A MIGHTY REVIVAL

With a diverse business community, exciting green spaces and lively activities, Downtown is booming.
There are endless ways to describe the vibrant possibilities in Downtown.

It’s the melting pot that keeps our neighborhood moving in harmony. No matter why you’re joining us here, come enjoy a little bit of everything.

See more at downtownhouston.org.

#WeAreDowntownHOU
07 START IT UP
Thanks to strong support from Houston's business community, the relatively young startup ecosystem known as Downtown Launchpad is helping innovators come together to chase their passions and their dreams. That means new businesses – and new jobs. BY HOLLY BERETTO

12 HEAR US ROAR!
Take a red-hot real estate market, add in a plethora of exciting redevelopment projects, the re-ignition of the Houston Theater District and plenty of Downtown visitors and what do you get? A vibrant city center firing on all cylinders. BY MICHAEL DORSEY

25 IN GOOD TASTE
Meet dynamic duo, Carissa and Kenneth Stephens, who took their love of good wine to the next level, creating Pur Noire Urban Wineries – the first Black-owned winery in Houston. You can enjoy their wares in their sophisticated tasting room in the heart of Downtown.

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The Alley Theatre toasts 75 years of excellence by celebrating its impressive and iconic theatrical history and embracing a vibrant and exciting future. BY HOLLY BERETTO

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The Four Seasons is known for exquisite hospitality, and its new eatery, Toro Toro, is no exception, providing an exceptional culinary experience. Whether you choose their super-fresh, super delicious ceviche bar or their larger-than-life mezcal-flambéed prime tomahawk steak, you’re certain to leave satisfied. BY SHELBY ROTH

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A full spring calendar is ready for you. Live music? It’s back. Your favorite sports teams? Taking the field (or the arena). Street festivals and your favorite Broadway shows? Step right up. We’ve got them all in one place so you can start planning.
For more than 10 years, we’ve been shoring up the heart of our city by investing billions in transformative projects like a revitalized Buffalo Bayou Park, PNC Stadium, POST Houston and dozens of new residential and hotel projects. Now that decade of investment in a multiuse, multidimensional city center is paying off. While other cities are still struggling to recover from the pandemic, projects like these have positioned us to experience more than just a rebound. We’re looking at a Downtown renaissance.

And it’s exciting.

You can see our strength in the numbers, with more than 50 percent of workers back in the office and growing, albeit in a hybrid model, and 28 major Downtown office leases executed in 2021 totaling 750,000 million square feet. Year-to-year occupancy rates for Downtown hotels – one of the hardest hit industries by the pandemic – skyrocketed to 51 percent in 2021 from 14 percent in 2020. And last year 28.5 million people visited Downtown, a 61 percent increase in visitors from the year before. You can read more about the projects on tap this year starting on page 12.

It’s that excitement, that tenacity, that commitment to the future, that coaxed me to my new role as CEO and president of Central Houston. More than anything, Houstonians are resilient and I see that resilience serving as a beacon for all kinds of businesses (like the one profiled on page 25), for arts, culture, and entertainment, for family-friendly events and for an eco-conscious urban lifestyle.

Houston's future is bright, and I'm so honored to be part of the next chapter in Downtown history. I hope you enjoy all downtown has to offer, and I encourage you to visit us online at downtownhouston.org, where we always keep you up to date on what’s happening. And thank you for reading!
arts & culture.
Looking Ahead

The Alley Theatre Celebrates 75 Years by Embracing its Past and Envisioning its Future

Midway through the Alley Theatre’s 75th anniversary season Artistic Director Rob Melrose has a keen appreciation for what it means to balance the past with the present, while looking to the future.
“The whole point is that theater should reflect its community,” he said. “Many of our loyal audience members are excited to see our new direction, and people who haven’t come to the Alley need to come and get excited.”

He is certainly excited himself. Melrose is at the helm of one of the country’s most-respected performing arts organization, one that’s won a Tony, one where playwright Edward Albee was in residence, one whose production of Angels in America went to the Venice Biennale. It’s a place that, for decades, has been synonymous in Houston and beyond as a place for serious theater. It has also, to be clear, had several challenges along the way, including challenging finances in the 1980s and the not-so-recent shakeup in artistic management that paved the way for Melrose’s entry.

“I look back on the organization and I am very proud to be running an organization that would do Angels in America and Robert Wilson’s Danton’s Death,” Melrose said. “I always try to uphold the past as something we should all be proud of.”

