This is the heart of your city, but with so much to uncover, where do you begin? Here are a few highlights to get you started, but you’ll find that there are endless surprises around every corner.

So get out there!

And don’t forget to tag #DowntownHouston.
VISIONARY LANDSCAPE

When he chose Houston to start his career in 1957, developer Gerald Hines saw a city filled with promise and the freedom to create something unforgettable. More than 60 years later he has built a landscape and a legacy. He is responsible for some of Houston's most iconic structures, and his son and granddaughter are well prepared to progress his vision in the coming decades.

BY SANDRA COOK

GOOD TASTE

There's simply no denying that Houston is in an elite group of cities when it comes to dining. And now thanks to the recent opening of Bravery Chef Hall, foodies can experience the genius of our world-renowned chefs up close and personal.

BY HOLLY BERETTO
The perfect bite

Houston has always been a great city for foodies. But this past decade we’ve moved to an entirely new level—elite status if you will! Downtown has played a critical role in that change, with some of the city’s best dining, markets and food events.

Diversity is key to Houston’s standing as foodie central and nowhere is that more obvious than at Bravery Chef Hall. Anchored on the ground floor of Aris Market Square, Bravery is a chef-driven experience in a fast-casual setting. The chefs typically prepare and serve the food to diners, allowing them to mix and mingle and creating a show-kitchen feel. Meet the renowned chefs and discover what they’re cooking starting on page 14.

For those who want a broad overview of what’s available, Best Bites Houston is an awesome place to start. The food tour company offers weekly Downtown walking tours that combine food, architecture, history and culture into a three-hour experience. Learn more about the tour and the dynamic young entrepreneur behind the venture starting on page 34.

If you’re interested in a casual food shopping experience, stop by the City Hall Local Lunch Market, where you can choose from a variety of delicious, ready-to-eat foods. Or pop into Phoenicia, for the ultimate food lovers experience—complete with artisan breads, boutique wines, gourmet items, gelato bar and a demo kitchen.

We’re also proud to introduce you to the man whose name is synonymous with Downtown’s development—Gerald Hines. In partnership with some of the world’s greatest architectural minds, Hines has developed, redeveloped or acquired nearly 1,350 properties across the globe, with 31 projects in Downtown Houston alone. Meet him (and the son and granddaughter who join him in a passion for building) starting on page 7.

Don’t forget to check out our calendar of events and activities in datebook on page 42 and 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!
backstage.
Spotlight on Wardrobe Teams

Bringing stories alive through the power of costume design

DOMINIQUE DAVISON

The 2019–2020 season is underway in the Theater District, and no one is more excited than the wardrobe teams for the Alley Theatre, Houston Grand Opera, Houston Ballet and Theater Under The Stars. With Giselle, Rigoletto, The Winter’s Tale and A Chorus Line premiering this fall, wardrobe departments are working tirelessly to bring their visions to life—whether it’s intricately detailed tutus, silky fabrics or perfectly stitched buttons. These teams are creating costumes that will leave audiences awestruck.

GETTING STARTED

Colleen Grady is the costume shop manager/designer for Theatre Under The Stars. She’s been a part of their wardrobe team for five years and is still thrilled by the challenges every show presents. Grady considers her team a family, relying on everyone, including directors, for honest feedback. “Their input means the most,” she explains. “Before I do anything I have a conversation with the director first to see where their mind might be going in terms of a concept.” This is just part of the process for the beginning stages of wardrobe production, and Grady isn’t alone.

Costume shop manager for the Alley Theatre, Nancy Julian, agrees. “It starts with the director and the designers,” she says. “They get together and have discussions about ideas; then the costume designer comes up with choices for all the characters that will exist in the show.” Once the designer comes up with sketches it is Julian’s job to make it happen. Julian has been at the Alley since 2006 and has done a little bit of everything from stitching to draping, to crafts and running wardrobe. As costume shop manager, her main job is to “run the department that provides the clothes.” She understands the different types of fabrics and how they behave on the body. She supervises the shop staff and ensures that the wardrobe is delivered on schedule. With the number of shows the Alley produces each season it’s pivotal that the costume department trusts one another.
“I don’t have people second-guessing me, and I don’t try to second guess my team,” says Julian. “There’s mutual respect and we listen to each other.”

At Houston Ballet, designers start their initial conversation with the director and a choreographer. After the designer comes up with sketches and concepts, he or she presents them to the director and choreographer. Once designs are approved, the entire team comes together to identify things that might be problematic, such as structure and silhouettes. They also discuss proper care for the costumes, budget, and laundry.

Enter Laura Lynch. Lynch is head of costumes for the ballet and she oversees the completion of all costume elements of production, determines the annual budget, and supervises all staff and union crew both at the costume shop and at Wortham Theater Center. She’s been with the Houston Ballet for 30 years and what she loves most about the ballet are the people she gets to collaborate with and the creative outlet it allows her to have. “I get to come in and do a job that feeds my love to shop fabric,” explains Lynch. “But also the social aspect of team and family, because we are like a family.”

And like any team or family, things don’t always go smoothly.

THE CHALLENGES
Working in the world of theater costuming is rewarding but also comes with its share of issues.

“Because what we do is such collaborative work, sometimes the challenge is being at the mercy of other people’s way of working,” explains Grady. “Trying to get everything done in the amount of time we have can be tricky, but we always pull it off.” Grady’s ability to work is limited until casting is complete and then there is little more than three works of rehearsal before the show hits the stage. This makes the time frame for getting actors fitted for costumes difficult. If the actors are local, Grady calls them in before rehearsals start—a luxury she doesn’t always have. And it’s not just the actors’ schedules that cause challenges; sometimes there are casting changes that come up as well. Which is why somebody always has to be working two to three projects ahead.

“I don’t have people second-guessing me, and I don’t try to second guess my team. There’s mutual respect and we listen to each other.”

—Nancy Julian, Alley Theatre costume shop manager
For Houston Grand Opera’s production team, the challenges aren’t just tight deadlines but having to adjust to a new shop space. Norma Cortez, head of costumes, and Dottie Staker, wig and makeup department head, have both been with HGO for more than 10 years. Staker ensures that wigs are in good condition and styled according to costume design specifications. For their production of *The Phoenix*, Staker created 88 wigs. She notes that wigs are easier to work with than real hair. “I can control the wig better,” Stoker says. “If I’m dealing with a lot of people, it’s easier for me to go down the row and put on a bunch of wigs.”

As head of costumes, it’s important to Cortez that the designer’s vision makes it to the stage. With a new production, planning typically starts a year in advance but that schedule has been hard to follow since 2017. “Because of everything with Harvey, moving to the new space, plus all of the productions we put on, time keeps running and there’s no way to stop it.” says Cortez. Cortez and Staker work closely together to ensure both have what they need to stay on top of things. “Opening night, that curtain goes up and everything had better be ready,” explains Staker. “We can’t tell 2,000 people ‘sorry, we’re not quite ready. Can we postpone?’”

Once deadlines are set for a production team there’s very little room for excuses. A majority of the time they’re juggling numerous projects at once so they won’t fall behind on the start of a next project. “You have to be going on to the next project while you’ve still got three in the shop,” says Julian. “It doesn’t end, and you always have to be moving forward.”

With the amount of time that goes into production, these teams are working long hours, putting in 70, 80, even 90 hours a week to make sure everything runs smoothly and that costumes look perfect when they hit the stage. “Trying to have a good work/life balance can be hard,” explains Lynch. “You can easily work a hundred hour week and have no life.”
Hines’ more than 60 years of influence on Houston and commercial real estate worldwide

By Sandra Cook
Whether you’re an architecture nut or a casual admirer of Houston’s marquee buildings, such as Pennzoil Place, One Shell Plaza and Williams Tower, you have the Houston heat to thank for such handsome structures—the heat and Gerald Hines.

Hines grew up in Indiana and following graduation from Purdue University with a degree in mechanical engineering, he took a job with a Detroit-based engineering company that specialized in air conditioning. After training and orientation, he was given the choice of three office locations—Indianapolis, Detroit and Houston.

He chose Houston, in part because a couple of college friends lived here, but also because, without a doubt, the air conditioning business was going to be stronger in Houston than the other cities.

While still working for the air conditioning company, Hines took on his first project—a 5,000-square-foot warehouse. He met his first client at a neighbor’s barbecue, and when the fellow mentioned he needed a warehouse for his company, Gerald Hines said immediately, “I can build that for you.” And he did, eventually founding his own firm, Gerald D. Hines Interests in 1957.

More than 60 years later, his company, known today simply as Hines, has developed, redeveloped or acquired 1,348 properties, totaling over 444 million square feet worldwide. Including Texas Tower, now under construction, Hines has 31 projects to its credit in Downtown Houston alone.

With offices in 24 countries, Hines has grown to more than 4,200 employees, including Gerald Hines’ son, Jeffrey C. Hines, the company’s president and CEO, and his granddaughter, Laura Hines-Pierce, who is managing director, as well as Hines’ transformation officer (be sure to look up her twitter handle).

Jeff was drawn to work for Hines because it was a natural fit for his varied business interests. “In business school, I liked marketing. I liked finance. I liked accounting and process management, so I realized that Hines’ generalist approach lined up well with all those interests,” he says.

Laura appreciates the opportunity to blend her academic disciplines of art history and economics. “Real estate development requires the rigor of economic analysis and provides opportunities to interact with architecture and design and the experience of a space,” says Hines-Pierce.

When lauded for his success and his firm’s indelible imprint on Houston, Gerald Hines modestly replies, “Houston was a good place to be. Houston grew; it had legs.”

It’s clear he was out in front leading the pack. Urban planning, placemaking and how their projects fit into the local community have long been factored into Hines projects—in Houston and in cities across the globe.

“We always work to make sure our projects are something the local population is proud to have added to their community,” says Jeff Hines.

“If you have the goodwill of the community, then you’ll get more business and your projects will be more successful because you’ve tied into the local atmosphere and interests,” says Gerald Hines.

With Houston as his wide-open canvas, Gerald Hines followed his boundless ideas, business instincts and commitment to design standards. This drive has not only resulted in a collection of stunning, elegant, enduring projects; but the success of those projects has influenced commercial real estate design and development across Houston and in major cities around the world.
Meanwhile, Gerald Hines had learned that Shell Oil Company was looking to move their U.S. headquarters out of New York City. He admits navigating his way through the global corporation based in the Netherlands was no easy task. Hines eventually found the right contact who became an advocate and helped illustrate the advantages of establishing not only their U.S. headquarters, but also their regional headquarters in Downtown Houston.

When Gerald Hines secured Shell in the late 1960s, it was his first high-rise office building and the firm’s first Downtown project. Beyond the magnitude of the deal for Hines and the significance of Shell relocating its U.S. headquarters from New York to Houston, One Shell Plaza was a marvel of engineering for the time. Innovations in erecting tall buildings on Houston’s dense clay made the 50-story office tower possible (previous practices only supported up to 44 stories). Its companion, the 26-story Two Shell Plaza, was completed in 1972. Both projects were designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill.

“If you can differentiate a project it will drive costs higher, and getting it right is a challenge, but it also makes the property more desirable,” says Gerald.

“And it creates creative tension between architect and developer, so you have to strike balance,” says Jeff.

Laura adds, “If you get it right, it not only adds to the community but it’s proven, from our perspective, to drive value for the asset. It’s a place people want to be, so the project rides the cycle better, because people want to be there, tenants stay there.”

In the first 10 years of the firm, Hines launched and developed more than 97 projects, largely office/warehouse projects and office buildings, but also retail, parking and residential. Following the success of Joske’s (1963, now Dillard’s), construction began on Neiman Marcus in 1967, setting up Phase One of Houston’s retail mainstay, The Galleria, which began in 1970.

We always work to make sure our projects are something the local population is proud to have added to their community — Jeff Hines
“Shell was obviously a very important tenant and occupier of space with a great reputation, says Gerald. “They were known as one of the premier companies of the world, so to us, to partner with them was very important to our own growth.”

“It put us on the map,” says Jeff. “One Shell was an early example of Hines being on the leading edge of technology, building design and structural innovation,” says Laura. “That combination is now infused into Hines’ approach, it’s part of our DNA.”

ENERGY CAPITAL STATUS

While the Houston area had been a significant hub for the oil industry since the 1960s, the major companies’ offices remained in other cities. Shell’s move legitimized Houston’s claim as the energy capital, and other oil companies followed suit. And other business sectors did, too, especially banking. Numerous architecture and economy chroniclers credit One Shell Plaza for sparking a decade-long building boom Downtown.

Today, with his firm having completed more than 1,300 projects, Gerald Hines favors Pennzoil Place among Hines’ Downtown Houston accomplishments. The project was Hines’ first of 15 collaborations with then-rising star architect Philip Johnson and Johnson/Burgee Architects, the firm Johnson formed with John Burgee.

“We had two tenants on board, so we needed two towers to be able to put each of the names on the buildings—it was an outstanding opportunity to have two tenants from the beginning.”

Those tenants were Pennzoil and Zapata Oil, which had been founded by Pennzoil’s CEO Hugh Liedtke and, among others, George H.W. Bush. It was Liedtke who approached Hines about developing a distinctive building that was not a “cigar box.”

Gerald Hines had already begun collaborating with Philip Johnson for the three towers at Post Oak Central when Hines determined the Pennzoil project required a truly innovative architect to fulfill Liedtke’s request.

Pennzoil Place was completed in 1976. Johnson’s striking pair of dark bronze parallelograms conjoined by sloping atriums was proclaimed “a towering achievement” by Ada Louise Huxtable in the New York Times the same year. Pennzoil Place later won multiple awards from the American Institute of Architects (AIA), Texas Society of Architects, and the Houston Chapter of the AIA.

The departure from the flat-top, slab-front structures of the 1950s and ’60s launched a revolution in office building design in Houston that spread across the United States. Pennzoil Place is also recognized by architectural authorities as a hallmark of Post Modernism.

The project propelled Hines to national acclaim as a visionary developer who sought to marry architectural excellence and successful commercial property development, while Pennzoil Place earned Philip Johnson national honors, such as the AIA’s Gold Medal and later selection as its first Pritzker Prize winner in 1979.

Jeff Hines brags, “My dad wrote the successful playbook for integrating great architecture into commercial buildings.”

It’s worth noting that despite the dark cloud of an economic recession that hovered from 1973 to 1975, Hines inserted two additional floors into each tower of Pennzoil Place due to the high demand for office leases in the project. Another bonus: The optical illusion, visible from Downtown’s surrounding freeways, of seeing the two angled forms split apart and join back together continues to delight freeway travelers to this day (look for it the next time you’re a passenger on a Downtown-adjacent freeway.)

It wasn’t until the late 1970s and early 1980s that office towers became celebrated architectural achievements—New York’s 1958 Seagram Building, designed by Mies van der Rohe, is the rare exception.

“Before that era, great architects primarily designed university buildings and museums,” says Gerald Hines.
HOUSTON SKYLINE ICONS

In a city as flat as Houston, skyscrapers make up our manmade mountain range, which began rising with One Shell Plaza, Houston’s first skyscraper. After the success of Pennzoil Place, Hines went on to conceive and build many more “peaks” in our skyline.

In the early 1980s, Hines delivered three stellar additions to Downtown’s skyline designed by renowned architects:

1100 Louisiana, 1980
Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

600 Travis, 1982
(formerly JPMorgan Chase Tower)
I.M. Pei

700 Louisiana, 1983
(formerly Bank of America Center)
Philip Johnson/John Burgee

Meanwhile, another Hines-Philip Johnson project was completed in 1983 over on Post Oak—the iconic and award-winning Williams Tower, adjacent to The Galleria. At 64 floors, Williams Tower boasts many distinctions: it is Houston’s tallest building outside of Downtown, which makes it one of the most-visible buildings in the city.

Upon its debut, Williams Tower (originally called Transco Tower) was the world’s tallest building located outside of a central business district. That title has since been lost, but Williams Tower is always there, as its upper floors and crowning searchlight can be seen for miles in all directions. And its mesmerizing Waterwall remains one of Houston’s most photographed locations (the public park now named for Gerald D. Hines).

PROJECTS ACROSS U.S. AND WORLDWIDE

Throughout the 1980s, Hines completed significant projects across the U.S., from Spokane, Washington to Washington, D.C. By the 1990s, the firm had major buildings in Mexico City, Moscow, Berlin, Paris and Barcelona, in addition numerous projects across the U.S.

In response to the firm’s growth, Hines also established a regional structure and set up regional office in major cities in the U.S. and worldwide. In 1990, after nine years with the firm, Jeff Hines was appointed president of Hines, as Gerald Hines became chairman.

EYE OPENER

“When it was dad’s turn to take me to school, he’d get me out the door by 5 or 5:30 in the morning to go visit construction sites before even the contractors were there,” says Jeff Hines. “So I learned at an early age the intensity and passion that dad had for what he does—and the attention to detail that he paid to everything. Of course, I realized this much later, upon reflection, not during those pre-dawn, before-school detours.”
**GROWTH THROUGH GREEN INITIATIVES**

In 1999, as the Environmental Protection Agency expanded its ENERGY STAR program to commercial buildings, 28 Hines buildings received the label during the first year of the program, followed by 13 more the next year. Hines has been recognized by the EPA a total of 15 times as an outstanding partner with the program. Presently, Hines-managed properties are 41 percent more energy efficient than the national average.

