early D Mon–Sun. $$

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. lastconcert.com. 1403 Nance, 713.226.8563. L Mon–Fri; D Mon–Sun; LN Fri–Sat; Bar & live music Tue–Sat. $$

Line & Lariat Modern American
An award-winning dining experience located in the historic lobby of Hotel Icon’s landmark bank building. The intimate dining room is adorned with 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 meet and greet. hotelicon.com. Hotel Icon, 220 Main, 832.667.4470. B Daily; D Mon–Sat. $$$

Little Napoli Italian
Theater and moviegoers can now enjoy these southern Italian dishes before the big show! The healthy options, such as whole wheat pizza crust and low-fat cheeses, are a nice touch. littlenapol.net. 540 Texas, 713.225.3900. $$  

Local Foods American
Local Foods is a culinary expression of all things local. The scratch gourmet sandwich shop showcases seasonal salads, fresh soups, farmers market sides, home-made snacks for the taking, and a raw bar with ceviche and oyster shooters. houstonlocalfoods.com. 420 Main, 713.227.0531. L & D Daily. $$

Lone Star Taco Tex-Mex

Louie Coffee Coffee House
Louie Coffee is housed at GreenStreet with a menu that includes a variety of coffees, teas, breakfast tacos, sandwiches, yogurt parfaits and other sweet treats. This cozy coffee shop is the perfect place to sit back, relax and escape the bustling Downtown streets. louie.coffee. 1201 Fannin, 713.255.2363. B & L Mon–Sat. $  

Luby’s, etc.
American
Enjoy an incredible view of downtown along with 10 food stations offering a wide variety of goodies: a build-your-own salad bar, made-to-order grill, pizza by-the-slice, delicious deli, global café and traditional Luby’s cafeteria line with all the classic dishes. lubysect.com. 1301 Fannin, 13th Floor. L, D, D & LN Daily. $  

Lucienne Mediterranean
Not only will the chic brass accents throughout this glamorous gem impress you, but the French-inspired dishes like Gravlax with rye toast, caper berries, dill and mustard sauce will tempt your tuxedo buds into coming back for more. You’ll find this glamorous gem sitting on the second level of Hotel Alessandra. hotelalessandra-houston.com. Hotel Alessandra, 1070 Dallas, Second Floor. 713.242.8555. B, L & D Mon–Fri; BR Sat–Sun. $$

Lucky Strike Lanes & Lounge American
Bowlers and patrons relax on sleek leather couches and enjoy floor-to-ceiling video screens that flash movie clips and music videos as DJs deliver danceable grooves. Delectable munchies are available lane-side and in the lounge. bowluckystrike.com. GreenStreet, 1201 San Jacinto, Level 3. 713.343.3300. L, D & LN Daily. $$

Mademoiselle Louie Bakery Coffee House
In addition to a quaint European vibe, Mademoiselle Louise Bakery offers chocolate croissants, tarts, eclairs, a variety of freshly baked bread and other classic French pastries. Conveniently located on the first floor of Skyhouse Main. mademoisellelouise.com. 1715 Main, B & L Sun–Fri. $$

Main Kitchen American
Named Main Kitchen to reflect its location on Main Street and the hopes of becoming a staple in Houston’s culinary scene, the restaurant and its chefs have been an exhibition kitchen providing guests with an insight into the chefs’ creative process. jwmarriotthotelhouston.com/main-kitchen. 806 Main St, 713.400.1245. B, L, D Daily. $$

Mango Tree Thai Bistro Thai
A casual Thai joint that keeps booths packed with hungry downtowners looking for eclectic dishes to satisfy their spice cravings. And there’s a pretty tempting happy hour for drinks and nibbles under $5. mangotreethaabistro.com. 914 Main Street, 713.659.1600. L & D Mon–Sat. $$

McCormick & Schmick’s Seafood
The extensive menu changes daily depending on each day’s fresh seafood deliveries. With more than 80 preparations on the menu each day, every guest is sure to find something to satisfy their palate. mccormickandschmicks.com. GreenStreet, 1201 Fannin, 713.658.8000. L & D Daily. $$  

McDonald’s Fast Food
808 Dallas (@ Milam), 713.651.9449. B & L Daily; D Mon–Fri. $$

Mia Bella Italian
You’ll enjoy an eclectic variety of Italian cuisine blended with a Mediterranean feel. A longtime favorite, this intimate little bistro’s simple, yet appealing décor, makes it a downtown stand out. bellaestaurants.com. GreenStreet, 1201 San Jacinto, 832.319.6675. B & L Daily; BR & LN Fri & Sat. $$

Minuti Coffee
Coffee House
The coffee is created by a roasting master in Italy, before making its way into the hands of talented baristas. This is the perfect place to bring the laptop and take advantage of Minuti’s free Wi-Fi. They also have beer and wine, which makes it a great pre/post theater spot. Be sure to sample some of the fresh-baked pastries and smoothies, too. minuticoffee.com. 909 Texas, 281.265.3344. B, L, D & LN Daily. $  

MKT Bar
International
Part of Phoenicia Specialty Foods, it’s the perfect place to stop when you need a chill moment. The bar offers coffee, pastries, wine, beer, gourmet pizza and other yummy nibbles for which Phoenicia is known, phoeniciafoods.com. 1001 Austin, 832.360.2222. B, L & D Daily. $$

The Moonshiners
American
The Moonshiners Southern Table + Bar offers up a rebellious respite in the bustling urban backdrop of Downtown Houston. The restaurant celebrates and elevates southern culinary traditions serving up moonshine and whiskey in mason jars alongside generous portions of southern comfort foods such as fried chicken, shrimp and grits, and pulled pork sandwiches. 1000 Prairie, 713.226.7717. L & D Mon–Fri; LN Fri & Sat. $$

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

Murphy’s Deli Deli
Indulge in a variety of sandwiches and salads. Hot or cold, Murphy’s specializes in creating your sandwich anyway it’s ordered. murphysdeli.com. 601 Jefferson, 713.652.4939. 1900 Main, 713.650.3354. 440 Louisiana, 713.247.9122. 700 Louisiana, 713.547.0660; 1415 Louisiana, 832.663.6113. 500 Dallas, 713.654.0033. B & L Mon–Fri all locations. $$  

Niko Niko’s Greek & American
Houston icon Dimitri Fetokalis opened his cafe in 2010 at Market Square Park. Favorites such as the gyro and kebobs are on the menu along with new items such as the breakfast pita. Specially coffee drinks, beer and wine also available. nikonikos.com, Market Square Park, 301 Milam, B, L & D Daily. $$

Osso & Kristalla Italian
Osso & Kristalla serves up authentic Italian fare in a modern, yet relaxed atmosphere. The casual trattoria features housemade pastries, pastas, wood-fired pizzas and more Italian eats, along with wine, beer, cocktails and local Katz coffee. Enjoy views inside their open concept kitchen or on their breezy outdoor patio. ossoandkristalla.com. 1515 Texas, 713.221.6666. B Mon–Fri; L & D Daily. $$