The Alley’s roots are found in 1947, when Nina Vance, a Houston high school drama teacher, sent out 214 penny postcards to drum up interest in a theater for the city of Houston. From those postcards more than 100 people came out to a meeting about launching the theater, which would become the Alley. The theater’s first home was in a dance studio on Main Street, with no heat in the winter or air conditioning in the summer. It opened its doors on Nov. 28, 1947, offering seating for only 87.

Over the next two decades, Vance’s vision shepherded the Alley to an old fan factory and then a space on Berry Street. Then, in May of 1962, the organization received a $2.1 million grant from the Ford Foundation to build a new theater. Coupled with the gift of a half block of land from Jesse H. Jones and his wife, seeds for the Alley’s permanent home were planted.

Today, sitting proudly on Texas Avenue, the Alley Theatre is a Downtown landmark. Its curved concrete turrets were once derided as “anti-aircraft encampments,” according to the theater’s history, but the structure itself is a hallmark of Brutalist architecture. The Ulrich Franzen-designed space would be hailed by Newsweek as one of the most striking buildings in the country. When it opened, it marked a whole new era for the Alley. It houses two theaters, the upstairs Hubbard Theatre and the smaller Neuhaus Theatre downstairs. It underwent a series of renovations beginning in 2013, resulting in new seating, expanded restrooms, larger public spaces and a host of backstage improvements. Following the devastation of Hurricane Harvey, the Alley suffered damage to much of its sub levels, including the destruction of more than 75,000 props, collected over the years.

And through it all, the Alley endured. The theater is an embodiment of Houston’s can-do spirit, and its Downtown location makes it very much a center of Houston’s performing arts scene. In addition to staging classic works from the theater canon, the Alley helps launch new plays by emerging playwrights with its Alley All-New Festival, and it brings in thousands of students each year to see its shows at student matinees. Its resident acting company is the very heart of the theater, nine actors...
“I always try to uphold the past as something we should all be proud of.”

—Rob Melrose, Artistic Director

who perform in the company’s productions throughout the year. While the theater does offer roles to those not in the resident company, the core acting group is part of what makes the Alley unique among theaters in Houston and is one of only a handful of companies around the country that offers this model. It gives audiences an opportunity to see actors in a variety of comedic and dramatic roles, and not only gives actors steady employment, but also affords them the chance to do what they do best: act.

As Melrose looks forward, he’s looking to build on the Alley’s three-quarters of a century of being a leading light in Houston theater. In recent years, the Alley has presented newer works, from more diverse artists. It’s also kept presenting favorites like its annual outing of A Christmas Carol and the popular Summer Chills series, mystery plays that run during the summer months. Those shows, said Melrose, bring in a devoted following.

“In addition to having our plays represent more of Houston, I’m trying to get that audience more excited about our regular [season] offerings, and come visit us during a time they are not used to visiting us,” he said. “Sometimes, it takes a while for the word to get out, that we’re not doing the same plays that you think we do. And it’s exciting and it’s vibrant!”
And a great deal of that innovation traces back to a building in Downtown. Amegy on Main is home to Downtown Launchpad, a startup ecosystem that is helping its companies – and the city – achieve success. For those unfamiliar with the program, it was born from Mayor Sylvester Turner challenging the Houston business community to completely overhaul and rethink the way Houston could approach startups and their needs. Downtown Launchpad is home to MassChallenge and gener8tor, two huge startup accelerators, dedicated to giving entrepreneurs startup support. It’s also home to Impact Hub Houston, a global collective that supports entrepreneurs by offering opportunities to network, programs to educate startups and a host of other services. The Cannon’s “vertical village” concept, also located at Amegy on Main, further provides co-working space for companies on the move. The entire set-up was designed with startups in mind.

“We’re one of the most innovative cities in the world; we always have been,” said Robert Pieroni, Central Houston Inc.’s director of economic development, who noted one of the most important ways for the city to move forward is to find ways to attract and help startups. “So, obviously, the idea was, we’re going to build something of our own, and we’re going to build it unlike anywhere else in the world and unlike anyone else has ever done it.”

If it takes a village to help a startup, it also took a village to launch Downtown Launchpad. The project is an initiative from Central Houston and the Downtown Redevelopment Authority.