In 2009, the firm launched Hines GREEN OFFICE (HinesGO) to improve sustainable operations within the firm’s own offices, later expanding the initiative to all of its office tenants. Today, more than 770 tenants have achieved the green designation.

**LATEST ADDITIONS TO HOUSTON SKYLINE**

More recently, Hines added two sleek, LEED Platinum-certified towers designed by Pickard Chilton—BG Group Place in 2011, with its eye-catching cutaway notch; and 609 Main at Texas in 2017, distinguished by its angled crown.

Still to come is Texas Tower, designed by Pelli Clarke Pelli. The 1-million-square-foot office tower is currently under construction on the former Houston Chronicle site and slated for completion in late 2021.

Hines’ leadership is so invested in the new Downtown tower that it plans to relocate the firm’s global headquarters into 155,000 square feet at Texas Tower, vacating its space at Williams Tower, which housed Hines since the mid-80s.

**CONTINUING TO CHANGE THE LANDSCAPE**

“With all that we’re doing in all the dynamic central business districts around the world, it’s clear that Downtown Houston is where we need to be,” says Jeff Hines. “We figure we ought to be in the place that showcases our latest and greatest innovations and technology and Texas Tower is off the charts, so we’re very excited to be a part of it.”

“The tower is set on the block at a 45-degree angle, which provides incredible views for the tenants. From the exterior, it’s classically great architecture,” says Jeff Hines. “It’s designed from the inside out to offer the tenant an experience made up of the latest standards—the amount of light, the right air quality, energy efficiency and flexible spaces.”

“And it’s not just about tenant spaces,” says Laura Hines-Pierce. “The whole building feels like it’s at their fingertips and seamlessly integrates within the cityscape at the ground level. If we do it well, it won’t feel like an office. It will be space people simply want to be in.”

“Real estate is at a very interesting point in its life cycle,” says Laura. “It’s one of the last industries to be deeply impacted by demographic shifts, technology changes, etc. We’re really just at the outset of that.”

She suggests that real estate could change more rapidly in the next five to seven years than it has in the last 30 years. “This is due not only to demographic shifts and user preferences, but also due to the fact that there was a major real estate boom in the 1970s and ’80s, so there’s a lot of aging stock than can be reimagined and rethought,” says Laura. “Maintaining our leading-edge design, and adding to the cityscape is something that we’re very excited about,” says Laura.
MOVING IN ON RESIDENTIAL

Think that Hines all about major office developments? Think again. The firm has widened its focus on residential projects significantly over the past decade. Currently, Hines has more square feet in residential projects in design and underway than office projects—19+ million square feet, versus 17+ million square feet respectively.

“We’ve made a big strategic push in residential over the past several years, which was also fueled by our decision to get into multi-family projects nine years ago,” says Jeff Hines.

“At the time that was very new and a little scary,” says Gerald Hines.

“We were less familiar back then, but our timing has been good and we’ve been able to prove that we can tap the footprint of talent we have across the globe and bring in specific product expertise to assist with each project,” says Jeff Hines.

“When you have that knowledge from all the asset classes and the capacity across the board, then you can turn on a lever when the market is right,” say Laura Hines-Pierce.

Downtowners are familiar with Hines’ Aris Market Square, the 32-story residential tower that opened in 2018 and The Preston—a 46-story residential tower with 331 rental units is currently under construction and expected to be open in 2022.

HINES GLOBAL RESIDENTIAL STATS

More than 29.4 million square feet of developments completed to date

More than 19 million square feet of developments underway

More than 48 million square feet combined

THE DEVELOPER AND THE ARCHITECT

When Gerald Hines’ ideas met Philip Johnson’s daring design aesthetic the result was an enduring partnership and 15 iconic buildings.

101 California
San Francisco

53rd at Third
(the Lipstick Building)
New York

343 Sansome
San Francisco

580 California
San Francisco

Capital Holding Center*
Louisville, KY

Bank of America Center
Houston

Comerica Tower at Detroit Center*
Detroit

Five Hundred Boylston
Boston

Franklin Square
Washington, D.C.

One Ninety One Peachtree Tower
Atlanta

One Sugar Land Park
Sugar Land

Pennzoil Place
Houston

Post Oak Central
Houston

Wells Fargo Center
Denver

Williams Tower
Houston

*Johnson/Burgee

Photo by Bryan Malloch
Bravery Chef Hall Provides a Chef-Driven Approach to Food Hall Eating

Walk past the Palm Springs-inspired landscape and through the doors of Bravery Chef Hall, and a symphony of sound and scent assault the senses. There’s Ben McPherson, behind the glass of BOH Pizza and Pasta, kneading dough for fresh pasta, traces of flour dotting the counters, accompanied by the metallic swish of pizza pans sliding in and out of the oven. In the back, Jess DeSham Timmons and Felix Florez at Cherry Block Butchers greet diners to the thunk and clang of their custom, hand-made smoker that cooks their daily meat selections. Further back, the sizzle of an egg hitting the griddle and the outsize voice of Richard Knight is the landmark for Atlas Diner. Through the back door is a tranquil garden, beckoning despite Houston’s end-of-summer heat and where the whoosh of steam from a cappuccino maker is the soundtrack for another Downtown morning.

Bravery Chef Hall has firmly anchored itself on a corner in the historic Market Square neighborhood, and the newcomer is set to change the Houston food scene. It pulls the chef-driven restaurant philosophy that’s been the heart of Houston dining for a decade into the fast-casual setting of a food hall. Each of the seven restaurants is headed by a chef who, along with his or her team, both cooks and serves food to diners. It’s like an ongoing show kitchen for those who sit at the counters, where they watch their food being created and chat with the chefs about the individual dishes. The only way the place could be more immersive is if diners jumped in front of the stoves and grills and woks for a little DIY dinner. And for those who want to grab and go, Bravery is set up to allow diners to take gourmet selections and continue on their way or eat in the common areas.

Reflecting Houston’s own diversity, the restaurants in Bravery span global cuisine. From Italian to Vietnamese to Japanese...
to an American diner laced with some British influences—not to mention a full bar and wine bar with selections from around the world—the hall is a United Nations of flavor.

“We consider ourselves a chef incubator,” says Shepard Ross, a partner in the venture, along with Ahn Mai and Lian Nguyen.

The chefs who’ve set up shop in Bravery each own some stake in their restaurants, and the team behind the hall serves as a financial partner. None of the concepts are necessarily there for forever; the idea, Ross stresses, is that they’ll one day move on and open their own brick-and-mortar spots. Some already have and are in the hall because the concept sounded like great fun. At the end of their three-year leases, each chef can opt to stick around or “fly the nest,” as Ross puts it.

For those who’ve not headed their own concepts, Bravery Chef Hall gives them structure and mentoring on how to operate a restaurant business. All of the chefs have worked in restaurants around the city and the country, but they might not have waded into the world of ordering supplies, dealing with infrastructure or the other million tiny details of running a business. The backbone of Bravery handles those day-to-day issues, while working with the chefs to help them understand the full scope of running a restaurant.

By having the chefs serve their food directly to customers, they gain an appreciation for what’s usually a front-of-house job. It also means they make more money—any tips they receive are theirs. In a traditional restaurant setting, servers are often paid one hourly rate, relying on tips to make up the rest, while kitchen staff are paid another, without access to tips.

“When we dreamed up this concept, we felt this could be the evolution of the food hall,” says Mai. “But we were also looking at the idea of how to tackle the issue of fairer wages for those who work the front of house versus the back of house.”

While that wage structure is an integral part of Bravery, the focus is definitely on the food and those who create it. From midday to evening—and beyond, in some cases—the energy and excitement of Bravery’s cuisine makes this a must-visit for Downtown dwellers and visitors.

With its prime spot on the ground floor of Aris Market Square, the hall has the potential to be the regular dining destination for those living in the luxury high-rise. No matter where the diners come to Bravery from, however, every visit should prove different, given the selections of cuisine and specials offered by all of the chefs.

From day to night, from global cuisine to American comfort food, from coffee to cocktails, Bravery Chef Hall has it all.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KATYA HORNER
ITALIAN PASSION

At BOH Simple Ingredients
Pack a Flavor Punch
In Italian, “boh” is teenage slang, used the same way American teens might say “whatever.” It’s a phrase McPherson recalls from spending time in Naples, where his father and little sister once lived.

“I’d go visit and she and her friends said it all the time,” he laughs. “When it came time to name this concept, I was thinking of something else and she said, ‘No! Boh!’”

BOH is McPherson’s love letter to Italy. The chef, who’s spent a career in Houston making decidedly American and continental fare at places like Prohibition Supper Club and Krisp Bird & Batter, and has flirted with Latin cuisine over at Batanga, has always had a passion for Italian food. He was dazzled by the idea that simple ingredients like tomatoes, basil, cheeses, could create fireworks of flavor. He’s taking that same minimalist approach at BOH, where the menu specializes in pizzas and homemade pastas.

Behind the glass wall that separates BOH’s seating area from its cooking space, diners can see McPherson and his team stretching and rolling dough on a gorgeous wood table the chef thinks will become the centerpiece of the restaurant. Being a part of Bravery means each chef is onstage as diners get to see them cook, as well as take orders and serve. BOH’s cuisine, McPherson thinks, is a natural for that kind of space.

“We’re making orecchiette by hand,” he says excitedly. “Rolling out these long ropes and shaping them with our thumbs. We’ll do campanelle, which is this cool, seashell-looking pasta.”

McPherson says his pasta selection is actually driven by the sauces he’s making, as each one grabs the sauce differently. The orecchiette, for example, arrives with fennel sausage, broccoli rabe, arbol chili, anchovy sofrito and pecorino cheese. His spaghetti has a classic San Marzano tomato sauce with basil, garlic, and extra virgin olive oil.

And then, there are the pizzas. All are offered by the slice, and all are done in the al taglio style.

“Pizza al taglio is considered a healthier pizza in Italy,” he says. “The long fermentation makes the dough easier to digest. When you eat it, you don’t get the heavy feeling like when eating lots of bread.”

He thinks that will be popular with diners, and the four pizzas on the current menu include favorites like a traditional Margherita with tomato, basil and olive oil; prosciutto crudo with prosciutto di Parma and heirloom tomatoes; and a pepperoni pizza with pepperoni cups, (a little pepperoni that curls up and forms cups that render the fat) oregano and parmigiana.

Growing up in Alabama, McPherson was surrounded by traditional southern cuisine, things like bacon green beans and cornbread. Mobile, where his family is from, is on the coast, so into the mix came shrimp and seafood. Then his father moved to Italy.

“We were outside Tuscany, and I remember he let me drink a glass of white wine,” McPherson says about one childhood visit. “And then, there was this pasta. I ate four bowls of it. Somehow, that’s when my life changed.”

He would go on to work in restaurants in Italy for seven years before coming back to the States. He is passionate about the Bayou City’s diverse cuisine and global flavors. That’s something he loves about Bravery, as though the space is a microcosm of Houston at large.

“It’s awesome,” he says about the space and being around fellow chefs. “There’s such a dynamic group here, and some great offerings.”
When Shepard Ross lays out a wine, those in the know understand they’re in for something special. Ross is the kind of enthusiast who naturally pulls others into his excitement. Ross has been everything from an actor to a menu developer to a wine buyer, opening and consulting for restaurants all over Houston. He’s a partner in Bravery Chef Hall, as well as the mastermind behind the hall’s wine bar.

Stretching along a long spot against the right wall of the space, the modern metal-and-wood area is accented with a blue-star-studded-tile counter and mint green bar chairs. Thirty wines are on tap, every single one of them hand-selected by Ross and designed to go with the hall’s global cuisine.

“A third of these wines are proprietary blends,” Ross says. “We’ve worked with winemakers to do our own blends and barrels and that will continue to increase as the vintages become available to us.”

Because Bravery is a chef-driven food hall, with each concept offering high-quality, curated cuisine, it made sense to ensure there was an equally high-quality wine bar. Diners, Ross says, naturally want an elevated wine experience if they’re having an elevated food experience. While the wine bar is one of three bar programs in the hall (the others are Lockwood Station and The Secret Garden), it has a foundational element Ross believes meshes with all of Bravery’s food offerings.

Wines are available by the glass and by the bottle, and diners have the option of grabbing a glass and sitting at the bar or taking that glass (or bottle) to one of the other concepts and savoring it with food from Bravery’s chefs. Ross says the hall will also add what he calls “wine slingers” to go around to diners and take their orders.

Ross wants the wine bar—and the whole hall—to become a place for socializing and engagement. His theory is that those seated at the bar will hear bartenders talking to guests about the wines, and guests will then start conversations with each other about what they’ve had and what they like, which creates an exchange of ideas that might lead to networking or even new friendships. He’s hoping the wine bar will be the place people can set down their phones and interact with each other.

“This can be a learning experience,” he says. “People are just dying to try new things. Most people love to have experiences, once they see the risk factor doesn’t have to be intimidating.”

Ross is also emphasizing that drinkers can expect a high level of service from the wine bar, with knowledgeable staff who are looking to provide them with something they’ll enjoy. There is a range of styles and prices, so everyone can find something suitable for their taste and budget.

“I want to put value in your glass,” he says enthusiastically. “I want people to fight for a seat here, there is such a great place to be.”

“This can be a learning experience. People are just dying to try new things. Most people love to have experiences, once they see the risk factor doesn’t have to be intimidating.”
RAISE A
GLASS
Bravery Wine Bar Brings the World to Downtown
A CUT ABOVE

Cherry Block Craft Butcher and Kitchen is Where Southern Comfort Meets Inspired Service
Chefs Felix Florez and Jessica Timmons are the kind of business partners who finish each other’s sentences. As they discuss their plans for Cherry Block Craft Butcher and Kitchen, they fall into an easy rapport born from affection, trust and respect.

“I hit upon the name Cherry Block because when you say it, it sounds good,” says Florez.

“It’s not intimidating to pronounce,” interjects Timmons.

“It’s also an ode to the old butchers of the 1900s, the ‘20s, ‘30s, with blood on the bibs of their aprons,” elaborates Florez.

For Florez, Cherry Block is one more prong in an already thriving business that includes Black Hill Ranch, a farm offering fine cuts of beef and pork to restaurants and individuals. For Timmons, who left the Landry’s empire after more than a decade, and who was a partner in Alvin’s Caboose BBQ, it’s an opportunity to blend her culinary chops with front-of-house skills. Since Bravery Chef Hall’s design puts chefs not only at the stove or the grill, but also in front of guests, the energy Florez and Timmons exude should make Cherry Block a popular destination.

“It’s going to be awesome!” Timmons said just prior to Bravery opening its doors, both about the restaurant and working with Florez, who readily agreed.

Cherry Block’s kitchen space is anchored by a massive butcher block of cherry wood (of course) custom-designed for the space by a company in the Heights. All of the dishes are prepared on a grill and smoker that Florez made himself, big, black, heavy iron things with hints of copper and brass.

Florez opened Black Hill Ranch in 2009 as part of a side project.

“My ultimate goal was to take a product from point A to point Z,” Florez explains. “With Black Hill, we’d raise and harvest and sell pork to wholesalers and that took us from point A to about G. With Cherry Block, we’re raising the animals, harvesting them, and then getting them into our restaurant and making our dishes to put in front of diners, which is that A to Z I was looking for.”

Using his own products means that Florez can assure guests of its high quality. With a menu that includes dishes like pork chops, mac and cheese, burgers, shrimp and cracklins, and blackened catfish with alligator sausage, Cherry Block takes Florez’s commitment to sustainable practices and combines it with Texas passion and home cooking.

“We wanted to offer things that people know and understand,” says Timmons about the menu.

That doesn’t mean Cherry Block is skimping on either creativity or quality. Everything on the menu is done in-house, and the restaurant offers exceptional cuts of beef and pork, butchered to Florez’s and Timmons’ specifications, providing a fine-dining experience at an attractive price point.

“I think the steak and eggs is going to be a huge hit,” says Timmons. “It’s a seared RC Ranch Wagyu with uni aioli and blind fish roe.”

“We’re also doing a dish called Gulf and Ranch,” says Florez.

For the Gulf and Ranch, Florez takes the spinalis, the muscle that surrounds the eye of the rib eye, peels it away and stuffs it with shrimp andouille sausage. “We’ll roll it, like a porchetta, and then finish it on our wood-fire grill,” he explains.

The pair is excited to be around such a talented group of fellow chefs. They also can’t wait to have their guests come to know them and the rest of the Cherry Block team, and they fully expect diners to create a sort of DIY progressive dinner or lunch when they come in.

“Come in and grab something from The Blind Goat and from us,” says Timmons. “You know, mix and match with a bunch of small plates,” says Timmons.

“Yeah, if you come in with a group, split up, get a bunch of things, and let everybody share,” finishes Florez.