The Oyster Bar
Seafood
Housed Inside Prohibition Supper Club, The Oyster Bar is a street-friendly, neighborhood-centric concept serving an extensive seafood menu including fried shrimp, fried oysters, Gulf Coast & East Coast oysters, pan roasted market fish, and roasted cauliflower & mushroom fetuccine. Get your seafood and burlesque fix all in the same place. prohibitionhouston.com. Prohibition, 1008 Prairie, 281.940.4636. D Daily. $$

Padthai
Thai Restaurant 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. padthaihouston.com. 401 Louisiana, 713.225.4900. D Daily. $$

Summer 2010 39
Pappadeaux  This local favorite serves up some of the finest and freshest seafood with a Cajun twist! Start with the crispy fried alligator or a bowl of gumbo, try the Chilean Sea Bass or the pasta mardi gras, and top it all off with the praline bread pudding soufflé. pappadeaux.com, 1001 Avenida de las Americas, 713.654.5077. L Fri–Sun; D Daily. $$$

Pappas BBQ Barbecue  Voted one of Houston’s best year around, 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. pappasbbq.com, 1217 Pierce, 713.659.1245. L & D Daily, 1100 Smith, 713.759.0018. L & D Mon–Fri. $&

Pappas Bros. Steakhouse Steakhouse  Pappas Bros. Steakhouse puts inmeasurable care into everything they do, all to provide their guests with a dining experience like no other. They buy the highest-quality ingredients, use a timeless recipe, and cook it flawlessly each and every time. pappasbros.com, 1200 McKinney, 713.658.1995. D Mon–Sat. $$$

Pappasito’s Cantina Tex-Mex  One of Houston’s most popular casual Tex-Mex restaurants, Pappasito’s specializes in sizzling fajitas, creamy quesos and tortillas that almost melt in your mouth! The Downtown location offers six unique ceviches and cruces that can’t be found at any of the other restaurants. pappasitos.com. Hilton Americas-Houston, 1600 Lamar St, 713.353.4400. L & D Daily. $$

The Pearl Seafood  The Pearl at the Sam Houston Hotel is a coastal-inspired restaurant with a passion for seafood and steak. The menu satiates guests with savory appetizers and salads, entrees like classic shrimp and grits, salads carbonara and short ribs, and a la carte selections such as premium cuts of steak alongside simply grilled fish and shrimp dishes. pearlrestauranthouston.com, 1117 Prairie, 832.200.8800. B, L & D Daily. $$

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. $$

Phoenicia Specialty Foods International  If you are in search of yummy food on the go, Phoenicia Specialty Foods is the place for you! This urban gourmet market boasts an incredible salad bar, made-to-order sandwiches, salads and pastas, homemade pastas and the signature veal osso bucco. potenighthouse.com, 1515 Texas, 713.237.1515. D Daily. $$$

Poten’ta Italian  A sophisticated Italian restaurant, Potenté is a dining experience like no other focused on using local products and only the highest quality ingredients. Menu items include daily seafood selections, steaks, homemade pastas and the signature veal osso bucco. potenthouse.com, 1515 Texas, 713.237.1515. D Daily. $$$

Prelude Coffee & Tea Coffee House  Get your coffee fix at this espresso bar located inside Innes’ 609 Main building and pair it with your favorite breakfast and lunch options from local favorite, Morningstar. instagram.com/preludecoffee. 609 Main, 832.382.3466. B & L Mon–Fri. $
Trofi Restaurant Continental Trofi’s menu is described as Continental with a Mediterranean and Latin flair and the ambiance is simple, yet sophisticated. Lunch buffets are available Monday through Friday.

Vic & Anthony’s Steakhouse This world-class steakhouse 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 Ballard Park District and across from Minute Maid Park, Vic & Anthony’s is the ideal spot for entertaining business clients, a special celebration or a pre/post-game dinner.

Walker St. Kitchen American Walker Street Kitchen serves the freshest offerings from the Gulf Coast, fusing cultural and geographical influences into a culinary feast. 1777 Walker, 713.654.1777.

Wimpy’s Hamburgers Fast Food Wimpy’s serves up a pretty good burger but they also have many other down-home favorites.

Your Pie Italian Your Pie is a “down-the-line” pizza concept offering customers the opportunity to build their own 10” hand-tossed pizza which cooks in a gas-fired oven in less than five minutes! Their bar menu includes 25 taps of craft beer and a selection of boutique red and white wines.

Zero’s Sandwich Shop Deli A great little spot for a freshly made deli sandwich.

The Dive | 809 Pierce A dive bar built for good vibes, you get the best of both worlds at this lounge with a mixture of free play arcade games, drinks and music by some of the best local DJs and international artists.
806 Lounge | 806 Main
A favorite of the locals, 806 Lounge located inside the JW Marriott Houston Downtown, ignites the senses with sophisticated creations. Their mixologists are experts in creating cocktails, lively in conversation, and can recommend a favorite dish to accompany your handcrafted drink. Daily 11 am–11 pm. jwmarriottdowntown.com/806-lounge

1820 Bar | 1820 Franklin
This cozy little bar is located just one block north of Minute Maid Park. It’s the perfect place for a pre-game drink or a strong night cap during the week. Eighteen Twenty Lounge shares a door with Joytastic Classic Games which is open on the first and last Friday of every month where $15 gets you all night access to practice your Pac-Man skills. Daily 4 pm–2 am. 1820lounge.com

Etro Lounge | 114 Main
Follow the bright lights and fun music flowing along Main Street to Etro Lounge! Known as a longtime staple in the Houston club scene, Etro spins the best in 80s dance and hip-hop as well as, contemporary electronic music. Tue–Sun 9 pm–2 am. etronightclub.com

El Big Bad | 419 Travis
El Big Bad is a gastro-cantina that specializes in infused tequilas, fresh juice margaritas and cocktails, Mexican and Texan Craft Beer and scrumptious fare. Sun–Thu 11 am–midnight; Fri & Sat 11 am–2 am. elbigbad.com

El Segundo | 306 Main
Kick back at the bar with a spiked agua fresca, frozen mojito slush or any other delicious concoction at El Segundo for a fun time of boozing. If you get hungry, the bar’s $2.50 tacos along with their inexpensive burgers, fries, and quesadillas will fill you right up. Sun–Wed 10 am–Midnight; Thu 10–2 am; Fri–Sat 10–3:30 am

Flying Saucer | 705 Main
Offering more than 200 beers, with nearly half on draft, Flying Saucer is a great place to hang out and enjoy a cold one. Check out the website for information on beer tastings, trivia night and specials. Mon–Wed 11 am–1 am; Thu & Fri 11 am–2 am; Sat noon–2 am; Sun noon–midnight. beerkurd.com

Frank’s Backyard | 413 Travis
Forget about ordering pizza to-go and enjoy a slice or two at Frank’s Backyard. Whether you take a seat at the beer garden’s nifty airstream trailer housing 40 beers on tap or enjoy a glass of bourbon on their upper level deck, this local hotspot will take your traditional “pizza night” to the next level. Daily 3 pm–2 am. franksbackyard.net

Henke & Pilott | 809 Congress
Where past meets present, and drinks and dining blend in flawless harmony. Henke & Pilott is more than a dynamic Downtown cocktail lounge. Named after the Houston grocery store chain that occupied the space in the 800 block of Congress over 150 years ago, the simple yet sophisticated setting offers patrons space in the 800 block of Congress over 150 years ago, its name to its drinks. Houston Watch Company is the essence of old-school. We suggest trying one of their four different versions of an old fashioned or the strawberry shrub cocktail made with fresh fruit! Sun–Tue 4 pm–midnight; Wed–Sat 4 pm–2 am. houstonwatchcompany.com