“IT’s a little like a moonshot,” quips Pieroni. “But it was a priority of our organization and because of our resources and affiliate organizations we were able to say, let’s try the impossible.”
The impossible, it seems, is paying off. Over the last three years, MassChallenge and gener8tor received 1,599 applications to their cohorts. Collectively, they accepted 166 startups into the programming. Those 166 startups have raised $35.1 million. MassChallenge’s first cohort started in 2019 and gener8tor launched its first in 2020. Both are currently working with new cohorts of entrepreneurs, and Pieroni predicts continued growth.

“As we bring in new cohorts, we’ll bring in new money, new jobs,” he said. “What makes it so fun is, we’ll bring in a hundred new companies every year, but the hundred from the year before just continue to grow. So, years five, six and seven will have 20 times the impact of today because you’ll have three, four, 500 startups compounding the amount of money they’ve raised, the revenue they’ve generated and the jobs they’ve created here. That’s what’s really exciting.”

One of those startups is CaseCTRL, a company that used artificial intelligence and automation to streamline and schedule workflows for surgical scheduling. Founded by Pamela Singh, who has a background in hospital IT management, and her husband, Dr. Ashvin Dewan, an orthopedic surgeon, the company went through gener8tor’s accelerator. To date, CaseCTRL has raised $1.3 million, and now employs 10 people.

Singh credits Downtown Launchpad.

“Downtown Launchpad’s model was critical to our success,” she said. “We went from having zero revenue to getting our first paid client after we completed the program. We went from zero experience in fundraising to raising $1.3 million. They absolutely helped us with our trajectory.”

She said Dewan noticed that surgeries were being cancelled and mismanaged. The problem wasn’t due to incompetence; it was technology.

“You’re using the latest in state-of-the-art robotic surgical methods, but the scheduling behind it all is paper, fax and email,” she explained. “That led not just to hospitals losing revenue, but to terrible patient care.”

Singh and her husband created a system that he began using. As colleagues noticed his surgical practices operating more efficiently, it was an ah-ha moment for the couple. They now knew they had a product. But they didn’t know what to do with it.

“We were ready to sprint, but we had no idea of what direction to go in,” said Singh.
Enter Downtown Launchpad. Working with gener8tor, she and Dewan received help in determining what their metrics for success would be, how to benchmark their goals and how they could get there.

“We didn’t have a pitch deck or an executive summary or the other documents you need,” said Singh. “They helped us do all of that.”

And so, a company that began as an idea has now become Singh’s full-time job. Dewan is still a surgeon and works with CaseCTRL after hours (“It’s why we call him the robot,” joked Singh). Their CTO is a childhood friend of Dewan’s who came aboard the team early on. CaseCTRL went from relying on interns and volunteering to offering full-time jobs. Some of those hires came from relationships made through the Downtown Launchpad. Singh and Dewan appreciate the mentoring they received, the connections they built, all of which added to their business growth.

When Downtown spoke to Singh, she said the team was in the process of looking for office space – in Downtown.

“Downtown Launchpad gives the Houston startup scene a backbone,” said Samantha Helper, another Downtown Launchpad alumni. “It gives us an infrastructure.”

Helper was part of gener8tor for early-stage companies with local roots called gBETA. Helper’s company, SeekerPitch, which she started at home during the pandemic, gives job seekers the opportunity to create digital cover letters that allow them to show their personalities, along with making a case for why they’d be excellent hires. For employers, it helps hiring managers get a sense of not only a potential employee’s skills, but also an understanding of how they might fit into the corporate culture. They can also conduct virtual interviews on the platform.

“This is what the next generation of hiring looks like,” said Pieroni, who cites SeekerPitch as one of many Downtown Launchpad startups that embody a creative approach to problem solving on the B2B scene. “It really democratizes the hiring process.”

“Downtown Launchpad gave me access I wouldn’t have had,” said Helper. “The founders’ events and the networking helped give me a community that allowed me to grow my business.”

Helper describes herself as “pretty scrappy,” and she used money she’d have spent on her wedding to bootstrap the company. (She and her fiancé eloped). She took part in a remote incubator, which was great, she said. But as of October 2021, she had a complete product and was not entirely sure how she was going to get users for it.

It happened that right as she finished up her product, gBETA was launching a cohort, and she was accepted.

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“Downtown Launchpad gives the Houston startup scene a backbone”

—Samantha Helper
“That allowed me to build an advisory board and get mentors,” she said. “I have 15 clients now, and 420 job seekers using the platform. I’ve been able to build four university partnerships.”