The two laugh at each other in a way that shows they’re so comfortable working together, diners should expect a great experience.
The thing Daniel Lee, Patrick Pham and their restaurant partner Jonathan Tran want to make clear is that this isn’t your grandmother’s sushi and yakitori spot. This bamboo-inspired, sea-foam green and blonde wood-accented Kokoro is very much a 21st-century concept, even as it nods to the past.

“We’re respecting the traditions of our childhoods, but providing those flavors on a different scale,” says Tran.

The trio have worked together in the past, crossing paths at Uchi, where they honed their sushi skills.

“I’ve been working in restaurants since I was 16,” says 29-year-old Lee, who started off in a hibachi place in high school, then briefly owned a sushi spot in Virginia. He worked in San Francisco and Washington, D.C., before coming to Houston. “This is the only thing I know how to do.”

That single-minded focus, and the team’s passion for their heritage—Lee’s is Korean, and Pham and Tran’s is Vietnamese—is evident in all the parts of Kokoro, starting with its name. In Japanese, the word means heart, and this group of young guns wants diners to understand they’re not just offering up another hand-roll or Japanese show restaurant. They’re using fresh, local seafood, as well as sourcing from around the world. They’ve got tuna coming in from Baja, Mexico and salmon from New Zealand. Japanese scallops and sea bream are also on the menu.

“We want to bring good quality fish at a decent price,” says Pham. “And our hand rolls are more like tubes, not the traditional cones people think of.”

“In traditional yakitori [grilled meat skewers], they’re grilling with a sauce called tari,” says Tran. “We’re marinating our meat in Thai curries. We’ll add on Latin flavors, like pastor-style pork. We also have what we call Japanese elotes, kind of a play on Mexican street corn.”

The menu features selections like pork belly basted in a chili-lime preparation. One chicken offering is flavored with yuzu butter. Another offers a peanut curry combination.

Lee, Pham and Tran have taken tremendous care to ensure the execution is exactly what they want it to be, even importing a grill from Japan. The half-charcoal, half-gas instrument was an expensive investment and uses Japanese charcoal, which, they agree, provides an entirely different flavor than what diners might typically encounter.

“Whatever we cook with this has so much flavor,” Lee says. “And Japanese charcoal doesn’t fire up as much as what we think of when we think charcoal. It smokes white, and that coats the food, adding an extra layer of flavor to it.”

The trio are excited to be part of Bravery, and they’ve taken great care to make the space into something they feel diners will love. All of them are happy being able to interact with their guests, explaining their processes and ideas. Lee says he wants those who sit at Kokoro’s counter to feel like friends and family.

“I’m looking forward to educating people,” says Pham. “We want to show people sushi isn’t just rolls. And I want them to see it doesn’t cost you and arm and a leg to eat good sushi. You don’t have to save up for a month to experience this.”

As Kokoro continues to find its footing, diners should look for some different elements between the lunch and dinner selections, with some evening offerings that will further expand on the trio’s concept.

They also have their own take on a Japanese dining tradition called yaki-kase, loosely translated as “trust the chef.” Koroko-kase selections will introduce diners to multiple fish options and preparations, all of them determined by the chef team. Lee, Pham and Tran think it’s a way to not only develop rapport with diners but to also showcase the sheer fun of trying new things.

Their excitement speaks not only to their own work ethic and desire to run their own business, but also to what they see as a renewed energy in Downtown, overall. While they were working to build the restaurant, they got a front-row seat to see how Market Square, and the larger city core, ebbs and flows throughout the day, from the coffee-carrying workers heading into office buildings to the throngs of lunchtime diners, to young couples and single professionals strolling the streets when offices shut their doors.

“A lot more people are coming Downtown,” says Pham. “A lot more restaurants, a lot more bars—not just franchises. It’s a great place to be.”
TRADITION
WITH A
TWIST
Kokoro Puts a Modern Spin on Japanese Cuisine
Lockwood Station Brings Elevated Cocktails to Bravery Chef Hall
David Cedeno has done a lot of things. He created Brasil’s cocktail program when the funky Montrose spot decided to add liquor to its already popular fast-casual offerings. He survived as an artist, making and selling paintings. He hosts a podcast called The Open Bar. As he sits on the plush orange cushions of a banquette in Lockwood Station, it’s obvious that he’s poured his creativity into creating a successful business.

Lockwood Station is unique among Bravery Chef Hall’s offerings. Like its hall neighbors, it’s driven by the passion of its founder. But while Bravery’s other concepts are business partnerships between the individual chefs and Bravery Chef Hall, Lockwood Station is the inaugural business in Bravery’s bar incubator program. It’s designed to offer a launch pad for a bar to move from Bravery to its own brick-and-mortar location in about 18 months. Shepard Ross and his Bravery Chef Hall partners heard multiple pitches from would-be bar owners and were blown away by Cedeno’s.

“My whole presentation was just a whole other level,” Ross says. “Just how meticulous he was, how he wanted it to look, what he thought the atmosphere would be, the level of service he wanted to provide, the products he wanted to bring in—I mean stuff no one else has.”

For Cedeno, it’s not enough that Lockwood Station—aMetroRail stop near his home—be just another craft cocktail bar. He’s looking to embrace an entire aesthetic, building on Bravery’s midcentury-modern vibe.

He wants Lockwood Station to be the kind of place where people feel welcome, whether they are stopping in on their way home from work, dropping by after a show or returning for their umpteenth visit because they live nearby. The menu features a series of classics, including daiquiris and whiskey-driven selections. But one of Cedeno’s big plans is to focus on vermouth, a spirit that hit a heyday among drinkers in the 1950s. He’ll have at least 30 available at the bar.

“My objective is to reintroduce vermouth to the American public,” he says. “Unfortunately, throughout the dark days of cocktails—which was the 1970s—bartenders lost a lot of knowledge because of the advent of frozen drink machines and synthetic ingredients, like powders used for making margaritas.”

“I’ve done about 20 menus,” he said shortly before Bravery’s opening, discussing how he was working to hit on just the right selection of regular cocktails and sippers. “But we do have a full bar, so whatever someone wants we’ll do as long as we have the ingredients.”

Cedeno has a standard list of about eight cocktails that are signatures of Lockwood Station. He’ll also offer flights of vermouth and whiskey as the concept continues to grow. The plan, after all, is all about growth. After Lockwood Station’s 18-month stint, Cedeno will “fly the nest,” as Ross says, moving into a new space all his own and allowing another bar concept to come to Bravery.

In the meantime, Cedeno plans to enjoy the ride. Lockwood Station has its own entry from Travis Street, where drinkers can come in and socialize when the rest of the hall is closed. He anticipates the place will be a gathering spot in the evenings, and he’s looking forward to providing patrons a high-quality experience.

“A bartender to me is a host, a storyteller,” he says. “They’re a bouncer. They condone. They console. They do all these things.”
ucked into a wrought-iron-fenced enclave just off Main Street, Bravery Chef Hall’s The Secret Garden beckons with plush seating and cozy tables shaded by umbrellas. Most mornings, its soundtrack is the hiss of steam from cappuccino and the tink-tink-tink of spoons against ceramic mugs. But as the sun starts to sink, the garden’s soundtrack morphs into the distinct sh-sh-sh of ice against a cocktail shaker and the satisfying waterfall of a well-crafted concoction being poured into a glass.

A cozy spot between Main Street and the back entry of Atlas Diner, The Secret Garden was conceived to be everything from morning coffee shop to weekend brunch spot to laid-back bar. Headed by Jonathan Gallardo, a native of Monterrey, Mexico who worked behind Prohibition Supper Club’s bar for six years, it’s a global concept within a global concept within a global city core.

“When the Bravery partners described what this would be to me, I was amazed,” he says. “I thought this was going to be so different in such a good way.”

Encouraged by Bravery partners Ahn Mai and Lian Nguyen, Gallardo decided to come on board to run the hybrid program. A 15-year veteran of bars and the hospitality industry, he looks forward to seeing The Secret Garden grow as a gathering spot. With its own entrance, the patio place can accommodate diners before Bravery opens for the day and after it closes in the evening. Both The Secret Garden and its closest neighbor, Atlas Diner, can be closed off from the rest of the hall to offer late-night and early-morning fare.

The Secret Garden’s coffee program is crammed with international offerings. Turkish coffee, Vietnamese iced coffee, traditional French presses and Italian styles dominate the menu. Gallardo has been helped on the coffee side by Nana Pesquera, who brings nine years of experience to the venture, having worked at Agora over in Montrose and also in Vietnam, Lebanon and Thailand. The pastry selections are designed to complement the coffees, and Gallardo says there’s an array of traditional croissants and muffins, as well as some things that he considers truly special.

“We have al sajorpa, these traditional Argentinean cookies, that we make using my grandmother’s recipe,” he says. “She would make these when I was growing up and share them with the whole family. I can’t wait to share them with everybody.”

The coffee bar options are available starting at 7:30 in the morning. As the morning eases on to lunchtime and later happy hour, the cocktail program takes over. Gallardo refers to it as “lady driven,” offering lighter libations, including selections such as frozé and other frozen concoctions, as well as cocktails made with fresh juices, designed to be accompaniments to the weekend brunch.

“This is definitely a different kind of program,” Gallardo says about the combined concept. “But I think it’s going to something people really love. People love to be outside when the weather is great, so here they can come and sit, have a drink, or grab something from one of the restaurants inside and bring it out here to enjoy with coffee or a cocktail.”

With the bar seating and the lounge space, The Secret Garden can easily accommodate 40 people, making it a natural spot to hang out. The space feels a world away from Downtown’s hustle and flow, and drinkers and diners will likely see it as an oasis.

“This can be a learning experience. People are just dying to try new things. Most people love to have experiences, once they see the risk factor doesn’t have to be intimidating.”
The Secret Garden Offers Day-to-Night Refreshment
World on His Shoulder
Atlas Diner Brings A Global Approach to Comfort Food
The cobalt-blue tile supporting the Formica counter that runs along Bravery’s back wall is a natural beacon for diners, pulling them into a timewarp. The décor of Atlas Diner borrows liberally from New York in the 1940s. Sleek chrome lines accent the space. White bowls and dishes cram the metal racks. A long, flattop stove is the anchor of the operation. And at the center of this whole affair, you’ll find Richard Knight.

The loquacious Brit with a booming laugh is known in Houston for an almost fearless culinary approach. This is the guy who opened Feast, one of the city’s first “tip to tail” restaurants, vowing to find a use for every part of an animal he brought in. He even got a tattoo of a pig to commemorate the opening. He’d go on to work with Treadsack and Hunky Dory, further embarking on the culinary journey he began at 14 when he started working as a dishwasher in a restaurant in his native England. Knight’s quick wit and infectious sense of humor and fun almost belie how seriously he takes food. But, to be clear: he takes food seriously, but not all that seriously.

“We’re going to do some crazy stuff,” he says of Atlas. “We’ll do some European things, some Indian, touches of Asian. I’ve meddled with the classic diner cuisine.” When Bravery Chef Hall’s partners Ahn Mai, Lian Nguyen and Shepard Ross approached him about coming in with a restaurant, they’d already had the idea they wanted a diner, and Knight said they’d even come up with the name. After their pitch, Knight thought it sounded like a grand time and figured he could turn the whole thing on its head, lending his signature style to the concept.

“I love a bit of fun,” he says, almost devilishly. Atlas seats 16 at its counter; an adjacent couple of banquettes have room for eight or so more. Knight wants Atlas to be a gathering place, and while all of Bravery’s restaurants are set up to embrace that, Atlas is a bit different. During the day, the diner is one more space in the wide maze of cuisine that is Bravery. But at 10 p.m., when the rest of hall shutters, Atlas kicks up the pace into late-night dining. It’s got its own entrance from both Main Street and a door in Aris Market Square (perfect for residents to feel like it’s their own private space), and is open until 2 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays.

“I’m very excited,” Knight says about being chef-cum-showman behind the Atlas counter. “Everyone’s going to be doing everything: running up and down the counter, taking food orders, chatting to people. This is very different, and I’ve not done something like this before.”

Foodwise, Atlas goes from early morning to late night, with subtle shifts in the menu. Fresh baked pastries, comfort-food diner breakfasts, a dish called Dakota Pancakes (named for his newly adopted 10-year-old daughter), blue-plate specials and fish and chips all make appearances. Knight promises a gourmet grilled cheese sandwich as a Monday special offering, as well as other quick-and-easy lunch options that come with a drink for $15 for those who need to take their plates and run, or only have a short time to sit at the counter.

“Just a classic diner menu,” he says. “But I’ve put a few English-isms on there. So, I’ve got bangers and mash, we’ll be doing some terrines, duck-liver mousse. I’ve got a masala dosa—a traditional Indian very, very thin pancake, even finer than a crepe and they leave it to get crispy and you put some spiced curry masala potatoes on. We’ll do Japanese pancakes just for brunch only.”

The late-night menu will be a slight cut-down from the dayside version, but Knight promises great options.

“Drunky monkey kind of things,” he emphasizes.

Knight’s had a blast putting together his menu, but he’s even more excited about being one piece of the larger Bravery Chef Hall.

“We’re all chef’s chefs,” he says, praising his neighbors. “We all work at a very high level. And I think people will love the hustle and bustle here – all the sights and sounds and smells, all this crazy stuff. I think they’ll walk by and look inside and go, ‘what’s going on in there’ and want to be part of it.”
The Blind Goat is my very first foray into the industry,” says Christine Ha, sitting in the dappled sunshine of Aris Market Square’s airy common room on an afternoon in July. “Unlike the other chefs, I didn’t come from running restaurants before. I consider myself a home cook.”

The home cook found herself in the middle of the restaurant industry after a star turn in 2012 on Gordon Ramsey’s MasterChef, a reality competition show where amateur cooks complete challenges set forth by the notoriously brash Ramsey. Those who make it through the elimination rounds and Ramsey’s criticism not only get the coveted MasterChef title, they take home a $250,000 prize. Ha won season three, where her final three-course meal was Thai papaya salad with crab and mixed vegetables; braised pork belly with rice, crispy kale and maitake mushrooms; and a dessert of coconut lime sorbet with a ginger tuile. With her win, she became the first legally blind contestant to take home the title. (Ha began gradually losing her sight in her 20s, after being diagnosed with neuromyelitis optica, a condition that enflames the optic nerve).

Since that win, people have been expecting me to open a place,” she says. “I’ve done pop-ups, but now I am finally at the stage where I felt like this opportunity was right, this was the right time and the right place.”

Ha describes The Blind Goat as a “modern Vietnamese gastropub.”

“I’m taking a lot of lesser-known street foods of Vietnam and giving them my own personal twist,” she says.

Born in southern California to Vietnamese parents and raised in Texas, Ha’s menu speaks to her history and heritage. Her mother died when she was 14, having never taught Ha how to cook.

“She didn’t leave any recipes. As many moms do, she just measured by knowledge or memory,” says Ha. “I really missed her cooking in college and decided to try to teach myself to cook.”

At first, she said, it was out of necessity. She bought Vietnamese cookbooks and began her self-taught journey while at the University of Texas. She’d read the recipes, trying to absorb the processes and ingredients that would become the food she remembered. Along the way, she found out she enjoyed cooking—especially when she shared her dishes with her roommates and friends and saw how they enjoyed eating them.

“There was something that made me very happy in creating something with my own two hands and satiating people and giving them joy as well,” she says.

She’s hoping diners at Bravery Chef Hall feel the same kind of joy. Ha loves that traditional Vietnamese noodle soups and banh mi sandwiches are as ubiquitous as barbecue and burgers in the Bayou City and believes The Blind Goat can introduce diners to different dishes.

“Across northern, central and southern Vietnam, they all have what I would call a different tweak in their cuisine,” she says. “I’m trying to take those foods and introduce them to Houston while putting my own spin on them.”

Her menu includes items such as kexo, a Vietnamese queso, where she incorporates a house-made hot sauce of dried shrimp, fish sauce, lemon grass and palm sugar into cheese sauce, then serves it with wonton chips. Another, more traditional dish, bánh khot, which she describes as a turmeric coconut fritter, also makes an appearance.

There’s also the dish that’s most personal to her, her mother’s fried spring rolls. They use a Filipino style of wrapper, giving a bit more crisp and crunch than the traditional Vietnamese rice paper roll. Ha says this was her favorite thing her mom made. Because they were so labor intensive, she only made them for birthday parties or other celebrations. Like other dishes, Ha had to teach herself to make it, and she was delighted when she finally reproduced the taste she grew up loving.

For Ha, The Blind Goat is a culmination of experiences. After she lost her sight, she learned to rely more on her other senses, which have helped her in the kitchen. She’s had to train her staff that she needs things in precise places so she can easily grab them, and if things are moved, to give her detailed directions on where they are.

Ha wants to show diners how diverse the regional cooking of Vietnam can be. In the north, she explains, dishes are simple, with few ingredients and flavors from a bone broth. In the central region, dishes are more spicy, and in the south, they tend to be sweet.