HTX Fan Tavern | 1800 Texas
HTX Fan Tavern is a sports-centric bar conveniently located across from Minute Maid Park. It’s the perfect place to pre-game before cheering on the home team or to celebrate after a big victory! htxfantavern.com

The Isles Eatery & Rhum Bar | 1515 Pease
Immerse yourself in this Caribbean hotspot and choose from an astonishing collection of 56 plus island rums used to create delightful cocktails rooted in the regional rhythms of the islands. Tue 4 pm–2 am; Wed & Thu 4–11 pm; Fri 3–2 am; Sat & Sun Noon–2 am. theisleseateryandbar.com

Kanaloa | 311 Travis
Bring on the mai tais, bamboo backdrops and vibrant island vibes! Kanaloa brings a full-on tiki experience to Historic Market Square. Lay back with a pain killer cocktail in hand or bite into any of the delicious Korean-Mexican fusion menu items from Oh My Gogi. Tue 4–Midnight; Wed–Sat 4–2 am; Sun 2 pm–Midnight. kanaloahtx.com

La Cantina by La Calle | 909 Franklin
This authentic Mexican sports bar is draped in vintage lucha libre threads, and is the perfect hangout to throw back a few Micheladas, enjoy your fix of tacos and catch your favorite soccer, boxing or UFC match on one of their large 82” screen TVs. If you get too carried away, drop by La Cantina’s sister concept, La Calle the next morning or the perfect hangover cure—a big bowl of menudo or caldo! Mon–Wed 3 pm–midnight; Thu–Fri 3 pm–2 am; Sat 11 am–2 am; Sun 11 am–midnight. lacalletacos.com

La Cabra | 813 Congress
The oldest building in Houston, this dark and cozy hideaway boasts a great jukebox, moody atmosphere and an extensive beer and wine selection. Sit on the outside patio or balcony and look up in awe at the amazing downtown skyline. Cash only. Mon–Fri Noon–2 am; Sat & Sun 1 pm–2 am.

Last Concert Cafe | 403 Nance
You have to knock three times on the red door to gain entry to the unmarked house in the Warehouse District (well, not anymore). With a backyard stage and sandpit, hoola-hooping and tiki bar, Last Concert has live music most nights. Tue–Fri 11 am–2 am; Sat 5 pm–2 am; Sun 3–9 pm. lastconcert.com

Lawless Spirits & Kitchen | 909 Texas
Lawless Spirits & Kitchen is an establishment with flair. A place that seems misplaced in its urban setting. The crowd, small yet perfectly sized, and the food served are a testament to that. Expect to find rare whiskies, bourbons, gins and vodkas, as well as wine and champagne. Expect a variety of music from all genres. The drink menu features a small selection of house drinks, shots, as well as beer, wine and champagne. Tue–Sun 4 pm–2 am. lawlessspirits.com

Lively & Bloom | 110 Main St.
Located in the historically chic Raphael Building, this beautiful two-story lounge is known for its specialty cocktails and guest bartenders every Tuesday night. Prepare to be amazed! Daily 4 pm–2 am. livelyandbloom.com

Houston Watch Company | 913 Franklin
Houston Watch Company is located in the lobby of the Bayou Lofts at 913 Franklin and gets its name from the former timepiece company that occupied the space over 100 years ago. From its name to its drinks, Houston Watch Company is the essence of old-school. We suggest trying one of their four different versions of an old fashioned or the strawberry shrub cocktail made with fresh fruit! Sun–Tue 4 pm–midnight; Wed–Sat 4 pm–2 am. houstonwatchcompany.com

The Nightingale Room | 308 Main
The Nightingale Room—named for the famous songbird—also references Houston music legend turquoise Wallace, known as the Texas Nightingale during her prime in the 1920s. This entertainment-focused bar is a casual, comfortable spot to listen to vinyl during the week and turn up the energy on weekends with live music—dancing is encouraged! Expect a variety of music from all genres. The drink menu features a small selection of house drinks, shots, as well as beer, wine and champagne. Tue–Sat 4 pm–2 am. mollyspubs.com

Noble Rot Wine Bar | 1010 Prairie
Noble Rot is a laid back wine bar inside the Conservatory with a list of fantastic & easy drinking wines. The bar staffs a superstar team of stewards who are there to guide and tone that may not drink much wine to a glass that’s their perfect fit. Sun–Wed 11 am–midnight; Thu 11–1 am; Fri–Sat 11–3 am. conservatoryhhs.com

Notsuoh | 314 Main
The name is Houston spelled backwards. A bar full of random weirdness: Think grunge lounge and artsy. You’ll find people playing chess, and drinking beer, live music, lots of crazy, weird artwork and maybe walk in on a night of punk-rock karaoke. Live bands on weekends. Daily 8 pm–2 am. notsuoh.com

One-Armed Scissor | 208 Travis
Chill vibes, tempting libations, and an intimate experience will keep you coming back to this hotspot located in the Historic Market Square neighborhood. Tue–Thu & Sun 3 pm–Midnight; Fri–Sat 3 pm–2 am. onearmedscissorsbar.com
The Original OKRA Charity Saloon | 924 Congress
Houston’s first charity bar is a true collaboration from Houston’s finest, including owners from Anvil, Paulie’s, Grand Prize and more. Expect classic cocktails and brews in a gorgeous historic building. Every drink purchase earns you a vote that can go toward select charities to win the bar’s monthly earnings.
Daily 3 pm–2 am. friedokra.org

Part & Parcel | 1700 Smith
Part & Parcel is a trendy patio bar located at The Whitehall Hotel—it’s the perfect place to mingle, sip and relax under the Texas stars. Their menu includes classic cocktails, original libations, and small plates with big taste! Mon–Thu 4 pm–midnight; Fri–Sat 4 pm–2 am. thewhitehallhouston.com

The Pastry War | 310 Main
A Mezcaleria from Bobby Heugel and Alba Huerta that serves up agave spirits along with classic Mexican cocktails and beers in a festive and intimate environment. This specialty tequila joint not only accepts pesos, but is on a brave mission to serve the best margaritas in town. Sah! Tue–Sat 4 pm–2 am. thepastrywar.com

The Pearl | 1117 Prairie
The Pearl offers a large variety of innovative cocktails, unique craft beers, wines and spirits. Mon–Thu 6:30 am–11 pm; Fri 6:30 am–12 pm; Sat 7 am–12 pm; Sun 7 am–11 pm. pearlerestauranthouston.com

Pete’s Dueling Piano Bar | 1201 Fannin at GreenStreet
Two dueling pianos and a sing-along, clap-along, drink-along, have-one-helluva-good-time-along bar! Wed–Sat 7 pm–2 am. showtime @ 8 pm. petesduelingpianobar.com