She’s also part of Houston Exponential’s talent initiative that connects diverse job candidates with jobs in innovative technology. That diversity doesn’t have to be specific to race or background. It can also be about the experiences someone’s had, which traditional algorithms won’t pick up on. If a job candidate has worked his way through school and shows great problem-solving skills, that won’t necessarily show up in his job history on his resume. Likewise, if company algorithms zero in on specific job titles and a select set of colleges or universities, they’re missing out on great candidates. Fixing those issues is SeekerPitch’s raison d’être, and the partnership gives her a platform to grow her business and help jobseekers and clients.

“I got all of that traction because of the Downtown Launchpad,” she said. “Because I was part of a community that believed in me and believed in what I was doing.”

Not all the companies that grew out of Downtown Launchpad are B2B. Consider Chasing Watts, a partnership between Scott Minard and his friend Jason, who didn’t want us to use his last name. They were also part of a gBETA cohort. Chasing Watts connects cyclists, who can join up for training, races or just a ride.

The company began as a website, which Jason built to help others coordinate group bike rides.

“A group ride is like the proverbial herding cats,” explained Minard. “In the old days, people would call or text or whatever, but then, when someone had to drop out or on the day of the ride, things needed to change, and it could get chaotic.”

Jason works in tech for oil and gas, and his website allowed users to post rides and see where they could meet up with others.

“It all seems intuitive now, but it didn’t exist at the time,” said Minard, who works in the cycling industry, coaching MS riders, “weekend warriors,” and middle and high school students.

A Fort Worth bike group soon reached out to Jason, asking him to build an app, which he did for iOS. Minard convinced him to do the same thing for Android users, and Jason then convinced Minard to come on board the team.

“Being part of gBETA helped us really ask pointed questions,” said Minard. “What did we want to do? Who was our target audience? How can we fulfill their needs? That was pivotal for us. We hadn’t necessarily thought of this as a business; it was a tool. As we progressed, it became obvious that we were creating a business model.”

Currently, Jason and Minard continue to work fulltime, and Chasing Watts is a part-time operation for both of them. They recently contracted someone to assist with social media.
and event coordination. Minard said they are set to roll out an ambassador program, to help generate both excitement and usership. And they are working to expand into other markets.

They’ve also had discussions with angel investors but haven’t taken any capital yet. The pair have been financially conservative, said Minard, and they’re looking for investors who will align with their values and vision for Chasing Watts.

“Building community is our great strength,” he said.

That doesn’t mean their startup experience isn’t a success. Far from it. Minard credits gBETA for not being what he calls a cookie-cutter program, and for being one that worked with them to identify what their business goals needed to be.

“For many startups, raising money is an important goal, but it’s not the only one,” he said. “Helping distill down our idea was important to building our business. And having mentors to turn to was really key for us.”

For Pieroni, Downtown Launchpad is not only a place for entrepreneurs to come together, to learn and to get their start, it’s also a model that Houston can show to the world.

“We’ve had conversations with people in Buffalo, New York and, in Boston. Those markets are major innovation hubs, and they want to know how we did what we did. We’re talking to people in Italy. We’ve had conversations with the Chilean government, with the Puerto Rican government. People want to know how we built what we built.”

MassChallenge Houston accelerated eight Italian startups in the most recent cohort as part of the Italian Trade Agency Global Startups Program, and Downtown Launchpad hosted 40 Chilean startups as part of the ProChile USA/Endeavor Chile Trade Mission Chile. Downtown Launchpad also partners with entities closer to home, including the Houston Angel Network, Houston Exponential, the Ion and several others.

When Houston startups succeed, they create jobs for Houstonians. Those Houstonians pour money back into the economy with their spending. Those companies purchase goods and services from other Houston companies. It’s very much a sense of rising tides lifting all boats.

“It’s just great to watch people chasing their passion,” said Pieroni, who Minard described as Houston’s greatest cheerleader for startups. “And Houston is standing behind entrepreneurs as they chase their dreams and create something epic.”

“It’s just great to watch people chasing their passion”

—Robert Pieroni
DOWNTOWN STRIKES BACK

from INSPIRED NEW GREEN SPACES and ★★★ A-LIST RESTAURANTS to HIPSTER HANGOUTS

Return of Everything that Matters, HOUSTON’S URBAN CORE COMES ROARING BACK TO LIFE

By

MICHAEL DORSEY
fter stopping the world in its tracks two years ago, the pandemic continued to rear its ugly head throughout 2021 with the omicron variant causing on-again, off-again uncertainty for everyone, everywhere.