“So all of these kinds of different lessons I’ve learned in my travels I want to share with Houstonians,” she says. “The cuisine is even broader than I knew.”
A MODERN VIETNAMESE GASTROPUB

The Blind Goat Explores a Country’s Rich Flavors
plate.

THE GUIDE TO EATING DOWNTOWN

Best Bites
FOOD TOUR
These listings are not reviews but are a guide to Downtown dining spots. *Recommended* restaurants are selected by downtown editors and are based on food quality, menu selection, service, ambiance and value.

**NEW!**

Biggio’s American
Biggio’s is not your average sports bar. The two-story sports haven named after the 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.


BirdDog Saint
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.


Birraporetto’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.


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. $ $

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.

massa.com. 1160 Smith, 713.650.0837. L Mon–Fri; D Mon–Sat. $$

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. $ $

Bombay Pizza Co. Indian Fusion
Pusing 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.

bombaypizzaaco.com. 914 Main, 713.654.4444. L & D Mon–Fri; D Mon–Sat. $$

Boomtown Coffee Main St. Coffee House
Part coffee shop, part bar, Boomtown’s drink 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.


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, D Mon–Sat. $$

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. $ $

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 offerings include classic dishes like risotto, steak frites and crêpes, along with delicacies such as escargots and chicken liver pâté.


NEW!

Bravery Chef Hall Food Hall
The first of its kind, Bravery Chef Hall is a next generation food hall with five chef-driven concepts and a Gagganau Concept Kitchen with a rotating roster of guest chefs. Culinary options include Atlas Diner, The Blind Goat, BOH Fasta & Pizza, Cherry Block Craft Butcher & Kitchen and Kokoro. The chef hall also houses three bars including Bravery Wine Bar, Lockwood Station and Secret Garden.

braverychefhall.com. 409 Travis, L, D, LN Daily. $$ $

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!

716 Main. 1722.303.3 B & L Mon–Fri. $ $

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, 713.228.0303. B & L Mon–Fri. $ $

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. $ 

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.


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.


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 & D Daily. $ 

Chipotle Mexican
Known for its large portions, this Mexican fast casual spot offers a variety of wholesome menu items.


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, shuffleboard, video games and an awesome outdoor patio!

christiantailgate.com, 1012 Congress, 281.556.1010. L, D & LN. $ 

جينسون كايدن
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 & D Daily. $ 

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, shuffleboard, video games and an awesome outdoor patio!

christiantailgate.com, 1012 Congress, 281.556.1010. L, D & LN. $
Best Bites FOOD TOUR
BY JOHN LUEDEMANN

Star Gilani doesn’t remember much about her childhood in Dubai. Her family relocated to the United States when she was 12, but one memory that has stuck with her vividly is the chicken shawarma.

“I remember we had our groceries delivered there, and I would have them bring me a chicken shawarma every time, but at the end of the month my parents would get the bill and I would get in so much trouble. Still, I kept doing it because the food was that good.”

It’s a craving that has stuck with her ever since, and she proudly declares the dish as part of her weekly routine. A self-described “foodie,” Gilani has spent the past year transforming her passion for the diverse flavors of local restaurants into Best Bites Houston, a thriving food tour company.

Since March her company has offered weekly, intimate walking tours of Downtown Houston that combine food, architecture, history and culture into a three-hour experience.

But her path to entrepreneurship started well before that.

Gilani, a graduate of the University of Houston’s Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management, began her career in the tourism industry.

“Right after I graduated from Hilton College, I started working full time for the city of Sugar Land. I actually started off as a coordinator, and about three months in, I was promoted to the tourism and marketing manager for the city.”

In addition to helping brand the town as the “Sweetest City in Texas,” Gilani’s responsibilities included providing tours to companies considering relocation to the area and other entities interested in the region.

In 2016 the travel counselors from the Texas Travel Information Centers recognized her skills as a tour guide as among the best they had seen that year.

Despite her success in the role, she felt her life lacked the balance that was important to her long-term happiness.

“It took me about eight months to develop a product that showcased the diversity of the city and also included a lot of the...
Guests are having these incredible interactions, and getting to meet some of the people behind the scenes.”

historical, architectural and cultural artifacts that both visitors and locals would find attractive,” said Gilani.

Much of the early stages of her planning was consumed by developing partnerships with Downtown restaurants. The tours, which begin at Discovery Green, feature an eclectic mix of eateries with the stops changing from week to week.

Gilani has secured relationships with favorites such as Brasserie du Parc, Kulture, Phoenicia Specialty Foods & MKT Bar, Reserve 101 and The Rustic.

“We’re spoiled, we’re so spoiled,” Gilani states without hesitation. “When I travel to other cities and eat out and compare it to what we have at home, I constantly think that I miss Houston. Other places just aren’t as good or as authentic.”

While the food, including, of course, the chicken shawarma at Phoenicia, is the star of the tour, the interactions that occur along the way are just as likely to captivate the guests. Her stops feature visits with the chefs or restaurant management to discuss the carefully chosen fare and specialty drinks featured throughout the evening.

“We’re not only eating delicious food, but also meeting people behind the scenes, so particularly for the Best Bite Houston tour, I think it makes us unique compared with other food tours,” she explained. “You’re getting that face-to-face connection with someone who works there and helped prepare what you’re eating or drinking, so it really goes the extra mile.”

In fact, she reports that after virtually every tour, some of her guests will decide to return to one of the stops to sample more of their dishes or drinks. Of course, that’s a trend that her restaurant partners appreciate, too.

“They love it because they are seeing the people come back,” she beamed. “I get tagged on Instagram when they visit the places again, and those are the big moments that we’re seeing when the people come back in the restaurants and are spending a lot of money, so this is exactly what they want.”

Whether it’s the night of the tour, or weeks later, Gilani is thrilled that her goal of increasing Downtown Houston’s accessibility as a destination is being realized.

Gilani’s offerings are attracting participants from well outside the region. Guests join from nearby cities such as Austin and Dallas, or from as far as the United Kingdom, Australia and Ethiopia, and all places in between.

A mix of couples, families and solo travelers, every tour has a different composition of guests, which Gilani points to as one of her favorite aspects of her new role.

“Every experience is so memorable to me. I love having international guests join us, and I think it really is a great way to make new friends in a short three-hour time period. When I see people exchanging numbers or Facebook information, I feel like my life is complete,” she laughed.

After spending nearly nine months building relationships with restaurateurs and perfecting the tour experience, Best Bites Houston launched its weekly Saturday tour in March. By late June she decided it was time to let two of her biggest skeptics see her vision for themselves.

“When I first told them my plans, my parents thought it was the worst decision I could ever make,” remembered Gilani. “I had a stable, government job, and they loved how hard I was working. They just could not understand why I would leave it.”

It wasn’t a complete surprise though. Despite owning a successful business in Dubai, Gilani’s parents realized their five children, all girls, would have limited opportunities there, particularly career-wise, and chose to move to the U.S.

“I actually took them on separate tours so they could enjoy it on their own,” she said. “My mom cried afterward and said, ‘I see what you’re doing, and I support you 100 percent and see why you have so much passion for it.’”

Her father’s response was just as positive. “Today, Gilani is excited to build on the “good mojo” she has developed. In addition to the weekly tours on Saturdays, customized, private tours are available. A regular Friday night tour is likely to be added soon.

In the meantime, she’s happy to be spreading the word about Downtown Houston’s amazing restaurants and connecting people who are unlikely to have crossed paths anywhere else.
Conservatory Beer Garden & Food Hall
Conservatory Underground Beer Garden & Food Hall is the first food hall in Houston to showcase a curated list of food vendors, including Moku Bar, Arte Pizzeria, Noble Rot Wine Bar, Treacherous Leches, The Pho 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 brewerries, foreign imports, and wine.

Corner Bakery
Corner Bakery is 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 rain 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 pastrami sandwiches, Neapolitan-style pizzas, burgers and other tasty menu items. coteriehtx.com. 737 Preston. B, L, D. Daily. $$

Diana American Grill
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 District American
The District offers classic American cuisine in a modern setting. Perfect for lunch or dinner before a show! The menu includes a variety of options like burgers, salads, pasta and small plates. There’s definitely something for everyone! thedistrichtx.com. 610 Main St. L & D. $$$

Domino’s Pizza
975 McKinney, 713.227.3030. P

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
Crawling a burger downtown? Popular for its juicy burgers and great-tasting fries, Eats makes for a great lunchtime stop. Guests can make their burgers exactly how they like them. 804 Milam, 713.223.3287. L. Mon.–Fri. $-

Edgar's Hermo Mexi-South
Edgar's Hermo is a southern American restaurant with a Mexican-inspired twist located inside The Whitehall Hotel. It perfectly blends Houston's native Tex-Mex cuisine with classic southern fare offering menu items like Texas corn cakes with pork chicharon and cotija cheese, mac and cheese with chipotle-grilled Gulf shrimp, and award-winning southern fried stuffed chicken with masa grits and candied bacon jam. thewhitehallhouston.com. 1700 Smith, 713.739.8800. B, L & D Daily. $$

Einstein's Bagels Deli
Known as a great place to grab freshly-baked bagels and coffee for breakfast, they also serve up delectable lunch choices that include paninis, melts and pizza bagels. Be an office hero and use the catering service to treat your work pals. einsteinbrothers.com. 1200 Louisiana, 713.375.4775. B, L & LN Mon–Sun. $-

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 filled with classic Tex-Mex dishes like pomegranate salsa, charred scallions, pumpkin seeds and more. elbigbad.com. 419 Travis, 713.229.8811. 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. $$

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. beerskundur.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 luxe 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. foundationroomhouston.com. 1204 Caroline, 888.402.5837. D & LN Fri–Sat. $$$-

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

Grotto Ristorante Italian
This trendy Italian eatery is conveniently located on Downtown’s restaurant row—Avenida Houston! Enjoy spectacular views of nearby Minute Maid Park en route to Green as you experience a revolutionized take on Italian cuisine from small and sharable plates, to fresh salads and traditional dishes like Neapolitan thin crust pizzas and house made pastas. grottorestaurants.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. $$-

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

Hearst on the Green American
Located inside the Embassy 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. hearshouston.com. 1515 Dallas, 832.377.3362. L & D Daily; LN Fri–Sat; BR Sun. $$-

Home Plate Bar & Grill Classic American
A great hangout spot before or after an Astros game. Enjoy a full menu of all-American favorites. homeplategrill.com. 1800 Texas, 713.222.1993. L & D Daily (may close earlier during off-season so call first). $$-

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

Irmga’s Mexican
Irmga 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 Chenevent, 713.222.0767. B & L Mon–Fri; D Thu–Sat. $$-

Irmga’s Southwest Mexican
Irmga’s second location is a hip spot to satisfy a Tex-Mex craving. Enjoy tasty foods and great drinks for lunch or dinner. Only a few short blocks from Minute Maid Park, irmgasouthwest.com. 1475 Texas, 713.247.9651. L & D Mon–Sat. $$-

The Isles Eatery & Rhum Bar Caribbean
The restaurant offers flavorful Caribbean dishes including Mofongo 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! jacksonstbbq.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. jansondeli.com. 901 McKinney, 713.650.1500. B & L Mon–Fri. $$-

Irma’s Southwest Mexican
Located inside the Embassy 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. hearshouston.com. 1515 Dallas, 832.377.3362. L & D Daily; LN Fri–Sat; BR Sun. $$-

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. $$-

minute maid park.
Jimmy John’s 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. $ 


Lone Star Coffee Coffee House Lone Star 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. lonestarcoffee.com. 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, delightful deli, global café and traditional Luby’s cafeteria line with all the classic dishes. lubysetc.com. 1301 Fannin, 13th Floor, 713.750.9954. B & L Mon–Fri. $ 

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 taste 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. $ 

Lucy 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. Select drinks and shuffleboard are available lane-side and in the lounge. bwlickystrike.com. GreenStreet, 1201 San Jacinto, Level 3, 713.343.3300. L, D & LN Daily. $ 

Mademoiselle Louise 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 seats 120 and boasts an exhibition kitchen providing guests with an insight into the chefs’ creative process. jwmarriottthotelhouston.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. mangotreethaihostro.com. 914 Main Street, 1125, 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, 713.655.8800. 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 standout. bellarestaurants.com. GreenStreet, 1201 San Jacinto, 832.319.6675. L & D Daily; BR & LN Fri & Sat. $ 

Minuti Coffee Coffee House The coffee is created by a roaster in Dallas, and 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 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. phoeniciafood.com. 1001 Austin, 832.360.2222. B, L & D Daily. $ 

The Moonshiners American The Moonshiners Southern Table + Bar offers up a rebellious reprieve 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 American 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 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 any way it’s ordered. murphysdeli.com. 601 Jefferson, 713.652.4939. 1900 Main, 713.650.3534. 440 Louisiana, 713.247.9122. 700 Louisiana, 713.547.0660. 1415 Louisiana, 713.663.6113. 500 Dallas, 713.654.0033. B & L Mon–Fri all locations. $ 

Niko Niko’s Greek American Houston icon Dimitri Petokakis opened his cafe in 2010 at Market Square Park. Favorites such as the gyro and kebabs are on the menu along with new items such as the breakfast pita. Specialty 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 pastas, pastas, wood-fired pizzas and more Italian eats, along with wine, beer, cocktails and local Kata 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 fettuccine. Get your seafood and burlesque fix all in the same place. prohibitionhoust.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. padthaihostro.com. 401 Louisiana, 713.225.4900. D Daily. 

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 puddling soufflé. pappadeaux.com. 1001 Avenida de las Americas, 713.654.5077. L Fri–Sun; D Daily. $$$$
Pappas BBQ Barbecue One of Houston's most popular casual Tex-Mex restaurants, Pappas BBQ specializes in sizzling fajitas, creamy queso and tortillas that almost melt in your mouth! The Downtown location offers six unique cuisines and cruds that can't be found at any of the other restaurants. pappasbbq.com. Hilton Americas-Houston, 1600 Lamar St, 713.353.4400. L & D Daily. $$

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, scallops 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 shawarmas and pizzas, grab-n-go sushi, sandwiches and various meat and seafood entrees. This is one of a kind downtown destination where you can appreciate down-to-earth gourmet food prices and a unique variety of flavors. phoeniciafoods.com. 1001 Austin, 832.360.2222. B, L & D Daily. $$

Potente Italian A sophisticated Italian restaurant, Potente 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. potentehouston.com. 1515 Texas, 713.237.1515. D Daily. $$$

Prelude Coffee & Tea Coffee House Get your coffee fix at this espresso bar located inside Hines' 609 Main building Your favorite with it for your favorite breakfast and lunch options from local favorite, Morningstar. instagram.com/preludecoffee. 609 Main, 832.382.3466. B & L Mon–Fri. $$

Prohibition American Prohibition is the home of the Moonlight Dolls who dazzle audiences with their sexy yet fun burlesque performances. beamimg with glitz and glamour, this upscale supper club has an exquisite menu featuring fresh Gulf seafood and steaks cooked to perfection! prohibitionhouston.com. 1008 Prairie, 281.940.4636. D Thu–Sat; BR Sun. $$$

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


Rachel's Cafe American Rachel's Cafe is an old fashioned hamburger joint inside the historic Londale Building. This quaint little cafe has an extensive menu with lots of simple classics like burgers, fries, sandwiches and salads—all made fresh! rachelscafehouston.com. 421 San Jacinto, 713.229.7067. L & D Mon–Sat. $$

Roma's Pizza Italian Located just across from the Preston Station on the METRORail, Roma's Pizza offers New York-style pizza by the slice or pie, as well as a variety of salads, lasagnas, ravioli, and chicken dishes. 223 Main, 713.222.1184. L & D Daily. $$

Russo's New York Pizzeria Italian Inspired by the traditional Italian values of family, friends & food, Houston's original doesn't disappoint when it comes to fresh, delicious, homemade Italian meals. And they serve more than just pizza—try one of their specialty calzones, sandwiches or pastas! nypizzeria.com. 604 Polk, 713.759.9800. L & D Daily. $$

Salata American This next-generation salad bar allows you to create your own, tossed-to-order salad or wrap complete with a variety of fresh greens, a large selection of veggies, fruits, nuts, cheeses and more. Top your order off with one of their signature dressings and your choice of chicken, seafood or tofu! salata.com. GreenStreet, 1201 Fannin, 713.275.1088. L & D Daily. $

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


Shake Shack American East Coast burger chain, Shake Shack is heatin' up downtown Houston with cult favorites like the Shack Stack, Chick'n Shack, crinkle cut fries, creamy shakes and Texas-exclusive, the Lockhart Link Burger. shakeshack.com. 702 Main, L, D, Daily. $$


Skyline Deli Deli With their freshly baked bread, Skyline makes a great deli sandwich. 717 Texas, 713.571.0509. B & L Mon–Fri. $

Sol Cafe Mejicano Mexican A family-owned cafe offering traditional Tex-Mex breakfast and lunch dishes made from fresh ingredients. 1205 Travis, 713.651.0049. B & L Mon–Fri. $