Public Services Wine & Whiskey | 202 Travis
Nestled in the historic Cotton Exchange Building, lies Public Services Wine & Whiskey. Public Services isn’t just any cocktail bar, in fact, they’re the complete opposite. Here, patrons can find classic wines and a vast yet distinctive whisky selection served straight, on the rocks, or with a small selection of mixers. Craft beer and cider help round out the carefully crafted drink menu. Mon–Sat 4 pm–2 am. publicservicesbar.com

Reserve 101 | 1201 Caroline
A whiskey and martini bar touting more than 220 specialty liquors that will make any cocktail aficionados mouth water. Stop by on Tuesday for complimentary tastings of special selections. Order up delicious bites from the new, chef-driven menu featuring tasty flatbreads, appetizers and sandwiches. Sun 5 pm–2 am; Mon–Sat 2 pm–2 am. reserve101.com

Saint Arnold Beer Garden & Restaurant | 2000 Lyons
Saint Arnold’s Beer Garden & Restaurant is a must-go-to destination combining beer, food, architecture, and art. Guests can enjoy a pint of any Saint Arnold beer along with an expanded lunch and dinner menu that includes a variety of shareable dishes, pizzas, sandwiches, salads, and world-class entrées. Sun–Wed 11 am–10 pm; Thu–Sat 11 am–11 pm. saintarnold.com

Shay McElroy’s Pub | 909 Texas at Rice Lofts
Dublin native and owner John McElroy created this space around a richly detailed, 19th-century bar he had shipped from Ireland. The crowd is an inviting collection of young professionals and not-so-young merrymakers. Mon–Fri 11 am–2 am; Sat & Sun 1 pm–2 am. mcelroypub.com

Sunny’s Bar | 901 Capitol @ Main
Laid-back place with a friendly atmosphere and great prices that keep the regulars coming back. Sunny will likely be behind the bar serving up the beer and cocktails and great conversation. Foosball, darts and shuffleboard are in the back of the house to keep you entertained. Mon–Sat 2 pm–2 am.

Tongue Cut Sparrow | 310 Main (upstairs)
Named after a Japanese fable, this 25-seat formal cocktail bar provides an extremely elevated experience from the tidy menu made up of 16 classic cocktails and a few select beer and wine options, to the bartenders clad in black bowties. Wed–Sat 4 pm–2 am.

Warren’s Inn | 307 Travis
This tavern is long known for its top-notch jukebox full of American classics, strong mixed drinks and its diverse crowd of customers. Mon–Fri 11 pm–2 am; Sat noon–2 pm, Sun 2 pm–2 am.

The Wine Cellar | 540 Texas
Unwind and relax with more than 400 varieties of wine and imported beers. Wine tastings Mon–Thu, 2–7 pm. Daily 11 am–midnight. thewinecellarhouston.com

Z on 23 | 1121 Walker
Sitting on Le Meridien’s 23rd floor, this gem offers a light menu, craft cocktails, specialty beers, a unique wine selection and 360-degree views of Downtown Houston. Sun–Thu 4–10 pm; Fri–Sat 4–11 pm. lemeridienhoustonondowntown.com

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Meaningful Change
Not Spare Change

It’s okay to say no to panhandlers.

THERE’S A BETTER WAY TO GIVE:
meaningfulchange.org
datebook.
PERFORMING ARTS

COMPLEXIONS CONTEMPORARY BALLET
Jun 1 Combining technical precision, power and passion, Complexions Contemporary Ballet transcends tradition in a groundbreaking mix of styles ranging from ballet to hip hop. This season the company presents an exhilarating program set to music from Bach to Bowie. Tickets start at $35. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. spahouston.org

CONSTELLATIONS
Jun 1–2 One couple. Infinite possibilities. Science and romance collide in this spellbinding play that imagines what happens when boy meets girl. And when boy meets girl again. And again. Defying the boundaries of the world we think we know, Constellations delves into the universal truth of finding and losing love and questions the difference between choice and destiny. Alley Theatre, 615 Texas. alleytheatre.org

THE MERRY WIDOW
Jun 1–9 The Merry Widow returns to Houston Ballet with a delicious cocktail of witty and intriguing characters based on the famous 1905 operetta by Franz Lehár. This lavish story ballet is filled with rich music and sweeping drama as decadent lives intertwine in early 20th-century Europe. With gorgeous costume and scenic designs, The Merry Widow is sure to enthral audiences with its humor and grandeur. Wortham Center, 501 Texas. houstonballet.org

JEROME ROBBIN’S BROADWAY
Jun 1–9 Jerome Robbins’ Broadway encompasses 10 shows, 13 musical numbers, a large, diverse cast, and countless character changes—all on one stage. The show features mesmerizing production numbers from some of Robbins’ biggest hits, including West Side Story, On the Town, Peter Pan, Gypsy and Fiddler on the Roof. Hobby Center, 800 Bagby. tuts.com

SPAMILTON
Jun 1–9 Don’t miss this “convulsively funny” (New York Times) parody from the comic mastermind behind the long-running hit Forbidden Broadway. After tearing it up in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles, Spamilton: An American Parody will stage a singing, dancing, and comedy revolution in Houston for a limited time. Hobby Center, 800 Bagby. thehobbycenter.org

BAYOU CITY JAZZ SERIES 2019- ERIC DARIUS & JEFF LORBER
Jun 2 The Bayou City Jazz Series is excited to feature Eric Darius and Jeff Lorber. Saxophonist, composer, producer Eric Darius likes to play by his own rules. Known for his smooth style, weaving together elements of funk, R&B, rock and electric jazz, keyboardist Jeff Lorber helped pioneer the post fusion sound of contemporary jazz. Together, they present an epic night of smooth jazz in one night. Wortham Center, 501 Texas. worthamcenter.org

HANNAH GADSBY—DOUGLAS
Jun 2 Tasmania’s own Hannah Gadsby-Douglas has come to the world’s attention through her multiaward-winning stand up show Nanette, which played to sold-out houses across Australia, London, Edinburgh, New York and Los Angeles before launching on Netflix as the first Australian Netflix original comedy special and stopping the comedy world in its tracks. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. spahouston.org

CHICAGO
Jun 4–9 Chicago has everything that makes Broadway great: a universal tale of fame, fortune and all that jazz; one show-stopping song after another; and the most astonishing dancing you’ve ever seen. Whether you’re looking for your first Broadway musical, want to experience the Academy Award-winning film live on stage or want to recapture the magic, Chicago always delivers! Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. spahouston.org
TUCK EVERLASTING
Jun 21–Jul 7 The show is set in Treegap, New Hampshire, where 11-year-old Winnie Foster meets the mysterious Tuck family, who never seem to age. Tuck Everlasting includes a breathtaking score with music by Chris Miller, lyrics by Nathan Tyson and a whimsical book by Claudia Shear and Time Federle. artFACTORY, 1125 Providence. artfactoryhouston.com

PRIDE & JOY—the MARVIN GAYE MUSICAL
Jun 26–30 From the diary of Anna Gordy Gaye comes the riveting story of Marvin Gaye and Anna Gordy. Pride & Joy tells of their union and how the two changed history, the music industry and Motown Records through ballads inspired by their love, conflict and creativity. Wortham Center, 501 Texas. worthamcenter.org