Along the way, Houston’s city center took an outsized beating from an unrelenting coronavirus that seemingly wanted to write off our very urban core—even though the area in question is home to everything that the city treasures most. Things like the Houston Astros, Rockets and Dynamo; Houston Grand Opera, Ballet and Symphony; Society for the Performing Arts; Alley Theater, Hobby Center and TUTS; Discovery Green and Market Square Park; plus, all the Fortune 500 companies that make the world go round. And that’s just the tip of the proverbial iceberg.

But fear not, Downtown is perfectly positioned to come back in a big way.

Thanks to the singular vision and efforts of Central Houston, Inc. and its affiliated entities, Houston Downtown Management District (Downtown District) and Downtown Redevelopment Authority—formed decades ago to recalibrate and reboot Downtown into a vibrant neighborhood for playing and staying well after sundown—Houston’s multi-use, multi-dimensional urban core finds itself in the enviable position of bouncing back faster than many of its municipal peers.

From commercial campuses seemingly designed for a post-Covid world and luxury apartments tailor-made for urban sophisticates to a bevy of gleaming new parks, infrastructure upgrades and bike lanes connecting all of it, the heartbeat of the city is once again poised for another moment in its evolutionary, albeit circuitous, journey upward.
As if on cue at this writing, Chevron had announced that all its Houston employees would return to work at the oil giant’s Downtown headquarters after the Health Department reported in January that the number of Covid cases in Harris County were trending downward.

For its part, Hines is not only welcoming the first tenants into its shiny new 47-story trophy—Texas Tower—but the company is also putting its money where its mouth is by moving their global headquarters into the 1.2 million-square-foot tower. Boasting three urban gardens, multiple outdoor terraces, health club, library, lounge areas, restaurants, co-working space and dedicated areas for employees to plug in laptops throughout, it should come as no surprise that the architectural wonder is already 50% leased. “If you build great stuff, people want to be a part of it, and we knew we were building a world-class product with Texas Tower,” affirmed Hines’ head honcho for the Southwest region, Mark Cover. “Taken together, the new assets being delivered in Downtown right now are important for the entire Houston region.”

One of the more surprising developments from 2021 wasn’t so much a single project as it was a symbolic tipping point on the residential front. After many national pundits predicted that people would abandon city centers because of the pandemic, Downtown Houston’s population actually grew by more than 1,100 people from the previous year, which not only defied the doomsday predictions, but it also hit the economically meaningful threshold of 10,000 residents in the process.

That number is expected to surge even higher in 2022 as more than 1,300 housing units come online by year’s end—just the third time in a decade that the housing supply has increased by more than a thousand units in a single year—including Trammell Crow’s 43-story tower on Block 98, Parkside Residences, overlooking Discovery Green as well as Hines’ other massive new project—Brava—the 46-story modern masterpiece at 414 Milam Street that now holds the title of tallest residential tower in Houston.

For signs that Downtown is revving up for an exciting new chapter in its ongoing renaissance, one need not look further than the huge influx of head-turning projects that have either just been completed or will soon be ready for their close-up. With key recovery indicators now pointing to resiliency in the office, residential and hospitality sectors, the Downtown forecast for 2022 is looking conspicuously sunny. So, turn that frown upside Downtown and take stock in vibrancy and all-that-makes-life-worth-living.

“In some ways, the pandemic has accelerated elements of what would be normal, organic change, and thankfully, many of those changes come in the form of places that better reflect modern tastes”

—Kris Larson
CHI President & CEO
In keeping with the rest of the post-Covid world, Buffalo Bayou Park witnessed a 10% uptick in visitors last year over pre-pandemic levels as Houstonians took to the great outdoors with gusto. Among those visitors were two unexpected guests seen multiple times late last year in the form of two otters sunning on the banks of the bayou, giving further proof of the extensive conservation and ongoing clean-up efforts of Buffalo Bayou Partnership. With the addition of paved walkways and bike lanes connecting the park from the westside of Downtown to the East End, those numbers will increase even further as greater access to and from Downtown becomes a reality, further reducing vehicular traffic in Houston's core all the while.