Spindletop American A favorite Houston seafood restaurant and fine dining experience ideal for birthday parties, family reunions, anniversaries and engagements. Perched on the 34th floor of Hyatt Regency Downtown, this glass-walled restaurant makes one revolution every 45 minutes, ensuring you’ll enjoy 360-degree views of the city and all of its famous landmarks. houstonregency.hyatt.com. Hyatt Regency, 1200 Louisiana, 713.375.4775. D Tue–Sat. $$$

Stack Burger American This Downtown burger joint is far from ordinary. Serving more than just your everyday burgers, Stack Burger also offers coffee, breakfast, fresh salads and a whole lotta Houston art. stack-burger.com. 703 St. Joseph Pkwy, 713.651.0227. B & L Daily. $

Sub Roc Fast Casual Located inside 1021 Main you’ll find Sub Roc, a quaint little space offering a diverse menu of breakfast and deli lunch options like soups and salads. Whether you’re taking a coffee break or a grab and go sandwich in hand, Sub Roc strives to make every guest’s experience pleasant with a smiling face and a relaxing environment. sub-roc.com. 1021 Main, Suite 200. 713.337.3530. B & L. $

Subway Fast Food 405 Main, 713.227.4700. Daily. $

Table 7 Bistro American Table 7 Bistro is a combination of an upscale, yet casual atmosphere. Weekday happy hour includes $4 well drinks and $2 domestic beers, and it’s happy hour all weekend with $2 mimosas all day on Saturdays and Sundays. district4ril.com. 720 Fannin (@ The Club Quarters, 713.227.4800. B, L & D Daily. $

Tejas Grill & Sports Bar American Located at The Shops at Houston Center, Tejas offers the perfect tailgate menu and full-service bar. tejasgrillandsportsbar.com. 1201 Lamar at The Shops at Houston Center, 713.739.8352. L Mon–Fri; D Mon–Sat. $$

Thai Cafe Asian Make your way to the Historic District and treat your taste buds to the authentic flavors of Thai fusion at this local hub. Menu favorites include a variety of Thai dishes including their Crispy Shrimp & Spicy Tamarind Sauce and Kao Soi. thaicafe917.com. 917 Franklin. 713.228.8424. L & D Mon–Sat. $$


Treebeards Southern A downtown institution for more than 30 years, Treebeards offers tasty Cajun dishes that are sure to satisfy. Favorite menu items include the chicken and shrimp gumbo, red beans and rice and étouffée. For dessert, try the famous butter bar. treebeards.com. 315 Travis, 713.228.2622. Closters at Christ Church Cathedral, 1117 Texas, 713.229.8248. 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.
1400 Dallas, Doubletree Hotel, 713.759.0202.
B, L & D Daily. $5

**NEW** Understory Food Hall
Located at the base of Bank of America tower, this expansive 40-foot atrium which doubles as a lively food hall is filled with natural light, an abundance of community gathering spaces and features diverse food and drink experiences such as Seaside Poke, Flip n' Tatties, Boomtown Coffee, MONA Fresh Italian Food, Mama Mia's Tacos & Tortas, East Hampton Sandwich Co and Silver Lining Bar.
understoryhouston.com, 800 Capitol. B, L, D, Daily. $5

**O Vic & Anthony's Steakhouse**
This world-class steak house is one of the most elegant dining locations in Houston. It boasts rich mahogany woodwork and one-of-a-kind hospitality. Located in the heart of the Bank of America Center.
1510 Texas, 713.228.1111. Mon–Fri; D, Daily. $$$$-

**Walker Street 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.
B, L & D Daily. $5

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

**Wokker at Craft Beer Cellar Asian**
Food truck favorite, Wokker, is now housed inside Craft Beer Cellar. Combining spices and cultures that blend harmoniously, Wokker is known for creating unique dishes that incorporate the wok, proteins and Texas cooking techniques. wokkerhtx.com. 907 Franklin, 713.227.0199. L & D, $.

**Xochi Mexican**
Named after Xochitl, the goddess of the flowers, Xochi specializes in the authentic cuisine of Oaxaca, the culinary capital of Mexico, and incorporates traditional Oaxacan herbs and ingredients throughout its menu. Highlights include the barbacoa de res de zaachila, lechon, and sopas de pedita, an ancient traditional fish and shrimp soup. jüten provecho! xochihouston.com. 1777 Walker, 713.400.3330. L & D, Daily. $5

**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. yourpie.com. 1625 Main (inside SkyHouse Houston), 832.767.2544. B & L Mon–Fri.

**Zero's Sandwich Shop Deli**
A little secret for a made fresh deli sandwich. zerossandwichshop.com. 809 Dallas, 713.650.3333. 1110 Lamar, 713.655.7722.
507 Dallas, 713.739.9955. B & L Mon–Fri.

**Zutro Restaurant & Bar American**
Nestled inside Le Meridien Hotel, Zutro Restaurant & Bar offers reliable quality in a relaxed upscale environment. Tasty dishes are made with locally sourced ingredients and include favorites like Duck and Andouille Gumbo, Crab Gratin and Chicken Fried Pork Tomahawk. 1121 Walker, 346.330.3446.
B, L & D Daily. $5

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Looking for a spot to go after a long day or for a fun night out with friends? Check out some of our favorites!

- **40 Below | 520 Texas Ave. (inside Revention Music Center)**
Located forty steps below Revention Music Center, this luxurious lounge has an exclusive entrance with access to the main music hall and a private bar offering premium food and beverages creating the ultimate pre-show hangout space. reventionmusiccenter.com/40below

- **BASE | 801 Congress**
This underground basement club in Downtown's Historic Market Square neighborhood boasts a high-end nightlife experience with a sleek, mysterious vibe. Guests can expect signature cocktails, world-class DJ's, high-end VIP bottle service and more.
Tue, Fri & Sat 10 pm–2 am. basehouston.com

- **Bardot | 1070 Dallas**
Perched on the second floor of Hotel Alessandra above the atrium, Bardot offers luxurious ambiance and menu options poised to please. Unwind with a hand-crafted cocktail at the end of the day, or start your evening with a glass of wine and a light bite sure to delight your taste buds.
Sun–Thu 3 pm–midnight; Fri–Sat 3 pm–2 am. hotelalessandrasonhouston.com/bar-bardot

- **Bayou & Bottle | 1300 Lamar**
Bayou & Bottle is a chic bourbon concept located in the lobby of Four Seasons Houston. The bar serves over 150 varieties of bourbons and whiskies along with flavorful cuisine inspired by Houston's melting pot of cultures. Unique features include the first-ever “Topgolf” simulation golf experience, Angel's Share private dining room, and personalized bourbon lockers.
Mon–Wed 11 am–midnight; Thu–Sat 11 am–1 am; Sun noon–midnight. Fourseasons.com

- **Boots 'n Shoots | 506 Main**
This Texas-themed bar conveniently located right off the METRORail, features a wide variety of whiskey. If you're feeling adventurous, try out the super fun larger-than-life FLINKO board which decides your fate when the time comes to take a shot!
Wed–Sat 4 pm–2 am. bootsnshootshouston.com

- **The Boulevardier | 410 Main, Downstairs**
This beautiful lounge provides an upscale yet comfortable respite to Main Street every Thursday through Saturday serving the finest craft cocktails.
Thu–Sat 6 pm–2 am. thecommonerbar.com/Upstairs

- **Captain Foxheart's Bad News Bar & Spirit Lodge | 308 Main**
A fun and quirky bar that doesn't take itself too seriously (hence the name), but the cocktails are seriously good. Patrons enjoy the sleekly-vibe and the patio terrace for prime people watching.
Mon–Sun 4 pm–2 am. twitter.com/badenewbar

- **Casablanca Lounge | 312 Main**
This Guatemalan-inspired bar offers drinks specials every day of the week, plenty of flat screen TVs to keep up with the latest sporting events and features live DJ’s on the weekends.
Tue–Sat 4pm–2am, Sun 4pm–midnight. casablancahouston.com

- **Cellar 7 Wine & Bar Bites | 610 Main**
From wine 101 classes and event tastings to enjoying cocktails with friends before a theater show, Cellar 7 is a go-to destination in the skyline district. Wind down after a work with a glass of wine or a Texas brew and pair it with a side of grilled oysters or any of the delectable bar bites on their menu. Daily 4–11pm. district7grill.com

- **Char Bar | 305 Travis**
Char Bar offers stiff drinks alongside custom suits. Drenched in nostalgia, Char Bar is proud of its history, as reflected in the old photos of family members who have worked in the space since the 1930s. Enjoy the second floor balcony or chat it up with Weldon Renfro, who has a permanent shoe shine booth at the entrance.
Mon–Wed 10 am–midnight; Thu–Sat 10 am–2am. twitter.com/TheCharBar

- **The Commoner | 410 Main, Downstairs**
Simple, straightforward. Cocktails, beer and wine.
Mon–Sun 4 pm–2 am; Sun noon–midnight. thecommonerbar.com

- **Coterie | 701 Texas Avenue**
The wine-centric bistro offers an extensive selection of wines, seasonal cocktails, coffee, and everything in between. Opt for a vintage wine from their walk-in wine tower, let the bartender fix you a cocktail at the bar, or get your espresso fix any day of the week.
Mon–Wed 6:30 am–11pm; Thu–Fri 6:30 am–1am; Sat 7:30 am–1am; Sun 7:30 am–10pm. coteriehouston.com

- **Cottonmouth Club | 108 Main**
For guests of The Cottonmouth Club, the cocktail experience will start before the first drop of liquor is poured. A brainchild of Reserve 101's Mike Raymond, the bar combines its come-one-come-all atmosphere with world-class cocktails and private barrel-blended whiskey. Daily 4 pm–2 am. cottonmouthhouston.com

- **Craft Beer Cellar | 907 Franklin**
Located in the Historic Market Square neighborhood, Craft Beer Cellar is a bottle shop and bar with a full wall of local, national and international beer options.
Stop by and have a drink at the bar or fill up a growler and take one to go! Mon–Sat 10 am–10 pm; Sun 11 am–7 pm. houston.craftbeercellar.com

- **Dean's | 316 Main**
Under new ownership and with a new look and feel, Dean's adds to the cool vibe found on the 300 block of Main. Great attention from the bartenders and the trendy crowd make it a unique place to socialize.
Mon–Thu 8 pm–2 am; Fri–Sat 5 pm–2 am. deansdowntown.com

- **The Dirt Bar | 1209 Caroline**
The non-venue rock 'n roll lounge is a popular pre- and post-show destination spot that has become famous for its performer patronage. Drawing crowds and artists from every venue in the city has allowed The Dirt to host hundreds of memorable after-show events, including Lady Gaga, Foo Fighters and Kings of Leon. Daily 6 pm–2 am. dirtbar.com
The Dive | 309 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. Fri–Sat 9 pm–2 am. divehtx.com

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 Joystix 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 spans 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 night of boozing. If you get hungry, the bar’s $2.50 tacos along with their inexpensive burgers, fries, and quenadillas will fill you right up. Sun–Wed 10 am–Midnight; Thu 10–2 am; Fri–Sat 10–3:30 am. elbigbad.com

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 arcade games, let’s 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 Cantina by La Calle | 909 Franklin
This authentic Mexican sports bar is draped in vintage lucha libre threads, and is the perfect hangout to throwback to a few decades back & enjoy your fix of tacos and catch your favorite sports, boxing and UFC match. Mon–Wed 3 pm–midnight; Thu–Fri 3 pm–2 am; Sat 11 am–2 am; Sun 11 am–2 am. lacalletacos.com

La Carafe | 813 Congress
The oldest building in Houston, this dark and cozy hideaway boasts a great juxtape, 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 Café | 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, hula 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 gives rise to the iconic visions of Teddy Roosevelt, Mark Twain, Frank Sinatra or Steve McQueen leaning on the bar with a stiff, well-crafted Rye Manhattan. Lawless is detailed with gizzy剧烈, featuring revolutionary cocktails accompanied by comfortable finger foods and satisfying bites. Daily 4–11 pm. lawlessspirits.com

Little Dipper | 304 Main
This spot is a cool, blue neighborhood bar with pinball machines, cheap bourbon and a bad-ass jukebox. Daily 4 pm–2 am. twitter.com/LittleDipperBar

LIVE Sports Bar & Grill | 407 Main
Located in Historic Market Square, Live Sports Bar & Grill makes you feel like you’re sitting at the game amongst all the action! Watch your favorite team on a number of TVs while you enjoy good eats and a drink from their ever-evolving selection of beer on tap. Daily 11 am–2 am. livesportsbarhouston.com

Lone Star Saloon | 1900 Travis
The Lone Star Saloon is a true classic Texas dive bar that seems misplaced in Houston’s urban setting. The crowd, half aging townies and half world-weary road dogs, are always willing to share have-been-to-hell-and-back stories. Daily noon–2 am.

MKT BAR | 1001 Austin
Part of Phoenicia Specialty Foods, MKT BAR is a hip wine and beer bar offering light bites and an urban, yet relaxed setting to hang out with friends on the weekend or unwind with coworkers after a long day. The bar is a local favorite with DJs, bands and fun theme nights. Mon–Wed 7 am–9 pm; Thu 7 am–2 am; Fri & Sat 9 am–2 am; Sun 9 am–8 pm. mktbar.com

Molly’s Pub | 509 Main
This classic Irish pub offers a variety of Irish whiskies and international beers. Tables and coves lead you to the back, where pool and darts can be found and a second-floor balcony provides excellent views of Main Street and Downtown. Daily 11 am–2 am. mollyspubs.com

The Nightingale Room | 308 Main
The Nightingale Room — named for the famous songbird — also references Houston music legend Sippie 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 will 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. nightingaleroom.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 anyone 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. conservatoryhtx.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 Salon | 924 Congress
Houston’s first charity bar is a true collaboration from Houston’s finest, including owners from Amvilli, Poullie’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 Mezcalería 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. Salud! Tue–Sat 4 pm–2 am. thepastrywar.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. 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 whiskey 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. santarnold.com

Shay McElroy’s Pub | 909 Texas
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. mcelroyspub.com

Sunny’s Bar | 901 Capitol
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. Poolball, 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 am–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. lemeridienhoustondowntown.com

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datebook.
TIFFANY
Sep 6  A legendary pop star, Tiffany has earned two No. 1 hit singles, I Think We’re Alone Now and Could’ve Been and set records as the youngest female artist to top the Billboard charts with her debut album. Her current album, Pieces of Me, is her 10th studio album and is her best work yet. Hobby Center, 800 Bagby. thehobbycenter.org

GISELLE
Sep 6–15  Stanton Welch’s Giselle returns to the Houston Ballet with a re-telling of a peasant girl deceived by an aristocrat disguised as a commoner. Love, betrayal and redemption play out in stunning simplicity. With sets and costumes by acclaimed Italian designer Roberta Guidi di Bagno, Welch’s Giselle is one of the most beautiful ballets ever produced. Wortham Center, 501 Texas. houstonballet.org

GREASE!
Sep 6–22  The whole gang’s here—Danny and Sandy, Rizzo and Kenickie, the Burger Palace Boys, the Pink Ladies, and even Eugene! This blast-from-the-past piece of nostalgia includes all the songs you know and love, while being given a new life with an innovative production design and high-energy staging. Art Factory, 1125 Providence. artfactoryhouston.com

A SYMPHONY OF HEROES
OPENING NIGHT: RACHMANINOFF PIANO CONCERTO NO. 3
Sep 14  Monumental doesn’t even begin to describe it. Prepare for an extraordinary concert experience when living legend Yefim Bronfman takes on the staggering virtuosity of Rach 3, a piece so demanding it’s often described as the Mount Everest of concertos. Renowned conductor Leonard Slatkin leads the Symphony in colorful crowd-pleasers, including Tchaikovsky’s sparkling souvenir of Italy. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. houston symphony.org

THE LITTLE MERMAID—FILM WITH LIVE ORCHESTRA
Sep 1  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

COMMON WITH THE HOUSTON SYMPHONY
Sep 4  One of the most influential and multifaceted artists of our time, award-winning hip-hop artist, film producer, poet, and actor Common will join the Houston Symphony for a special, one-night-only showcase of his biggest hits. Hear Common perform a selection of songs including the Grammy Award-winning Love of My Life, Golden Globe- and Academy award-winning Glory from Sehru and more. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. houstonsymphony.org

THE WINTER’S TALE
Sep 13–Oct 13  William Shakespeare’s whimsical tale of romance, tragedy, and comedy will be seen through the imaginative eyes of a young, Houston child. Featuring the entire resident acting company. Alley Theatre, 615 Texas. alleytheatre.org

RENÉE ELISE GOLDSBERRY
Sep 6–8  Following her Tony Award—winning run in Hamilton, Broadway star Renée Elise Goldsberry returns to her childhood home of Houston for an unforgettable evening of beloved Broadway show tunes recognizable to young and old alike. You’ll hear selections like You’ll Never Walk Alone, plus songs from The Lion King and Rent. And, there’s always the possibility of a few numbers from Hamilton! Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. houstonsymphony.org