HARRY POTTER AND THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX IN CONCERT
Jul 18–20 Relive the magic with Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix displayed on a giant screen in high-definition and accompanied by a symphonic orchestra. See Harry and his friends race through the Department of Mysteries, practice Defense Against the Dark Arts in secret, and endure Professor Umbridge—all with Nicholas Hooper’s iconic score! Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. houstonsymphony.org

MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS
Jul 17–Aug 3 Based on the real-life case of a barber who stabbed his mistress in a fit of jealousy and was sentenced to death. This is a radical new production that plunges audiences into America’s biggest fear and obsession. Rec Room Arts, 100 Jackson. recroomarts.org

EXxonMobil’s Summer Chills
Jun 15–Aug 25 The past unfolds in this dramatic retelling of France’s infamous young monarchs, Marie Antoinette and King Louis XVI, by Stanton Welch. This three-act ballet chronicles the queen’s tragic life in a time of immense social and political strife for the people of France. Wortham Center, 501 Texas. houstonballet.org

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ALADDIN
Jun 26–Jul 14 From the producer of The Lion King comes the timeless story of Aladdin, a thrilling new production filled with unforgettable beauty, magic, comedy and breathtaking spectacle. Hobby Center, 800 Bagby. thehobbycenter.org

THE MUSIC OF QUEEN
Jul 5–6 We will, we will rock you! Amped up with a vocalist and full rock band, the Houston Symphony pays tribute to Freddie Mercury and Queen. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. houstonsymphony.org

THE MUSIC OF SELENA
Jul 12–13 Sensational vocalist Isabel Marie Sánchez performs iconic hits like Dreaming of You, Como la Flor, Bidi Bidi Bom Bom, No Me Queda Más and I Could Fall in Love in this unforgettable and emotional tribute to the Queen of Tejano Music. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. houstonsymphony.org

WOYZECK
Jul 17–Aug 3 Georg Büchner’s 19th-century play, widely regarded as the first truly “modern” drama, was based on the real-life case of a barber who stabbed his mistress in a fit of jealousy and was sentenced to death. This is a radical new production that plunges audiences into America’s biggest fear and obsession. Rec Room Arts, 100 Jackson. recroomarts.org

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ASTROWORLD MODEL AND EXHIBITION
Through Aug 31
Houstonians have fond memories of AstroWorld, the theme park that left Houston nearly a decade ago, including the restored original 1967 model that was used to help visualize the park’s landscape during construction.

SUMMER READING PROGRAM
Jun 1–Aug 1
Houston Public Library’s Summer Reading Program, Explore the Unknown, is a free, inventive-based way to encourage kids and teens to read and explore various programs. The more they read, the more prizes they’ll win.

NEVERLAND BALLOONS AND FACEPAINTING
Jun 4
The very best balloon twisting and face painting you’ve ever seen! Kids ages 3–12. 10:30–11:30 am.

SUMMER DRAMA-RAMA!
Jul 16
Join HPL for a variety of fun performing arts lessons and activities, from silly acting warm-ups, and costume designs to prop building and beyond! Kids ages 5–12. 10:30–11:30 am.

HARRY’S BELATED BIRTHDAY BASH WITH HARRY AND THE POTTERS!
Aug 6
Calling wizards, squibs, and muggles of all ages to join the Houston Public Library in celebrating The Boy Who Lived’s special day! Come dressed as your favorite character to get sorted into your Hogwarts House, meet fellow fans, enjoy games, trivia, and music by Harry and the Potters.

IVANLA VANZANT
Jul 26
The celebrated spiritual teacher, New York Times best-selling author, and Emmy Award-winning television personality Iyanla Vanzant, returns to the stage with her Acts of Faith Remix Tour. The beloved life coach will lead audiences through the transformative work that unites the humanity in all of us. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. joneshall.org

JASPER IN DEADLAND
Aug 2–18
A modern myth, this brilliant new musical by Hunter Foster and Ryan Scott Oliver, takes you on a journey to the afterlife as Jasper searches through the lost souls of Deadland to find his recently deceased friend Agnes. The show blends multicultural mythology, religion, and superstition with an unbelievable pop-rock score. artFACTORY, 1125 Providence. artfactoryhouston.com

RENT
Aug 6–11
Rent follows an unforgettable year in the lives of seven artists struggling to follow their dreams without selling out. With its inspiring message of joy and hope in the face of fear, this timeless celebration of friendship and creativity reminds us to measure our lives with the only thing that truly matters—love. Hobby Center, 800 Bagby. thehobbycenter.org

MARC MARON: HEY, THERE’S MORE TOUR
Aug 24
Best known for his hit landmark podcast, WTF with Marc Maron, Maron has interviewed personalities such as Conan O’Brien, Robin Williams, Keith Richards, Ben Stiller, Julia Louis-Dreyfus, Lorne Michaels and former President Barack Obama. Wortham Center, 501 Texas. worthamcenter.org

THE LITTLE MERMAID—FILM WITH LIVE ORCHESTRA
Aug 31
Perfect for the entire family! Join Ariel and friends for an adventure Under the Sea as Disney’s 1989 animated classic projects on the big screen at Jones Hall with the complete Oscar-winning score performed live by the Houston Symphony. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. houstonsymphony.org
FESTIVALS & SPECIAL EVENTS

CITY HALL LOCAL LUNCH MARKET
Through Jun 26  It’s a food-lovers delight at City Hall’s Local Lunch Market. The public can enjoy a variety of locally prepared, ready-to-eat or packaged to-go foods, food trucks as well as locally produced art, all amid Houston’s dramatic Downtown urban setting. 11 am–1:30 pm. Hermann Square, 901 Bagby. houstontx.gov/specialevents

LATIN BEATS
Fridays through Aug 17  Enjoy free salsa dance lessons, a live DJ and salsa music, plus great food and drinks. No cover charge. 410 Bagby. downtownaquarium.com

downtownhouston.org
SPECIAL OFFER:
TWO FOR TUESDAYS
Tuesdays through Aug 27 Buy one get one free Aquarium Adventure Passes. Adventure Pass includes unlimited access to Aquarium Adventure Exhibit, Stingray Reef, and all rides. Visit downtownaquarium.com to download coupon.

SUNRISE YOGA SPONSORED BY BIG POWER YOGA
Jun 7 & 21, July 5 & 19, Aug 2 & 16 Jump start your weekend with an early 45-minute yoga session alongside Big Power Yoga while enjoying spectacular views of Downtown. Yogis of all levels and ages are welcome, just bring your own mat and water bottle. Free, but $10 donation suggested to Buffalo Bayou Partnership. The Water Works at Buffalo Bayou Park, 105 Sabine. buffalobayou.org

WORLD OCEANS DAY
Jun 8 Celebrate Oceans Day at the Downtown Aquarium with a day full of fun learning activities.
410 Bagby. downtownaquarium.com

SAINT ARNOLD BREWING CO. 25TH ANNIVERSARY PARTY
Jun 8 Saint Arnold celebrates 25 years of brewing independently in Houston and will feature live music from Texas and Louisiana, art cars, dancers, mariachis, face painting, and other fun things going in one place. Must be 21+. 3 pm. Free. Saint Arnold Brewery, 2000 Lyons. saintarnold.com

SAINT ARNOLD BREWING CO. 25TH ANNIVERSARY RARE CELLAR TASTING
Jun 9 Sample a wide range of one-of-a-kind selections and aged beauties pulled from deep within the belly of the Saint Arnold brewery. You’ll get 2-ounce samples of each beer, access to the Houston Dairymaids Cheese tasting table, and a special souvenir 25th anniversary tasting glass. Must be 21+. Tickets $50. Noon–2:30 pm & 3:30–6 pm. Saint Arnold Brewery, 2000 Lyons.