buffalobayou.org

Downtown Houston is once again bustling with activity, as evidenced by visitation numbers tracked by Central Houston. Last year 28.5 million people visited Downtown, representing a 61 percent surge in visitors from the year before and a 94 percent increase in evening and weekend visitors, who undoubtedly made the journey Downtown to discover the diverse mix of entertainment, dining and recreation offerings. From the triumphant return of the performing arts, professional sports and big-name entertainment to forward-thinking outdoor programming at Market Square Park and Discovery Green, Downtown Houston continued to witness a gradual return to life as we love it.

centralhouston.org

28.5 million people visited Downtown, representing a 61 percent surge in visitors from the year before and a 94 percent increase in evening and weekend visitors

buffalobayou.org

Photo by Jim Caldwell
The Bagby Street Improvement Project (I-45 to Franklin Street) was conceived and funded by the Downtown Redevelopment Authority to turn Downtown’s western gateway into a “livable street,” breathing new life into an essential corridor complete with dedicated bike lane, wider pedestrian walkways, signature lighting and 79 new trees. The new and greatly improved Bagby Street quietly re-opened in October, connecting the Theater District, City Hall, Houston Public Library and The Heritage Society to no fewer than ten public spaces and parks, including a link to the city’s vast network of greenways via Buffalo Bayou Park. The project’s soft opening was followed in quick succession by the not-so-quiet sound of thousands of people making the trek Downtown to experience the extraordinary Winter Wanderland light installations during the holidays.

Lynn Wyatt Square for the Performing Arts (600 Louisiana Street) is named for global ambassador and philanthropist, Lynn Wyatt, who kicked in the $10 million needed to fast-track the pet project. With a comparable investment from the Downtown Redevelopment Authority, construction on the square block surrounded by Wortham Center, Jones Hall and Alley Theatre is now well underway and will be home to a street theater, performance lawn and dramatic water feature along with space for a future food and beverage concept when the forward-thinking project opens in late fall with wide-ranging outdoor entertainment and special events.

Trebly Park (1515 Fannin Street) will become Downtown District’s newest green space when it debuts this summer, providing a quality-of-life boost for the growing number of residents who work and play in Southern Downtown. The $9.5 million project was spawned by the huge influx of high-density housing options surrounding Bell, Fannin, Leeland and San Jacinto Streets and fully funded by the Downtown Redevelopment Authority. The ambitious new park will recast the long-time home of a Goodyear tire shop into an urban retreat complete with an artsy playscape, reflection garden, dog park, rotating art installation and center stage designed for inclusive and creative events and happenings, films, live performances and more. Notably, it will also be home to a second iteration of the locally born, bred and beloved, Tout Suite—the French-inspired café with legions of diehard fans magnetized by a community gathering space with souped up salads, sandwiches, baked goods and great coffee. When it opens in late May, Trebly Park will be fully operated and programmed by Downtown District which has a proven track record of making things a whole lot better after turning the long-dormant Market Square Park into one of the most vibrant and visited parks in the entire city.

downtownirz.com

downtowndistrict.org
The long-awaited 35th Annual Houston Art Car Parade Weekend will take over Downtown on April 9 following a two-year hiatus from COVID-19. The Orange Show's signature event—Houston's most iconic and beloved annual celebration—is returning with a robust lineup of events and activations that will celebrate and showcase over 250 mobile masterpieces from across the country and engage the public with opportunities to express their personal artistic vision.

In 2021, the lights came back on in Houston's beloved Theater District as Houston Grand Opera, Houston Ballet, Houston Symphony, Alley Theater, Society for the Performing Arts and TUTS all returned to their Downtown digs. Bouncing back like an expertly executed jeté, Houston Ballet's annual performance of The Nutcracker sold nearly 68,000 tickets, or 91 percent of pre-pandemic ticket sales for the wintertime favorite. Springtime showstoppers include perennial favorites Hamilton and Wicked at Hobby Center for the Performing Arts and the Franco Alfano and Giacamo Puccini opera Turnado at Wortham Center. Meanwhile, nationally touted Alley Theater is celebrating its 75th milestone season with the romantic classic, Jane Austen's Sense and Sensibility.
Ensconced in a chic upscale setting, Pur Noire (802 Milam Street) was dreamed up by the husband/wife team of Carissa and Kenneth Stephens after they serendipitously purchased a bottle of pinotage vinted and imported by a company owned by people of color. Fast forward a year later, and the couple’s entrepreneurial-minded passion for oenology was reignited on a trip to a favorite Italian wine region a year later, sparking the idea of The Pur Collection, the couple’s own wine brand that, to date, includes a petite syrah-based blend and a pinot gris-sauvignon blanc-based blend as well as a tempranillo rosé. To accommodate their growing customer base, the Stephens opened a Downtown storefront in January that virtually transports guests to the Italian wine country with its bold green, ruby red and sophisticated black interiors.