A CHORUS LINE
Sep 10–22  The singular sensation that is A Chorus Line opened on Broadway in 1975 and was an instant classic. It went on to become one of the longest-running shows in Broadway history. A brilliantly complex fusion of song, dance, and compellingly authentic drama, A Chorus Line is the musical for everyone who’s ever had a dream and put it all on the line. Hobby Center, 800 Bagby. tuts.com

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VIETGONE
Oct 4–Nov 3 Two Vietnamese refugees now in America after the fall of Saigon find a strange new land of cowboys, hippies, bikers, and each other. Irreverent and infectious style, it’s a hilariously rip-roaring ride across 1970s America. Alley Theatre, 615 Texas. alleytheatre.org

SPRING AWAKENING
Oct 8–20 When it debuted on Broadway, Spring Awakening offered a raw and honest portrayal of youth in revolt, shattering expectations of what musical theater can be. Based on Frank Wedekind’s controversial 1891 expressionist play of the same name and featuring an electrifying alt-rock score, Spring Awakening follows a group of adolescents as they navigate their journey into adulthood with a poignancy and passion that is illuminating and unforgettable. Hobby Center, 800 Bagby. tuts.com

RICK STEVES’ EUROPE: A SYMPHONIC JOURNEY
Oct 11–13 Get ready for a European adventure like no other when best-selling travel author and PBS star Rick Steves comes to Jones Hall. The breathtaking sights of Italy, England, France, Vienna, Norway and more fill the giant screen while the Houston Symphony performs stirring selections like The Blue Danube Waltz, Ode to Joy and Pomp and Circumstance. Rick provides fascinating insight and cultural context at each stop. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. houstonsymphony.org

WANDS & WIZARDS: MUSIC FROM HARRY POTTER & MORE
Oct 12 Grab your wizard robes and brush off your witch’s hat for a magical, musical concert sure to leave you spellbound. Wave your wands in time as the Houston Symphony performs music from Harry Potter and dancers enchant with The Sorcerer’s Apprentice. Plus, wear a costume and charm the crowd in a fun onstage costume parade, just in time for Halloween! Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. houstonsymphony.org

MAGOS HERRERA AND BROOKLYN RIDER—DREAMERS
Oct 12 Performing works from their award-winning 2018 album Dreamers, Mexican-born songstress Magos Herrera and the omnivorous string quartet Brooklyn Rider join forces for an unforgettable musical journey, reinterpreting classic songs from Mexico, Chile, Brazil, Argentina and Spain, and celebrating texts by Octavio Paz, Federico García Lorca and Rubén Darío. Wortham Center, 500 Texas. spahouston.org

STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND—PHOTOGRAPHER JODI COBB
Oct 15 Known for breaking through barriers and going undercover to reveal hidden societies, National Geographic photographer Jodi Cobb has captured fascinating glimpses of worlds such as Japan’s secret Geisha culture and the cloistered lives of Saudi Arabian women. Travel with this inspiring woman as she chronicles her public—and private—path from young photojournalist to world-renowned photographer. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. spahouston.org

JEFF GOLDBLUM & THE MILDRED SNITZER ORCHESTRA
Sep 20 With an acting career spanning four decades and film credits including Jurassic Park and Independence Day, legendary actor Jeff Goldblum will bring a delightful evening of jazz standards to Jones Hall. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. spahouston.org

OPENING NIGHT: BON APPETIT!
Sep 21 Enjoy a spectacular opening night of surrealistic and culinary musical delights. Acclaimed bass-baritone Ryan McKinney brings his magnetic presence to Poulenc’s marvelously absurd Le bal masqué. Mesmerizing last season in Vienna 1900: In the Garden of Dreams, soprano Abigail Fischer portrays Julia Child in Lee Hold’s comic operatic take on the unflappable chef’s 1970s television program. Starved musicians join the renowned Imani Winds for a quintessential Da Camera evening of surprise and musical adventure. Wortham Center, 501 Texas. dacamera.com

EXIT STRATEGY
Sep 26–Oct 13 A comedy about a crumbling public school about to be shut down. A blistering reflection of America’s education system and a timely story for Houston. Rec Room, 100 Jackson. recroomarts.org

GERSHWIN’S PIANO CONCERTO & PORGY AND BESS
Sep 27–29 Breezy tunes, breakneck pace and plenty of Jazz Age swagger make Gershwin’s Concerto a firm audience favorite, and Jean-Yves Thibaudet lends his individual style and interpretive flair to this much-loved masterpiece. Copland’s lively snapshot of a Mexico City dance hall, the familiar melodies of Porgy and Bess and music of Mexican-great Carlos Chávez complete this musical collage of color and exuberance. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. houstonsymphony.org

JOHN SCOFIELD QUARTET
Oct 4 Powerhouse jazz guitarist John Scofield makes his long-awaited first appearance on Da Camera’s stage. Scofield’s stint with Miles Davis from 1982 to 1985 placed him firmly in the forefront of jazz as a player and composer. Since that time, he has prominently led his own groups, recorded over 30 albums as a leader, and collaborated with greats including Pat Metheny, Charlie Haden, Eddie Harris, Bill Frisell, Brad Mehldau, Jack DeJohnette and many more. Wortham Center, 501 Texas. dacamera.com

BAYOU CITY JAZZ SERIES—STEVE COLE & JEFF KASHIWA
Oct 4 Bayou City Jazz Series continues with an electric combination of Steve Cole and Jeff Kashiwa. A native of the windy city, Steve Cole’s sound has been described with one word, “Big.” Having established himself in the ’90s as one of the most diverse saxmen in contemporary jazz, Kashiwa has been amazing audiences for decades, oftentimes leaving them wanting more. Wortham Center, 501 Texas. worthamcenter.org

MENDELSSOHN & MAHLER
Oct 4–6 One note is worth a thousand words in this program of spellbinding choral works with a story to tell. First, witness the wings of genius take flight in Mahler’s staggering first masterpiece, written when he was just 18. Then, Goethe’s text ignites the fire of Mendelssohn’s imagination in a celebration of spring that sees Druids dance and bonfires burn. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. houstonsymphony.org

JOHN SCOFIELD QUARTET

photo by Pari Dukovic
EXHIBITS

RARE BOOKS ROOM SHOWCASE
Sep 5 Houston Metropolitan Research Center will showcase rare, interesting, and unique items from the Rare Books Room/HMRC Vault. This event will offer exclusive, insider access to materials that are normally restricted for preservation purposes. 6:30–7:30 pm. Julia Ideson Building.

POST-IMPRESSION: ENVISIONING VINCENT VAN GOGH’S LIFE THROUGH FASHION
Sep 15–Dec 1 This exhibition features garments from Fashion Fusion, an annual competition presented by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and the award-winning Fashion Design program at Houston Community College. This year, HCC students and alumni designed original outfits inspired by the museum’s recent exhibition, Vincent van Gogh: His Life in Art. Central Library.

¡MUSICA! A HISTORY OF HISPANIC SOUNDS IN HOUSTON
Sep 1–Nov 9 Hispanics have contributed to the Houston music scene in every genre and decade. This exhibit captures key moments through the decades and the vast impact the Hispanic community made on the Bayou City and its music scene. Hear oral histories from those who played, promoted and participated behind the scenes. Julia Ideson Building.

PROGRAMS & EVENTS

WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS
Sep 3 Looking for a job? Need help writing a resume? Seeking advice on your career? Houston Public Library and Workforce Solutions are here to help. 10 am–noon. Central Library.

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY BASICS
Sep 7 This course explains the various characteristics of digital photography. 4 pm. Central Library.

BOOK CLUB
Sep 10 Do your reading tendencies lean toward the classics? If so, this is one club you’ll want to be a part of! Noon–1 pm. Central Library.

FOUNDATION CENTER WORKSHOP
Sep 10 Introduction to fundraising planning for nonprofit organizations. This workshop will provide the basic steps used for developing a fundraising plan. 4–6 pm. Central Library.

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY HELP
Sep 19 Learn about new digital technologies that will help keep you informed in today’s world. 2–4 pm. Central Library.

¡MUSICA! FESTIVAL & MERCADO
Sep 28 Experience the sights and sounds of Houston’s Latino music history during this daylong colorful and festive celebration of ¡Musica! Festivities include live entertainment; an outdoor market; exhibit tours and discussions; youth activities and a movie on the plaza. 1–9 pm. Central Library & Julia Ideson Building.

LIFTOFF HOUSTON! PITCH DAY
Nov 9 Mayor Sylvester Turner along with Liftoff Houston partners, Capital One Bank, Houston Public Library and the Office of Business Opportunity, present the Start-Up Business Plan Competition 2019 Pitch Day event! If you are thinking of starting your own business or love the highly rated TV competition show Shark Tank, then you don’t want to miss this event! 10 am–2 pm. Julia Ideson Building.

All events free and open to the public.

Central Library
500 McKinney

Julia Ideson Library
550 McKinney

832.393.1313
houstonlibrary.org
MIRANDA SINGS—WHO WANTS MY KID?  
Oct 16  Best known for portraying her character “Miranda Sings,” Colleen Ballinger is a multihyphenate: actor, comedian, trained vocalist, writer and executive producer. Colleen has amassed over 20 million followers across social media and passed 2 billion views on YouTube. Miranda is known for her overdrawn red lips, questionable advice about singing and life, and over-the-top rants (the polar opposite of Ms. Ballinger). Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. spahouston.org

TOGETHER LIVE  
Oct 17  Together Live is a traveling event that brings diverse storytellers together for an epic evening of laughter, music and hard-won wisdom. Thought leaders, musicians, celebrities and comedians share the stage and tell their own raw, inspiring stories of finding purpose and community. This fall, Glennon Doyle, Abby Wambach, Nadia Bolz Weber, Cameron Esposito, MILCK and others are headed to Houston for the 2019 Together Tour. Wortham Center, 501 Texas. worthamcenter.org

I AM TANGO BY TANGO LOVERS  
Oct 18  I Am Tango by Tango Lovers brings to the Cullen Theater a taste of Argentina and Uruguay. The show introduces audiences to the sensual world of tango, from the Golden years to contemporary times. Wortham Center, 501 Texas. worthamcenter.org

MARTHA GRAHAM DANCE COMPANY  
Oct 18  The Martha Graham Dance Company has been an artistic world leader since its founding in 1926 and returns to Houston for the first time in 15 years. The company will perform works from The Eve Project including Chronicle, which honors the centennial of the 19th Amendment, guaranteeing women the right to vote. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. spahouston.org

HOCUS POCUS POPS  
Oct 18  The tradition of Halloween-inspired Pops selections and spooky fun returns. Dress up in your Halloween costume for a chance to walk on stage during the concert. The first 100 costumed kiddos to check in at Hocus Pocus Central in the North Plaza get the chance to march in the Goblin Parade. If you dare, hop onto the Great Pumpkin Express—train rides begin at 3:30 pm in the Pavilion’s Gold Lot. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. houstonsymphony.org

ROCKY HORROR SHOW  
Oct 18–31  Hot Patootie! The Rocky Horror Show returns to Art Factory, just in time for Halloween! Join Brad, Janet, Dr. Frank-N-Furter and the whole mansion of zany characters for this cult-classic rock musical, live on stage. Brush up on your “call outs” and polish up those stilettos, because it’s time to do the Time Warp again! Art Factory, 1125 Providence. artfactoryhouston.com

VERDI’S RIGOLETTO  
Oct 18–Nov 1  Featuring some of opera’s more recognizable music, Verdi’s Rigoletto is a tragic story of jealousy, lust and revenge. The antagonistic jester, Rigoletto, is cursed after a joke goes too far in the court of the villainous Duke. Despite his best efforts to protect his beloved daughter, Rigoletto is unable to keep her safe from the outside world and the curse’s fulfillment. He most certainly will not have the last laugh. Wortham Center, 501 Texas. hgo.org

CRISTELA ALONZO: MY AFFORDABLE CARE ACT  
Oct 19  Cristela Alonzo made history in 2014 when she became the first Latina to create, produce and star in her own network sitcom, Cristela, for ABC. In 2017, Cristela made history again when she became the first Latina lead in a Disney Pixar film when she voiced the part of Cruz Ramirez in Cars 3. Her first stand-up special, Louer Classy, is currently streaming on Netflix and her memoir, Music to My Years, will be released this fall. Wortham Center, 501 Texas. worthamcenter.org

RUSSIAN BALLET THEATRE PRESENTS SWAN LAKE  
Oct 20  Choreographer Nadezhda Kalinina lovingly retouches the oldest St. Petersburg version of the ballet and adds her vision and something more that undoubtedly will leave audiences flushed with emotion. Those faithful to the tradition of Swan Lake must see Russian Ballet Theatre’s new production of the timeless classic. Wortham Center, 501 Texas. worthamcenter.org

QUARTETTO DI CREMONA  
Oct 21–22  Revel in the musical riches of Italy! Named for the small city that was home to the great stringed instrument makers Amati and Stradivari, Quartetto di Cremona makes its Houston debut. Hear rarely heard gems by Verdi, Puccini and Respighi, performed by Italy’s leading ensemble on instruments made by Guadagnini, Testore, Torazzi and Amati. Wortham Center, 501 Texas. dacamera.com

CATS  
Oct 22–27 CATS, the record-breaking musical spectacular by Andrew Lloyd Webber, has captivated audiences for decades. Audiences and critics alike are rediscovering this beloved musical with breathtaking music, including one of the most treasured songs in musical theater—Memory. Hobby Center, 800 Bagby. houston.broadway.com

HANDEL’S SAUL  
photo by Bill Cooper

The tradition of Halloween-inspired Pops selections and spooky fun returns. Dress up in your Halloween costume for a chance to walk on stage during the concert. The first 100 costumed kiddos to check in at Hocus Pocus Central in the North Plaza get the chance to march in the Goblin Parade. If you dare, hop onto the Great Pumpkin Express—train rides begin at 3:30 pm in the Pavilion’s Gold Lot. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. houstonsymphony.org
**WAGNER + BEETHOVEN 2**  
Oct 25–27  
Beyond epic in scale, dazzlingly mythological in scope, Wagner’s operas redefined the genre and changed the course of music forever. Feel the thrill of love and the fire of lust when pre-eminently conductors Marek Janowski leads the rich, resounding melodies of Tannhäuser and Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg. Filled with boundless vigor and bracing wit, Beethoven’s Second finds its composer at the outset of a new trail—one that he himself would blaze. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. houstonsymphony.org

**HANDEL’S SAUL**  
Oct 25–Nov 1  
Barrie Kosky’s imaginative production of Handel’s dramatic biblical oratorio has been critically lauded for its choruses and breathtaking design. The opera begins after David slays Goliath and follows the mental breakdown of the envious King Saul. In this stimulating and emotionally inspired production, Kosky creates a captivating drama highlighting the tension of social class and a world fraught with religious strife. Wortham Center, 501 Texas. hgo.org

**RAY CHEN, VIOLINIST**  
Nov 9  
Ray Chen is a violinist who redefines what it is to be a classical musician in the 21st century. Chen’s remarkable musicianship transmits to a global audience that is reflected in his engagements with the foremost orchestras and concert halls around the world. Accompanied on the piano by Julia Elizalde, the program includes works from Grieg, Saint-Saens, J.S. Bach, Debussy and Ravel. Wortham Center, 500 Texas. spahouston.org

**A WOMAN’S LIFE: THE DIARY OF VIRGINIA WOLF**  
Nov 1  
The poetic inner world of one of the 20th century’s most brilliant writers, Virginia Woolf, comes alive in Dominick Argento’s Pulitzer Prize-winning monodrama, *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf*. Tracing moments in her fragile yet productive creative life from 1919 to 1941, these musical settings bring us remarkably close to a sensitive and original woman of genius. Wortham Center, 501 Texas. dacamera.com

**DAVID SEDARIS**  
Nov 1  
With sardonic wit and incisive social critiques, David Sedaris has become one of America’s pre-eminent humor writers. He is the master of satire and one of today’s most observant writers addressing the human condition. His latest book is a New York Times best-selling collection of his essays entitled *Calypso*, which will be the center of the discussion. Wortham Center, 500 Texas. spahouston.org

**BERNADETTE PETERS**  
Nov 2  
Throughout her illustrious career, Bernadette Peters has dazzled audiences and critics with her performances on stage, film and television, in concert and on recordings. Bernadette recently starred on Broadway as Dolly Gallagher Levi in the hit musical, *Hello, Dolly!*. Her talent has garnered numerous accolades including three Tony Awards, a Golden Globe, three Emmy and four Grammy Award nominations and a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. spahouston.org

**BLUE NOTE RECORDS 80TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION**  
Nov 2  
Celebrate the legendary jazz record label with performances by three outstanding artists. Houston native pianist James Francis released his Blue Note debut *Flight* in 2018, and is enjoying a meteoric rise in the jazz world and beyond. Kandace Springs counts Billie Holiday, Roberta Flack and Norah Jones as her heroes, but as evidenced by her sparkling recordings, mimics none of them. Detroit saxophonist James Carter leads an intergenerational organ trio featuring rising B3 star Gerard Gibbs and the propulsive drum support of Alex White. Wortham Center, 501 Texas. dacamera.com

**JOYCE DIDONATO | IN WAR & PEACE: HARMONY THROUGH MUSIC**  
Nov 6  
In the midst of chaos, how do you find peace? HGO Studio alumna Joyce DiDonato’s award-winning project *In War & Peace: Harmony through Music* makes a stop at HGO on its international tour. The illustrious ensemble Il pomo d’oro, under the baton of Maxim Emelyanychev, will join DiDonato, 7 pm. Wortham Center, 501 Texas Ave. hgo.org

**MERCHANDISE AVAILABLE**  
#### WAGNER + BEETHOVEN 2  
Oct 25–27  
- Event T-shirt: $25.00  
- Program: $30.00  
- Art print: $75.00

#### A WOMAN’S LIFE: THE DIARY OF VIRGINIA WOLF  
Nov 1  
- Event T-shirt: $20.00  
- Program: $30.00  
- Art print: $75.00  
- Book: $30.00

#### DAVID SEDARIS  
Nov 1  
- Event T-shirt: $20.00  
- Program: $30.00  
- Art print: $75.00  
- Book: $30.00
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.