DIY DOWNTOWN WITH POP SHOP AMERICA
Join the DIY movement and unleash your inner crafter with Pop Shop America's DIY Downtown. Gather your friends, family and co-workers for a one-of-a-kind arts and crafts workshop at unique pop-up locations in the heart of Downtown Houston. Listen to music and snack on savory treats while making everything from terrariums to hand-dyed tea towels. $36. 6:30–8:30 pm. diydowntownhou.com

Jun 12 Saint Arnold Brewing Company Workshop: DIY Terrarium Building
Jul 10 Part & Parcel Workshop: DIY Candles with Essential Oils
Aug 14 Julia Ideson Library Workshop: DIY Origami

VOLUNTEER WORKDAYS
Jun 15, Jul 20 & Aug 17 Get your gloves out and sign up for a volunteer workday at Buffalo Bayou Partnership. Help maintain and revitalize Buffalo Bayou this spring while having fun. No tools necessary. Just sign up and complete the online volunteer waiver required. 8:30–11:30 am. The Water Works at Buffalo Bayou Park, buffalobayou.org

HOUSE OF BLUES LOCAL BREWS, LOCAL GROOVES
Jun 15 Part house party, part street festival, House of Blues’ Ultimate Craft Beer and Music Festival returns featuring an abundance of local craft breweries, 40+ beers and rare releases, local bands and DJs, brew-inspired pub food pairings and more. $10. 2:30 pm. 21+ only. House of Blues, 1204 Caroline.

2019 LGBT HOUSTON PRIDE PARADE
Jun 22 The 2019 Houston LGBT Pride Parade features more than 115 businesses, organizations and other community supporters who will line the streets of Downtown Houston with their brightly colored flags and floats. The parade pre-show will begin at 8 pm and the parade itself will begin at 8:30 pm. General admission is free, but VIP and reserved seating options are available. pridehouston.org
CITGO FREEDOM OVER TEXAS
Jul 4 Fireworks will ignite the sky, and country tunes will set the stage for Houston’s annual patriotic celebration, Freedom Over Texas. Celebrating 32 years of July Fourth music, fireworks and fanfare on Buffalo Bayou, this big bash will turn it way up with live music, fun family activities and stunning pyrotechnics.
4–10 pm. www.houstontx.gov

SHARK DAY
Jul 14 Celebrate sharks with education booths, arts and crafts, dive booths and plenty of shark-themed activities at the Downtown Aquarium, 410 Bagby. downtownaquarium.com

COLOMBIAN FEST HOUSTON
Jul 21 Get ready for a Colombian and Latin culture extravaganza in the heart of Houston. Houston’s Colombian Fest 2019 will feature singers, dancers, and hands that will get your feet moving and hands clapping. Special appearances by Hector Acosta, Jean Carlos Centero, El Combo and more! 11 am. Hermann Square, 900 Bagby. colombianfest.com

TIGER WEEKEND
Jul 28–29 Get excited about Tiger weekend at the Downtown Aquarium. Come out for a fun-filled day learning about tiger conservation, their adaptations, and how you can help save tigers in the wild. 410 Bagby. downtownaquarium.com

SAINT ARNOLD ROOT BEER FLOAT DAY

THEATER DISTRICT OPEN HOUSE
Aug 25 Visit the Alley Theatre, Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, Wortham Theater Center and Jones Hall all in one day. Performances will be offered on stage at the Theater District’s venues. Tour backstage, dive into the costume trunk, and get up close with musical instruments at the instrument petting zoo. End your day with a free Houston Symphony concert at 4 pm at Jones Hall. Free. Noon. theaterdistrictopenhouse.com

GREETINGS FROM HOUSTON: VINTAGE POSTCARD VIEWS OF THE CITY EXHIBIT
Jun 1–30 View the earliest beginnings of the city in over 132 postcards. Tue-Sat, 10 am–4 pm; Sun 1–5 pm. $5. The Heritage Society, 1100 Bagby. heritagesociety.org

HELP RESTORE THE NOBLE HOUSE! EXHIBIT
Jun 1–30 The Heritage Society will celebrate 65 years of working to preserve Houston’s history, beginning with Houston’s oldest building. Tue-Sat, 10 am–4 pm; Sun 1–5 pm. $5 The Heritage Society, 1100 Bagby Street, heritagesociety.org

OPEN HOUSE
Through Jul 3 The artistic duo, Havel Ruck Projects, transformed a previously abandoned house into an interactive temporary public sculpture. Visitors can walk through Open House, viewing both the modern skyscrapers of Downtown Houston and the landscape of Sam Houston Park through the holes that have been carved out of the house. At night the house is lit from within, creating a lantern effect. Open daily from dawn until dusk. The Heritage Society, 1100 Bagby. artblockshouston.com

OPEN HOUSE

EXHIBITS & VISUAL ARTS

FREEDOM OVER TEXAS

photo by Richard Carson
**Don’t Miss**

**Body by Broadway**
Jun 11 & 25, Jul 9 & 23, Aug 13 & 27  In partnership with Theatre Under the Stars, the popular Body by Broadway is back at Market Square Park! Sing, squat and plank along to some of your favorite Broadway tunes. Enjoy an hour-long sweat sesh while unleashing your inner Broadway star at the park. 6:30 pm. Free.

**Blanket Bingo at Market Square Park**
Jun 20, Jul 18 & Aug 15  This popular park favorite is back. Bring your blanket, lawn chairs or snag one of the tables at the park for a night of music and great prizes. $10 admission includes one bingo packet (approximately nine games). Additional games and daubers can be purchased for $1 each. Benefits Market Square Park and Buffalo Bayou Partnership. Note: Blanket Bingo is a monthly event through October. 6–9 pm. Bingo begins at 7 pm.

**Summer Calendar**

**Marketsquarepark.com**

Market Square Park is open daily from 6 am–11 pm. Blankets, lawn chairs, and picnics are welcome; food, beer and wine are available for purchase at Niko Niko’s. No glass containers or outside alcoholic beverages are allowed. Metered on-street parking is available and free after 6 pm.

Market Square Park presents the Quirky & The Classics
Forget about trekking to the theater for your movie fix and come Downtown instead. Join us at Market Square Park for these fantastic films under the stars:

- **Jun 5**  Little Shop of Horrors, PG-13, 1986, 94 mins
- **Jul 3**  Spaceballs, PG, 1987, 96 mins

**Recreation**

**Bayou Bikers**
Jun 2, Jul 7, Aug 4  Bayou Bikers meet at Market Square on the first Sunday of the month for 25- to 40-mile bike rides exploring the bayous of Houston. Rides are open to all. Mountain bikes or bikes with fat tires are necessary. This is an informal group whose purpose is to show Houstonians and visitors the beauty of Houston’s waterways. First Sunday of the month, 8 am.
CAN’T MISS ART INSTALLATIONS

SONIC PLAYGROUND: YURI SUZUKI
Through Aug 31 Discovery Green presents the colorful, interactive installation Sonic Playground: Yuri Suzuki, a six-piece sculpture that invites visitors to engage with sound in unusual and playful ways. Open daily.