As if that’s not enough, POST Houston also comes with a state-of-the-art live music space, 713 Music Hall, which is drawing some of the world’s biggest names in entertainment to the 5,000-seat theater, including Willie Nelson, Khruangbin and Olivia Rodrigo, when it’s not doubling down as a creative alternative for meetings and private events, offering multi-tiered seating, VIP areas, multiple bars and more.

POST Houston—the 555,000-square-foot adaptive re-use project opened to 40,000 visitors at its splashy grand opening and is already a blockbuster hit, drawing thousands of people a day who can’t resist the allure of a five-acre rooftop park and a Tokyo-style food hall—dubbed Post Market—boasting a critically acclaimed roster of 20+ international vendors and counting. The foodie-focused venue is currently getting top billing on Top Chef: Houston, cementing its overnight status as a top destination in Downtown Houston.

purnoirewines.com

POST Houston

713musichall.com
New chef-driven concepts continue to dot the Downtown landscape, further reinforcing the neighborhood's growing reputation as a bona fide dining destination, including Georgia James Tavern (737 Preston Street) by celebrity Chef Chris Shepherd, featuring a much-talked-about $22 burger from its wood-fired grill that has already become a major pre-theater draw and neighborhood favorite.

Toro Toro—a new Pan-Latin steak and sushi concept by global chef Richard Sandoval—also recently launched on the 3rd floor of the completely revamped Four Seasons Hotel Houston (1300 Lamar Street), offering expertly plated dishes like the mezcal-flambéed tomahawk steak and Spanish octopus.

Bravery Chef Hall (409 Travis Street) continues to attract some of the city's hottest rising-star culinary talent. After establishing itself as a go-to spot for lunch, happy hour, dinner and late-night dining, the chef incubator has become something of a launch pad for budding chef/restaurateurs looking to cut their teeth in a high-volume setting. Case in point: Chef Christine Ha recently announced plans to expand the hoof-prints of her Vietnamese gastropub, The Blind Goat, to a brick-and-mortar location in Spring Branch. Since then, the Downtown food hall has added a new contemporary Mexican concept by Jonathan Gallardo of Secret Garden HTX and former Caracol Executive Chef Tim Reading called Ixim, which replaced Cherry Block Craft Butcher after it expanded into a brick-and-mortar location in Katy and a soon-to-open second iteration in Garden Oaks.

LifeTime Athletic opened its first-ever urban location last year at Downtown’s evolving GreenStreet—hitting an immediate chord with young professionals looking for complete health, wellness and connection through its baby brands LifeCafe, LifeSpa and LifeTime Works. The 60,000-square-foot facility offers expansive workout options including weights, cardio machines and fitness studios in addition to the café, salon and spa designed to maximize personal potential for the ever-growing number of movers-and-shakers who are reshaping Downtown Houston.
At press time, **Frost Town Brewing** (100 N. Jackson) has either just opened its taps or will do so any day now, so we encourage you to check their website. What we do know about the new craft brewery is that it’s named for the historic Frost Town neighborhood established in 1837 and was home to the first commercial breweries in the strange new town of Houston. We also know the pet-friendly brew pub is situated on a half-acre lot featuring a 10,000-square-foot outdoor beer garden and 9,100-square-foot taproom and is sure to have Astros fans giddy when they realize Frost Town’s across-the-street proximity to **Minute Maid Park**.

**frosttownbrew.com**

**The Highlight at Houston Center** (1200 McKinney Street)—the rebranded, redesigned and rebooted 196,000-square-foot will also be unveiled this year with a newly configured exterior spilling into Discovery Green. Among the F&B, entertainment and lifestyle offerings, The Highlight will offer a diverse line-up of experiential restaurants, retail outlets and services a stone’s throw from top Downtown destinations.