BLANKET BINGO
Sep 19, Oct 17 Stamp your way to $500 and other great prizes! 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 (nine games). Additional games and daubers can be purchased for $1 each. Packets are sold beginning at 6 pm and bingo starts at 7 pm. Proceeds benefit Market Square Park and Buffalo Bayou Partnership.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL
Nov 15–Dec 29 A family-friendly re-telling of Charles Dickens’ classic story which follows Ebenezer Scrooge’s journey with the three ghostly spirits who visit him on Christmas Eve. A powerful message about redemption and the spirit of the holiday season. Alley Theatre, 615 Texas. alleytheatre.org

TRIFONOV PLAYS TCHAIKOVSKY
Nov 22–24 One of the most iconic openings in all of classical music is spun into a staggering tour de force for the ages in Tchaikovsky’s wildly popular concerto. No one plays it better than Daniil Trifonov, an artist who “reaches places other pianists can only dream about” (Daily Telegraph). Just like your favorite art gallery, Mussorgsky’s vivid, sonic sketches offer a feast for the senses and an escape from the ordinary, from the spooky haunts of Baba Yaga’s hut to the majestic gates of Klev. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. houstonsymphony.org

THE WIZARD OF OZ
Nov 22–Dec 8 Celebrating the 80th anniversary of the legendary film, The Wizard of Oz lands at Art Factory for the holiday season. Featuring Somewhere Over the Rainbow, Ding! Dong! The Witch is Dead, We’re Off To See the Wizard, If I Were the King of the Forest and the rest of the beloved songs and characters from your childhood, this production is the perfect holiday treat for the whole family! Art Factory, 1125 Providence. artfactoryhouston.com
FULLY COMMITTED
Nov 26–Dec 29  A hilarious and delicious comedy, featuring over 40 characters brought to life in the hands of one man. Sam works the reservation line at one of the hottest restaurants. While juggling scheming socialites, name dropping wannabes, fickle celebrities, and egomaniacal bosses, can he still manage to get home for the holidays? Alley Theatre, 615 Texas. alleytheatre.org

ALL-STRAUSS THANKSGIVING
Nov 29–30  Just how great is the Houston Symphony? You’ll find out in this program of lush, full-orchestra showpieces from the greatest symphonic poet of all time. To start, hear two of the most soul-stirring works ever written in Strauss’ poignant musings on life, death and transcendence. Then sparks fly and spirits soar as we feel the racing pulse of history’s most legendary ladies’ man and encounter a lovable trickster who always gets the last laugh. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. houstonsymphony.org

THE NUTCRACKER
Nov 29–Dec 29  Stanton Welch’s opulent production of The Nutcracker is one of the most splendid ever staged. In this, the most traditional holiday tale, Clara and Drosselmeyer travel together to the Land of the Sweets where the Sugar Plum Fairy is reunited with her prince—and where the magic happens. With grand sets and stunning costumes, The Nutcracker features the entire company of dancers as well as many Houston Ballet Academy students playing hundreds of fun and exciting roles. Wortham Center, 501 Texas. houstonballet.org

SAVE THE DATE

ELF - THE MUSICAL
Dec 7–22  Based on the cherished 2003 movie, the musical tells the story of Buddy, a human accidentally transported to the North Pole as a baby. Unaware that he is actually human, Buddy’s enormous size and poor toy-making abilities cause him to face the truth. With Santa’s permission, Buddy embarks on a journey to New York City to find his birth father, discover his true identity and help the Big Apple remember the true meaning of Christmas. Hobby Center, 800 Bagby. tuts.com

FESTIVALS & SPECIAL EVENTS

CITY HALL LOCAL LUNCH MARKET
Wednesdays, Sep–Dec  The new City Hall Local Lunch Market offers the public a variety of prepared, ready to eat foods. Creative items by local artists are also available for purchase, all amidst Houston’s dramatic Downtown urban setting. 11:30 am–1:30 pm. Hermann Square, 901 Bagby. 713.880.5540.

SPECIAL OFFER: SUPER SATURDAYS
Sep 7, 14, 21, 28  Buy one, get one free Aquarium Adventure Passes on Saturdays. Adventure pass includes unlimited access to Aquarium Adventure Exhibit, Stingray Reef, and all rides with the purchase of another. Visit website to download coupon. Downtown Aquarium, 410 Bagby. downtownaquarium.com

BEER & CHEESE PAIRING
Sep 8  Enjoy an afternoon in Saint Arnold’s Beer Hall as they pair their handcrafted beers with Texas made cheeses by the Houston Dairymaid, a few of which will be on hand for questions and discussion. $30. Saint Arnold Brewing Co., 2000 Lyons. saintarnold.com

SHOP LOCAL MARKET
Sep 14  Shop local while you drink local! A variety of local vendors will be on-site selling goods. Free. Saint Arnold Brewing Co., 2000 Lyons. saintarnold.com

JUSTIN WILLMAN
Sep 14  Magician Justin Willman dazzles the crowd with his mysterious tricks. House of Blues, 1204 Caroline. houseofblues.com/houston

3RD ANNUAL NIGERIA CULTURE PARADE & FESTIVAL
Sep 28  Celebrate Nigeria’s 59th year of independence in the heart of Downtown. Attendees will witness a rich cultural experience through the streetwide celebration. 9 am–3 pm. Root Memorial Square, 1400 Clay. nigeria-culturalparade.com

GAMERTAGG NATION
Sep 28  This fun and exciting video game tournament will allow gamers from all across the land to showcase their skills for a grand prize. 10:30 am. Toyota Center, 1510 Polk. toyotacenter.com

THE NUTCRACKER

photo by Allyson Huntsman

FULLY COMMITTED

ELF - THE MUSICAL

photo by Amitava Sarkar
ART & CULTURE

THE SHAPE OF THINGS BY MICHAEL CRAIG-MARTIN
Through Nov 3 This bold and imaginative exhibition by Michael Craig-Martin comprises a series of six monumental steel sculptures offering a playful perspective of everyday objects which challenge our perception of space, appearing like line drawings in the air.

THE LEGEND OF BIG BEND
Sep 21 Acclaimed indie classical group Montopolis turns west Texas tales into songs inspired by Big Bend National Park. Weaving science, history, poetry and personal stories into music accompanied by breathtaking video that captures the vast high desert wilderness. 8–9:30 pm.

GIRL SHY
Sep 6 Two Star Symphony, Houston’s most unusual music ensemble, makes a welcome return to Discovery Green with a performance of their original score to Girl Shy, the classic romantic comedy by Harold Lloyd. (black and white, 1924, 87 min.) Come dressed in period 1920s costume and learn to dance the Charleston with Dance Houston. 7:30–10 pm.

ON DECK!
Wednesdays, Oct 2–Oct 30 Join us for lunchtime performances by Kinder HSPVA students in various disciplines with lunch specials from The Lakehouse and The Grove. Noon–1 pm.

ART@DISCOVERY GREEN
Oct 25–Oct 27 From jewelry to furniture, paintings to sculptures, shop from over 75 fine art and contemporary craft artists.
SPECIAL EVENTS

**MEXICO EN EL CORAZON**
Sep 13 México en el Corazón immerses its viewers into the artistic world of mariachi music, folkloric ballet and other representations of Mexican heritage. This showcase of traditional Mexican culture features more than 50 performers in a North American tour presented by NAIMA. 7–10 pm.

**FLEA BY NIGHT PRESENTED BY GREEN MOUNTAIN ENERGY**
Sep 21, Oct 19, Nov 16, 23 & 30 Discovery Green’s local artisan market is irresistible to the avid shopper! Enjoy live local music, food trucks and shopping under the stars and twinkling lights. 6–10 pm.

**SCREAM ON THE GREEN**
Oct 25 Houston’s citywide costume contest and Halloween celebration for the whole family, featuring a screening of *The House with a Clock in its Walls* (2018, 105 mins. 7:30 pm).

**DIA DE LOS MUERTOS**
Nov 1 Day of the Dead, or Día de los Muertos, is a Mexican holiday where families and friends gather to celebrate, remember and prepare special foods in honor of those who have departed. Featuring music by Austin-based Bidi Bidi Banda. 6–10 pm.

**THE ICE POWERED BY GREEN MOUNTAIN ENERGY**
Open daily starting Nov 15 Downtown ice skating under the stars. Opening night (November 15) features ice skating specials, entertainment and more.

**FROSTIVAL**
Nov 22 Discovery Green’s Winter Carnival features live music, ice sculptures and the premiere of Paloma presented by PNC Bank. Discovery Green’s enchanting winter art installation. 6–10 pm.

The events listed are confirmed at the time of printing. For a full listing of Discovery Green’s fall 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.

ENTERTAINMENT

**BANK OF AMERICA SCREEN ON THE GREEN**
Catch a free movie under the beautiful Downtown skyline. Arrive early for contests and activities. Sep 14 *The Incredibles 2* (PG) 2018, 125 mins. 8 pm

**UNPLUGGED AT DISCOVERY GREEN**
The best musical acts in town perform in an unplugged concert series challenging them to rethink, rearrange and deliver a unique performance of their songs using only acoustic instruments. 5–9 pm.

Oct 15 Heights Funk Collective
Oct 20 Los Guerreros De La Musica/LGMHOUSTON
Nov 10 ‘Uche’

**FULL MOON FRIDAYS**
Family-friendly concerts showcasing the best music of the Gulf Coast! Blankets, lawn chairs and picnics are welcome. 7 pm.

Oct 11 Ian Moore: Texas Guitar Hero
Nov 15 Ana Popovic: Modern Blues Guitar Slinging Diva
Dec 13 The Skatalites: Ska Reggae Legends

**SUNDAYS IN THE PARK**
Sundays, Sep 1–Nov 17 Make Sundays your favorite day in the park while playing fun games and picnicking with your loved ones! 2–5 pm.

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**YOUTH PERFORMANCE POETRY SESSIONS**
Sep 6, Oct 4, Nov 1 Free Writers In The Schools (WITS) writing and slam workshops for poets ages 13 to 19: 6:30–8pm.

**YOUNG WRITERS WORKSHOP**
Saturdays, Sep 7–Nov 16 Houston’s only free and open writing workshop for kids. 10:30–11:30 am.

**TAKE ME OUTDOORS HOUSTON**
Sep 28 Sample great outdoor activities with Texas Parks and Wildlife.

**TODDLER TUESDAYS**
Tuesdays, Oct 1–29 Houston Public Library teams up with Discovery Green for a morning of fun with story time, activities and crafts! 10:30 am–noon.

**YOGA**
Mondays, Sep 2–Nov 18, 11:30 am–12:30 pm

**HEARTFULNESS MEDITATION**
Mondays, Sep 2–Nov 18, 12:30–1:30 pm

**CORE FOCUSED YOGA**
Tuesdays, Sep 3–Nov 19, 11:30 am–12:30 pm

**ZUMBA STRONG**
Wednesdays, Sep 4–Oct 30, 6:30–7:30 pm

**PARKOUR**
Thursdays, Sep 5–Nov 21, 6:30–8 pm

**TAI CHI**
Fridays, Sep 6–Nov 15, 9–10 am

**SATURDAY YOGA**
Saturdays, Sep 7–Nov 16, 9–10 am

**RECYCLING SATURDAYS**
Saturdays, Sep 7–Nov 16 Bring your sorted glass, paper, plastic and aluminum to a recycling station at Discovery Green. 11 am–2 pm.

**KAYAK RIDES AND R/C BOATS ON KINDER LAKE**
Weekends, Sep 1–Nov 17 Rentals are provided by Bayou City Adventures and are subject to weather conditions. No reservation required. Kayak rentals are $5 per person.

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ROOFTOP SILENT DISCO  
Sep 28  The rooftop of GreenStreet’s garage will be transformed into Downtown’s largest (and quietest) dance floor for one night ONLY! Top national DJs spin the best in trance and house while guests don special headphones to tune into specific channels and dance like nobody’s watching. The event also features pop-up art installations, ambient performances and plenty of food and drinks to keep you moving. The music battle of the future is now. 9 pm–1 am. downtownhouston.org

HOUSTON BBQ THROWDOWN  
Sep 29  BBQ joints from around the area will be serving dishes that represent their interpretation of Houston-style barbecue. Along with a panel of judges, you will sample all of the dishes and decide on your favorite. $65. Saint Arnold Brewing Co., 2000 Lyons. saintarnold.com

OKTOBERFEST DINNER  
Oct 4  It’s time to put on your best dirndl, lederhosen or other Tyrolean duds for the annual Oktoberfest party in the classic German-style Saint Arnold Beer Hall. You could even be crowned King or Queen of Oktoberfest. Enjoy live music, traditional German fare and the regular lineup of beers on tap as you drink from their commemorative Oktoberfest glass boot. $50. Saint Arnold Brewing Co., 2000 Lyons. saintarnold.com

KOREAN FESTIVAL  
Oct 5  This annual family friendly event celebrates the Korean culture through food, performances and activities for all ages, 10 am–7 pm. Discovery Green, 1500 McKinney. koreanfestivalhouston.com

OKTOBERFEST WEEKEND  
Oct 5–6  Head to the annual Oktoberfest party on the entire Saint Arnold campus. Enjoy traditional German fare, live music and shop local at the market on-site. Free. Saint Arnold Brewing Co., 2000 Lyons. saintarnold.com

BAYOU CITY ART FESTIVAL DOWNTOWN  
Oct 12–13  A sophisticated outdoor gallery under the iconic Houston skyline, transforming the streets of Downtown into artistic avenues bursting with color and culture. The two-day festival showcases the works of more than 300 of the finest artists and craftsmen in the world. Adding to the festive outdoor gallery are a variety of food options, a creative zone for children, and a stage with ongoing multicultural entertainment. Tickets $15 adult, $5 child, children under 5 free. 10 am–6 pm. 901 Bagby. bayoucityartfestival.com

MOONLIGHT RAMBLE  
Oct 19  BikeHouston is celebrating Space City’s 50th anniversary of the moon landing with a unique ride. Lift off onto the night streets with over 1,000 other costumed riders for this midnight adventure. $40. Saint Arnold Brewing Co., 2000 Lyons. bikereg.com

HALLOWEEN KIDS FEST  
Oct 26 & 27  Spook-tacular fun for the entire family. Enjoy fall-themed activities, photo opportunities with an ambassador animal and much more. Downtown Aquarium, 410 Bagby. 713.223.3474. downtownaquarium.com

HEARTMADE HARVEST ART MARKET  
Nov 2  Knock out your holiday shopping early this year at Heartmade Art Market. This curated market features works and wares from 70 regional artists, crafters and creatives. The day offers something for everyone including live music, food truck fare, a beer and wine garden and interactive activities. Celebrate Texas art all in one place. Proceeds benefit Artists for Artists. 10 am–5 pm. heartmadehouston.com

HOUSTON SALUTES AMERICAN HEROES  
Nov 11  Houston is a cornerstone of Veterans Day celebrations in the United States. As a city, Houston is proud to pay tribute to our men and women in the military by providing an annual “Houston Salutes American Heroes Veterans Day Celebration.” This civic celebration honors and celebrates the brave men, women, and families who fight for our liberty and freedom. Free. Ceremony starts at 10 am, parade starts at 12:30 pm. 901 Bagby. houston.tx.gov/nov11

HOUSTON VS. AUSTIN BBQ THROWDOWN  
Nov 17  The Houston Barbecue Festival and Saint Arnold Brewing Company will host the second annual Throwdown, featuring top barbecue restaurants from Houston and Austin competing to determine who reigns supreme when it comes to Texas barbecue. $80. Saint Arnold Brewing Co., 2000 Lyons. saintarnold.com

VIA COLORI STREET FESTIVAL  
Nov 23–24  Amazing chalk artists transform streets into colorful optical illusions and masterpieces in a festival benefiting the Center for Hearing and Speech. Enjoy live music on multiple stages, food, drinks and activities for all ages. Hermann Square and City Hall, 900 Smith. centerhearingandspeech.org/via-colori