IMPULSE
Jun 14–Sep 2 Hop on over to the Avenida for a human-powered light and sound experience. Built to encourage play for children of all ages, a series of 15 interactive and illuminated seesaws respond when put into motion. Impulse is an ever-changing urban instrument where participants become the musicians and artists. Daily, 8 am–11 pm. Free. Avenida Houston, 1001 Avenida de las Americas. avenidahouston.com

SPECIAL EVENTS

FLEA BY NIGHT PRESENTED BY GREEN MOUNTAIN ENERGY
Jun 15 & Aug 17 Treasure hunt for all things vintage, handmade, recycled, repurposed and renewed. Live local music, food trucks and fun under the stars and twinkling lights. Free. 6–10 pm.

RAINBOW ON THE GREEN
Jun 21 The 10th Annual Land Rover Houston Central’s Rainbow on the Green returns to the park! Always an unforgettable celebration of Houston’s LGBT community, featuring electrifying performances and community celebrations. Featured performances include Chad Michaels and OneUp. Free. VIP tickets available for $25. 7–10 pm.

HOUSTON CENTER FOR PHOTOGRAPHY CLASSES
Jun 26 Bring your camera and learn how to capture spectacular photos from expert photographers. Meet at the Morgan Reading Room behind the Lake House Café. Free. 6:30–8 pm.

A GIANT LEAP: 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MOON LANDING
Jul 20 Discovery Green celebrates the 50th anniversary of the epic Apollo 11 mission to the moon. The family-friendly event will feature a paratrooper landing by the US Army Golden Knights; exhibitions from the Johnson Space Center and Lone Star Flight Museum; a screening of Apollo 11; and more. 6–10 pm.

ENTERTAINMENT

THURSDAY CONCERTS PRESENTED BY UHD
Family-friendly concerts in the park featuring the best in Gulf Coast music. Blankets, lawn chairs and picnics are welcome. No glass containers or outside alcoholic beverages permitted. Most events are free, unless noted otherwise. 1500 McKinney.

The events listed are confirmed at the time of printing. For a full listing of Discovery Green’s summer events, please visit the calendar at discoverygreen.com

Blankets, lawn chairs and picnics are welcome; food, beer and wine are available for purchase at the Lake House. No glass containers or outside alcoholic beverages permitted. Most events are free, unless noted otherwise. 1500 McKinney.
UNPLUGGED
Jun 16  This much-loved local series challenges bands to rearrange and reimagine songs using acoustic instruments only; resulting in unique, intimate and soulful performances. Headliner: Los Guerreros de la Musica. 5–9 pm.

BANK OF AMERICA SCREEN ON THE GREEN PRESENTED BY TAQUERIAS ARANDAS
Beloved family movies under the stars and Houston’s skyline. Arrive one hour early for contests and activities. Free.

Jun 29  Mean Girls (PG-13) 2004, 97 mins., 9 pm

FAMILY & CHILDREN EVENTS

YOUNG WRITERS WORKSHOP
Saturdays through Jul 6  Kids learn to express their thoughts and develop language skills, thanks to Writers In The Schools (WITS), HPL Express and Discovery Green in Houston’s only free and open writing workshop for kid. 10:30–11:30 am.

RECYCLING SATURDAYS
Through Aug 31  Bring your paper, plastic and aluminum to a recycling station at Discovery Green. 11 am–2 pm

KAYAK AND R/C BOATS
Through Aug 26  Leisurely kayak around Kinder Lake or navigate a radio-controlled boat. No reservation required. Some events may be affected by weather. $5 per person for kayak. 11 am–7 pm

SUNDAYS IN THE PARK
Sundays through Jun 30  Enjoy lawn games, activities and more. 3–5 pm

STARGAZING WITH HOUSTON ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY
Jun 8, Jul 20, Aug 10  Join the Houston Astronomical Society (HAS) for a star party in the heart of Space City. Volunteers from HAS will be on hand with telescopes to show off the moon, other planets in our solar system, various deep-sky objects and maybe even the International Space Station and the Hubble Space Telescope. Visit website for full schedule.

FITNESS IN THE PARK PRESENTED BY SPROUTS FARMERS MARKET
No pre-registration required, but participants must sign a waiver upon arrival. Bring a towel and water, as well as a mat for yoga classes. Yoga mats can also be purchased at Discovery Green’s office between 9 am–6 pm. View website for full schedule. Free.

YOGA
Mondays, Noon–1 pm
Tuesdays, 6:30–7:30 pm

HEARTFULNESS MEDITATION
Mondays, 1–1:15 pm

OFF THE COUCH
Wednesdays, 6:30–7:30 pm

ZUMBA STRONG
Wednesdays, 6:30–7:30 pm

LET’S DANCE
Thursdays, 6:30–8 pm

THAI CHI
Fridays, 9–10 am

HATHA YOGA
Saturdays, 9–10 am

OTHER EVENTS

SUMMER CELEBRATION OLD SCHOOL HIP HOP AND R&B CONCERT
Jun 8  Kick back and relax as you listen to the soulful sounds of the best of the ’80s and ’90s. Ticketed. 6 pm. txeblacksxpo.com
CONCERTS

HOUSE OF BLUES HOUSTON
Jun 1  Jessie James Decker
Jun 2  Rooney*
Jun 6  ‘Taylor Phelan’*
Jun 7  Draco Rosa*
Jun 9  Fonseca
Jun 10  Americo
Jun 12  Anberlin
Jun 13  Yacht Rock Revue
Jun 14  JID
Jun 18  Monsieur Perine*
Jun 19  Rich The Kid
Jun 24  NAV
Jun 28  Ocean Alley*
Jul 5  Charly Bliss*
Jul 10  New Found Glory
Jul 12  Scott Stapp
Jul 17  Howard Jones
Jul 18  Celeste Barber
Jul 19  Boney James
Jul 28  August Burns Red
Jul 30  Iration + Pepper
Aug 2  Carly Rae Jepsen
Aug 10  Bone Thugs-N-Harmony
Aug 25  O.A.R. with American Authors
Aug 30  bbno*$

*Indicates that the show is in the Bronze Peacock Room. HOB’s online calendar is updated regularly. Visit their website for more info and to purchase tickets. House of Blues, GreenStreet, 1204 Caroline. hob.com/houston

TOYOTA CENTER
Jun 18  Hugh Jackman
Jun 21  Twenty One Pilots
Jun 25  Jennifer Lopez
Jun 27  Luis Miguel
Jul 18  Khalid
Jul 24  Queen + Adam Lambert
Jul 25  Shawn Mendes
Aug 9  Duke Perfect
Aug 10  Cody Johnson
Aug 18  Pepe Aguilar
Aug 31  Backstreet Boys

Toyota Center’s online calendar is updated regularly. Visit their website for more info and to purchase tickets. Toyota Center, 1510 Polk. houstontoyotacenter.com

EXPOS
Jun 6–8  ISS Houston 2019
Jun 13–16  Anime Matsuri 2019
Jul 13–14  American Fitness Expo
Jul 13–14  Bridal Extravaganza 2019
Aug 16–18  Halo: Outpost Discovery

The George R. Brown Convention Center’s online calendar is updated regularly. Visit their website for more info and to purchase tickets. George R. Brown Convention Center, 1001 Avenida De Las Americas. grbhouston.com.

TOURS
WAUGH COLONY BAT TOUR
Jun 1, 8 & 29, July 6,13 & 20, Aug 3 & 31  Guests will enjoy an amazing view of over 250,000 magnificent Mexican free-tailed bats as they emerge from underneath Waugh Drive Bridge. $30, reservations required. Children under 4 are not permitted. Boat departs 30 minutes before sunset. Allen’s Landing, 1001 Commerce. buffalobayou.org

Revention Music Center’s online calendar is updated regularly. Visit their website for more info and to purchase tickets. Revention Music Center, 520 Texas. reventionmusiccenter.com
WELLNESS WALKING TOUR
Jun 5, Jul 3, Aug 7 A wellness walk led by Laura Conelly, founder of Urban Paths Wellness Coaching. Walk through the paths of Buffalo Bayou Park while discussing topics including mental and physical health as well as the benefits of being exposed to nature. Free. 9–10:30 am. The Water Works at Buffalo Bayou Park. buffalobayou.org

NATURE WALKING TOURS
Jun 15 & Jul 20 Enjoy a free walking tour in Buffalo Bayou Park highlighting the landscape and ecology of 19th-century Texas that created Houston, as well as the importance of prairies in rebuilding this astonishing and all but vanished ecosystem. Free. 10:30–11:30 am. The Water Works at Buffalo Bayou Park. buffalobayou.org

LOOKING BACK HISTORY TOUR
Jun 15 Take a look back with local historian and author Louis Aulbach to the late 1800s when Houston was founded. He will share stories about the Allen brothers and provide historical information about the people, places and events that helped shape our city. $40. 10–11:30 am. Allen’s Landing, 1001 Commerce. buffalobayou.org

TWILIGHT TOURS
Jun 15 & 28, Jul 12 & 27, Aug 17 & 30 These 30-minute boat rides are a great way to spend the afternoon or evening with your family. Escape from the city and enjoy the cool breeze as you glide along Buffalo Bayou’s waters. Look for graceful herons, jumping fish, and even an occasional alligator sunning on the banks. 5:30–8:30 pm. Allen’s Landing, 1001 Commerce. buffalobayou.org

LANDSCAPE DESIGN WALKING TOUR
Jun 19 What were the considerations and obstacles in planning for this 160-acre green space in the heart of Houston’s floodplain? Find out firsthand on this walking tour led by Scott McCready, principal of SWA Group, one of the team leads on the landscape design of Buffalo Bayou Park. $10. Meet at the Lost Lake Visitor Center located at 3422 Allen Parkway. buffalobayou.org

PORT-TO-PORT BOAT TOURS
Jun 22 Cruise around from the old port of Houston to the new port with bayou guide Andrew Groocock as he takes a historical tour of the upper channel of Buffalo Bayou. The seven-mile-long trip will focus on the historical significance of this industrial stretch of Houston. $4, reservations required. 10 am–noon. Allen’s Landing, 1001 Commerce. buffalobayou.org

MINUTE MAID PARK TOUR
Get a behind-the-scenes look at Minute Maid Park including historic Union Station, broadcasting booth and press boxes, Astros’ and visitors’ dugouts, luxury suites and much more. Tickets $15 adults, $12 seniors and $10 for kids 3–12. Mon-Sat, 10 am and noon. Minute Maid Park, 501 Crawford. astros.com

SAINT ARNOLD BREWING COMPANY TOUR
Visit Saint Arnold Brewing Company’s Brewery and get a behind-the-scenes look at the brewing process. Their knowledgeable staff will explain the history, ingredients, and equipment used to produce the freshest beer. Tours are available daily at 1 pm, 3 pm, 5 pm, and 7 pm. After the tour, guests are welcome to stay for a free tasting. Admission is free Mon–Fri and is $10 on Sat. No reservations required. All minors under the age of 21 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. Saint Arnold Brewing Company, 2000 Lyons. saintarnold.com

HOUSTON ASTROS
Jun 7–9 Astros vs. Baltimore Orioles (Star Wars Night)
Jun 11–12 Astros vs. Milwaukee Brewers
Jun 14–16 Astros vs. Toronto Blue Jays (Father’s Day Weekend)
Jun 25–27 Astros vs. Pittsburg Pirates
Jun 28–30 Astros vs. Seattle Mariners
Jul 5–7 Astros vs. Los Angeles Angels (Kids Day)
Jul 19–21 Astros vs. Texas Rangers
Jul 22–24 Astros vs. Oakland Athletics
Aug 2–4 Astros vs. Seattle Mariners
Aug 6–7 Astros vs. Colorado Rockies
Aug 19–22 Astros vs. Detroit Tigers (Superhero Day)
Aug 23–25 Astros vs. Los Angeles Angels (Dog Day)
Aug 27–29 Astros vs. Tamba Bay Rays

HOUSTON DYNAMO
Jun 1 Dynamo vs. Sporting Kansas City
Jul 3 Dynamo vs. New York Red Bulls
Jul 12 Dynamo vs. Los Angeles Football Club
Jul 27 Dynamo vs. Seattle Sounders FC
Aug 3 Dynamo vs. Chicago Fire
Aug 17 Dynamo vs. Colorado Rapids

For schedule info and tickets, call or visit website.
BBVA Compass Stadium, 2200 Texas. 713.276.0000 astros.com

HOUSTON DASH
Jun 15 Dash vs. Orlando Pride (Fathers Day Night)
Jun 29 Dash vs. Portland Thorns FC (Prize Night)
Jul 13 Dash vs. Chicago Red Stars (7/13 Night)
Jul 28 Dash vs. Sky Blue FC (International World Cup Night)
Aug 2 Dash vs. Reign FC (Salute to Women’s Veteran’s Night)
Aug 24 Dash vs. Sky Blue FC

For Schedule info and tickets, call or visit website.
BBVA Compass Stadium, 2200 Texas. 713.276.0000 houstondynamo.com

HOUSTON ROLLER DERBY
Jun 15, Aug 3 & 24 Bring the family Downtown and check out one of Houston’s toughest competitions as four teams from the all-female, amateur, flat-track roller derby league compete in a double-header. Doors open at 6 pm, and the bouts start at 7. $15–$25. Revention Music Center, 520 Texas. houstonrollerderby.com

CONCACAF GOLD CUP GROUP C DOUBLEHEADER
Jun 21 Gold Cup returns to BBVA Compass Stadium this summer with a Group C Doubleheader. Come watch El Salvador vs. Jamaica and Honduras vs. Curacao. Tickets start at $30. BBVA Compass Stadium, 2200 Texas. bbvacompassstadium.com

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON TOURS, VISIT DOWNTOWNHOUSTON.ORG/GUIDE/TOURS

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SPORTS
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!
Public garages, surface lots and metered on-street parking are abundant in Downtown. Reminder: on-street parking is free after 6 pm Monday–Saturday and all day Sunday.