70TH ANNUAL H-E-B THANKSGIVING DAY PARADE  
Nov 28  The Houston Thanksgiving Day Parade began in 1949, when Santa arrived at Union Station and rode his sleigh to the Downtown Foley’s. Since then, the parade might have a new route, but it remains a holiday tradition showcasing the Houston community and entertaining parade-goers who line the streets of Downtown Houston on Thanksgiving morning. 9 am. houstontx.gov/thanksgivingparade

DC VS. MARVEL ART SHOW  
Nov 29–30  This event will highlight artwork from local artists, provide an eclectic vendor market, cosplay contests and of course Saint Arnold beer! Free. Saint Arnold Brewing Co., 2000 Lyons. saintarnold.com

100TH ANNUAL MAYOR’S HOLIDAY CELEBRATION & TREE LIGHTING  
Nov 30  This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Mayor’s Holiday Celebration & Tree Lighting! The spectacular event is a holiday tradition of music, Santa, fireworks and family fun. A towering Holiday Tree, glowing with energy efficient LED lights, shimmering ornaments and a stunning star topper will light up the streets of Downtown Houston this holiday season. Free. 6–8 pm. Hermann Square at City Hall, 900 Bagby. houstontx.gov/mayorsholiday

FURNISHING A TEXAS-MADE HOME IN THE VICTORIAN ERA  
Through Sep 29  The furniture on display in The Heritage Society’s Museum Gallery represents the Texas pioneer version of the same pieces that would have been in any middle-class Victorian home. The native woods, cow-hide seats, and simplistic German style influences show the distinctness of the Texas-made pieces. $5. Tue-Sat, 10 am-4 pm; Sun 1-5 pm. Heritage Society, 1100 Bagby. 713.655.1912. heritage society.org

HELP RESTORE THE NOBLE HOUSE! EXHIBIT  
Through Sep 29  The Heritage Society is celebrating 65 years of working to preserve Houston’s history, beginning with Houston’s oldest building. $5. Tue-Sat, 10 am-4 pm; Sun 1-5 pm. Heritage Society, 1100 Bagby. heritage society.org
REVENTION MUSIC CENTER

Oct 4  Daniel Caesar
Oct 7  Australian Pink Floyd
Oct 19  Paulina Rubio
Sep 22  UB40, Ali and Astro with Shaggy
Sep 23  Deep Purple
Sep 25  Die Antwoord
Sep 26  MARINA
Sep 27  Zedd
Oct 1  Stone Temple Pilots
Oct 3  Countess Luann
Oct 4  Lizzo
Oct 5  The Raconteurs
Oct 9  Natalia Lafourcade
Oct 11  Judah & the Lion
Oct 12  Adrian Uribe y Consuelo Duval
Oct 16  Tank & The Bangas
Oct 18  NF
Oct 20  Experience Hendrix
Oct 25  Wilco
Oct 31  AJR

Nov 1  Dane Cook
Nov 9  Christian Nodal
Nov 14 & 15  deadmau5
Nov 17  Ilennium
Nov 22  La Arrolladora Bandaelan
Nov 24  Incubus
Nov 26  Conan Gray

Revention Music Center’s online calendar is updated regularly. Visit their website for more info and to purchase tickets. Revention Music Center, 520 Texas. 800.745.3000. reventionmusiccenter.com

HOUSE OF BLUES

Sep 1  Vic Mensa & Jesse
Sep 3  Pat Benatar & Neil Giraldo
Sep 5  Hayden James
Sep 6  keshi
Sep 10  Brian Courtney Wilson
Sep 12  In This Moment
Sep 13  Joe Russo’s Almost Dead
Sep 14  flor
Sep 18  Daniela Mercury
Sep 18  Injury Reserve
Sep 19  The Goodanni Gallows
Sep 20  Banks Courtney
Sep 20  Dominic Pike
Sep 21  Candlebox
Sep 21  Finish Ticket
Sep 22  Black Label Society
Sep 23  dodie
Sep 23  Landon Cube
Sep 24  Clara
Sep 25  Starset
Sep 28  G70 Shake
Sep 28  Big K.R.I.T.
Oct 1  Bad Religion
Oct 3  Jai Wolf
Oct 5  BJ The Chicago Kid
Oct 7  Christian French
Oct 10  BANKS
Oct 10  Iya Terra
Oct 11  Lil Duval
Oct 11  Vetusta Morla
Oct 12  The Band CAMINO
Oct 16  X Ambassadors
Oct 18  Maxo Cream
Oct 19  Amon Amarth
Oct 20  Julia Michaels
Oct 22  Ashe
Oct 22  Sebastian Bach
Oct 24  Hobo Johnson
Oct 25  Big Wild
Oct 26  Nate Bargatze
Nov 1  Sabrina Claudio
Nov 2  Jade Bird
Nov 2  Lukas Graham
Nov 6  Scotty Sire
Nov 7  Mating Ritual
Nov 7  Sleater-Kinney
Nov 14  Cautious Clay
Nov 16  Jon McLaughlin
Nov 16  Thievery Corporation
Nov 18  Matt Maeson
Nov 19  As I Lay Dying
Nov 26  Icon For Hire
Nov 30  Domo Wilson
Nov 30  Gryffin

HOB’s online calendar is updated regularly. Visit their website for more info and to purchase tickets. House of Blues, Greenstreet, 1204 Caroline. 888.402.5837. hob.com/houston

TOYOTA CENTER

Sep 6  Mana
Sep 8  John Mayer
Sep 9  KISS
Sep 21  Carrie Underwood
Sep 24  Phil Collins
Sep 25  The Who
Sep 26  Jonas Brothers
Sep 27  Maluma
Oct 6  Chris Brown
Oct 8  Mumford & Sons
Oct 10  Billie Eilish
Oct 23  Chance The Rapper
Nov 2  The Chainsmokers & 5 Seconds Of Summer

Toyota Center’s online calendar is updated regularly. Visit their website for more info and to purchase tickets. Toyota Center, 1510 Polk. 713.4HOUTIX. houstontoyotacenter.com

WILCO
NATURAL WALKING TOURS
Sep 21, Oct 19, Nov 16 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, 150 Sabine Street. 713.752.0314. buffalobayou.org

VOLUNTEER WORKDAYS
Sep 21, Oct 19, Nov 16 Bring your own gloves and BBP will provide any needed tools. To sign up, please read and complete an online volunteer waiver with the event date. 8:30–11:30 am. The Water Works, 150 Sabine Street. 713.752.0314. buffalobayou.org

FROM PORT TO PORT BOAT TOUR
Sep 28, Oct 12, Nov 9 Join bayou guide Andrew Groocock on a historical tour of the upper channel of Buffalo Bayou focusing on the historic significance of this industrial stretch and Houston, as you cruise the approximately seven miles from the old port of Houston to the new port of Houston. $45. 10 am–noon. Allen’s Landing, 1001 Commerce. 713.752.0314. buffalobayou.org

WILLOUGH COLONY BAT TOUR
Sep 7, Sep 21 Learn more about these thousands of magnificent Mexican free-tailed bats that share the city with us. Led by a “bat girl” docent, guests will enjoy an amazing view of the bats’ dusk emergence from the Waugh Drive Bridge on Buffalo Bayou. $30. 7–8:30 pm. Allen’s Landing, 1001 Commerce. 713.752.0314. buffalobayou.org

LANDSCAPE DESIGN WALKING TOUR
Oct 26 Buffalo Bayou Park is an award-winning park for many reasons, including its thoughtful and resilient design. 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. 6–7:30 pm. The Water Works, 150 Sabine Street. 713.752.0314. buffalobayou.org

GHOSTS ON THE BAYOU BOAT RIDE
Oct 30 & 31 Join Buffalo Bayou Partnership guide, Andrew Groocock, as he shares stories of haunted tales and legends along Buffalo Bayou. Costumes are encouraged in keeping with the Halloween spirit and to continue the ghoulish fun in Downtown after the tour. $50. 6:30–8 pm. Allen’s Landing, 1001 Commerce. 713.752.0314. buffalobayou.org

BEST BITES TOURS
From elevated soul-food to a 36-year old Shawarma recipe, try these diverse bites and more on this Downtown Houston food tour! Leave with hidden secrets that even locals don’t know about. Dates and times vary. 832.558.8903. bestbiteshouston.com

DISCOVER HOUSTON TOURS
Choose from ghost tours, tunnel walks, rail tours, architectural tours and more. Ticket prices vary. 713.222.9252. discoverhoustontours.com

HERITAGE SOCIETY HISTORIC HOMES TOUR
Nestled among 19 acres in the heart of Downtown Houston, the Heritage Society boasts eight historic structures dating from 1823 to 1905. Each historic structure is authentically restored to reflect its original magnificence. Tickets $15 adults, $12 seniors, $6 children 6–12 and kids under 5 are free. Sam Houston Park, 1100 Bagby. Times vary. 713.655.1912. heritagesociety.org

MINUTE MAID PARK TOUR
Get a behind-the-scenes look at Minute Maid Park including historic Union Station, broadcasting booth or press boxes, Astros’ or visitors’ dugout, luxury suites and much more. Tickets $9 adults, $7 seniors and $5 for kids 3–14. Mon–Sat 10 am, noon, 2 pm. Minute Maid Park, 501 Crawford. 713.259.8687. astros.com
SAINT ARNOLD BREWING COMPANY TOUR
Come visit Texas’ oldest craft brewery. Every Saturday, the doors open at 11 am and groups rotate in and out of the facility in an open-house format until 2 pm. If Saturdays don’t work for you, check out their weekday open house at 3 pm. After the tour, guests are welcome to stay for a free tasting. Tickets $10, no reservations required. All minors under the age of 21 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. 2000 Lyons at I-10. saintarnold.com

SEGWAY TOURS OF HOUSTON
Like the rest of Texas, Downtown Houston is a pretty big place to walk around. There are a lot of things to see up close and from a distance. Experience the Bayou City, once the capital city of a sovereign country, from a talking perspective within a few hours while you have effortless fun on a Segway. $75–$80. Meet at Wortham Center, 501 Texas. Daily: 10 am, noon, 2 pm, 4 pm and 6 pm. 866.673.4929. segwaytoursofhouston.com

TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL
Nov 9  TSU vs. Alabama State
For schedule info and tickets, call or visit website. BBVA Compass Stadium, 2200 Texas. 713.313.4335. tsball.com

HOUSTON ASTROS
Sep 5–8  Astros vs. Seattle Mariners
Sep 9–12  Astros vs. Oakland As
Sep 17–18  Astros vs. Texas Rangers
Sep 20–22  Astros vs. Anaheim Angels
For schedule info and tickets, call or visit website. Minute Maid Park, 501 Crawford. 877.927.8767. astros.com

HOUSTON DYNAMO
Sep 11  Dynamo vs Minnesota United FC
(First Responders Night)
Sep 21  Dynamo vs. Orland City SC
(Soccer Kicks Cancer Night)
Oct 6  Dynamo vs. LA Galaxy
(Fan Appreciation Day & DaMarcus Beasley Sendoff)
For schedule info and tickets, call or visit website. BBVA Compass Stadium, 2200 Texas. 713.276.GOAL. houstondynamo.com

HOUSTON DASH
Sep 13  Dash vs. Utah Royals FC
Sep 25  Dash vs. Washington Spirit
For schedule info and tickets, call or visit website. BBVA Compass Stadium, 2200 Texas. 713.276.GOAL. houstondashsoccer.com

SPECIAL OFFERS & EVENTS:
BOOT SCOOT’N BBQ STREET FEST
Sep 7  Join the Astros for their annual Boot Scoot’n BBQ Street Festival complete with music, food and fun for the kids! A valid game ticket is required for entry into the street festival. Minute Maid Park, 501 Crawford. astros.com

HISPANIC HERITAGE STREET FESTIVAL
Sep 21–22  The Astros are celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month with a colorful street festival complete with music and cultural celebrations. A valid game ticket is required for entry into the street festival. Minute Maid Park, 501 Crawford. astros.com

ASTROS $1 HOT DOG TUESDAY
Every Tuesday night home game is $1 Hot Dog Night presented by Nolan Ryan Beef. Enjoy all the hot dogs you can eat at Minute Maid Park!

ASTROS FRIDAY NIGHT FIREWORKS
Kick off your weekends at Minute Maid Park! Every Friday night home game is followed by the best fireworks show in town.

For schedule info and tickets, call or visit website. Minute Maid Park, 501 Crawford. 877.927.8767. astros.com

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, sidwalk cafes, outdoor festivals, pontoon boat tours and more.

**Welcome to Downtown Houston!**

### Attractions & Sights
- **Tours**
  1. Buffalo Bayou Boat Tours 713.752.0314
  2. Heritage Society Historic Homes Tour 713.655.1912
  3. Minute Maid Park Tour 713.239.8687
  4. Saint Arnold Brewing Company Tour 713.686.9494
  5. Toyota Center Backstage Tour 713.758.7715
- **Sports**
  6. Minute Maid Park
  7. Toyota Center
  8. BBVA Compass Stadium
- **Recreation**
  9. Buffalo Bayou (hiking & jogging trail)
  10. Root Memorial Square (basketball court)
  11. Discovery Green (exercise class, bocce ball & putting green)
- **Shopping**
  12. GreenStreet
  13. The Shops at Houston Center

### Institutions
- **Education**
- **Medical**
- **Religious**
- **Spiritual**

### Parks
- **Eat & Drink**
  - 26. Ballpark District
  - 27. Bayou Place/Theater District
  - 28. Avenida Houston
  - 29. Downtown Aquarium
  - 30. Historic District
  - 31. GreenStreet
  - 32. The Shops at Houston Center
  - Food Halls
  - 34. Bravery Chef Hall
  - 35. Conservatory
  - 36. Finn Hall
  - 37. Understory

### Music Venues
- **Theater**
  - 74. Alley Theatre
  - 75. Hobby Center
  - 76. Jones Hall
  - 77. Jones Plaza
  - 78. The Landing Theatre Company
  - 79. Prohibition Supper Club
  - 80. Rec Room
  - 81. Wortham Center

### City, County & Federal
- 85. City Hall
- 86. City Hall Annex
- 87. Bob Casey Federal Courthouse
- 88. Harris County Court Campus

### Where to Stay
- **Groceries & Conveniences**
  - 69. CVS/Pharmacy
  - 71. Phoenixia Specialty Foods
  - 72. Wolfe’s Cleaners

### Film
- 73. AMC Houston 8 (formerly Sundance Cinemas)

### HOUSTON B-cycle
- A great way to get form point A to point B or just explore downtown! You can purchase daily, weekly or annual memberships. [112 more info](http://houston.bcycle.com)

### METRORail Lines
- **Always be aware of pedestrian, drivers, bicyclists and trains when near tracks!**

### Visitor Information
- 114. Houston Visitors Center

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**FREE DOWNTOWN CIRCULATOR**

**Green Route**
- Mon–Fri, 6:30 am–7:00 pm
- Sat 9 am–midnight, Sun 9 am–6 pm

**Orange Route**
- Mon–Fri, 6:30 am–midnight
- Sat 9 am–midnight, Sun 9 am–6 pm

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**greenLink**

**PARKING MAP**

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**Institutions**
- 43. Incarnate Word Academy
- 44. Kindred High School for the Performing & Visual Arts
- 45. South Texas College of Law Houston
- 46. University of Houston–Downtown

**Medical**
- 47. St. Joseph Medical Center

**Religious**
- 48. Antioch Baptist Church
- 49. Annunciation Catholic Church
- 50. Christ Church Cathedral
- 51. First United Methodist Church
- 52. Holy Cross Church
- 53. Islamic Dawah Center
- 54. Sacred Heart Co-Cathedral
- 55. Houston First Baptist Church

**Spiritual**
- 56. Hines Center for Spirituality and Prayer

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**Tours**
- **Sports**
- **Recreation**
- **Shopping**

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**Parks**
- **Eat & Drink**

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**Music Venues**

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**City, County & Federal**

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**Where to Stay**

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**Groceries & Conveniences**

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**Film**

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**Real Estate**
- 113. Heritage Texas Properties

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**Visitor Information**
- 114. Houston Visitors Center
With a fusion of culture, lifestyles and commerce, life around here is designed by icons like Philip Johnson and I.M. Pei. Turn a corner the theater, innovative chefs, funky hotspots, movies in the park, sidewalk Tours.

Recreation

Buffalo Bayou Boat Tours
Minute Maid Park Tour
Company Tour
Toyota Center Backstage Tour

Shopping Groceries

Conveniences

Downtown Aquarium
Historic District
Bayou Place
Union Station at Minute Maid Park
Bayou Place/Theater District
GreenStreet
Bravery Chef Hall
Heritage Society Museum

Institutions

Film

BICYCLISTS AND TRAINS

METRORail Lines

North/Main
Southeast
East End

Public Parking Garages
Bayou Trail Access
Historic District
24-Hour Accessible ATM
Dog Parks
Houston B-cycle

Our new Google Map will help you find where you’re going, where to park and what’s nearby downtownhoustonparking.org

Downtown Interactive Parking Map

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.
PARK.RIDE.NAP.

DREAMY COMMUTER SERVICE
DIRECT TO DOWNTOWN.