**houstoncenter.com**
Year-to-year occupancy rates for Downtown Houston hotels—one of the hardest hit industries by the pandemic—skyrocketed to 51 percent in 2021 from 14 percent the year before. A whopping 368,574 room nights are now booked thanks to the 29 conventions, conferences and expos taking place at George R. Brown Convention Center and throughout the city this year—a 56 percent increase from the year before. The resurgence of the visitation economy is good news for Downtown’s impressive hotel supply, which recently added a newly branded luxury concept, The Laura Hotel, Houston Downtown, Autograph Collection (1070 Dallas Street), and will expand by 119 new rooms when the stylishly modern boutique property, The Moxy Hotel by Marriott (412 Main Street), opens later this year, giving Downtown Houston more than 8,500 hotel rooms.

The aptly named C. Baldwin (400 Dallas Street) is also back following a pandemic-related hiatus and once again serving as the Allen Center’s social anchor. Honoring the brash and fiercely independent Charlotte Baldwin Allen—aka The Mother of Houston—the sleek property boasts stylish accommodations and stunning common areas, including 354 guest rooms, 14,000 square feet of state-of-the-art meeting and event spaces and a lively lobby bar serving up premium craft cocktails. The boutique hotel’s signature restaurant by Top Chef Master Chris Cosentino—Rosalie Italian Soul—combines old-world traditions like wood-fired pizzas, homemade pastas and rustic Italian red sauce dishes with bold, chef-driven interpretations of classic Italian American cooking staples.

grbhouston.com
thelaurahotel.com
moxy-hotels.marriott.com

cbaldwinhotel.com
rosalieitaliansoul.com
Amegy on Main (1801 Main Street) finished updating its building lobby and common areas while adding a new parking garage—no doubt a most welcome addition for MassChallenge, gener8tor and Impact Hub. The fast-growing start-up accelerators and startup service provider are ensconced on the building's 10th floor at the 17,000-square-foot tech hub, Downtown Launchpad—a project spearheaded by Central Houston and the Downtown Redevelopment Authority and which now serves as the northern point of Houston’s burgeoning Innovation Corridor connecting Downtown to Texas Medical Center.

JP Morgan Chase Tower (600 Travis Street), which still anchors the Downtown skyline as the tallest tower in Texas is nearing completion on its own makeover with extensive renovations that include the addition of a striking trapezoidal glass pyramid entry along with an urban garden, collaborative work areas, conference center and a sky lounge for the exclusive use of its tenants.

Swedish subsidiary Skanska USA’s newest commercial project—1550 on the Green—(1550 Lamar Street), broke ground next door to Four Seasons Hotel Houston overlooking Discovery Green. The building will reach 28 stories and offer 375,000 square feet of office space and ground floor retail when completed in 2024. Designed by Bjarke Ingels Group, it will feature a unique side-core design allowing for unlimited natural light and park views and will also include three terraces and private rooftop terrace. Impressively, the building has already landed its anchor tenant in the form of the third-largest law firm in the country—Norton Rose Fulbright—and will also become the conglomerate’s greenest office project in Texas with certified LEED Platinum status.
2021 was a terrific year – we’re looking forward to an even better 2022!

LISTINGS SOLD IN 2021

1. 20502 Glademill Ct.
2. 917 Main St. Unit 1108
3. 705 Main St. Unit 320
4. 222 E. 25th St.
5. 914 Main St. Unit 1804
6. 1010 Rosine St. Unit 25
7. 915 Franklin Unit 4J
8. 711 Main St. Unit 901
9. 204 Travis St. Unit 4A
10. 915 Franklin St. Unit 6I
11. 915 Franklin St. Unit 3I
12. 204 Travis St. Unit 4B
13. 915 Franklin St. Unit 6D
14. 915 Franklin St. Unit 8I
15. 5104 Caroline Unit 302
16. 1010 Rosine St. Unit 22
17. 2205 McKinney Unit 314
18. 4627 Wild Indigo Unit 594
19. 705 Main St. Unit 704
20. 705 Main St. Unit 608
21. 915 Franklin St. Unit 4K
22. 11004 Ellwood, The Woodlands
23. 201 Main St. Unit 5B
24. 201 Main St. Unit 3G
25. 2000 Bagby Unit 3401
26. 2000 Bagby Unit 5410
27. 5836 Kansas
28. 210 Bremond
29. 613 E 12 1/2 St.
30. 2510 Zemmer Ln.
31. 82 Cokeberry Ct.
32. 343 W 17th St.
33. 705 Main St. Unit 414
34. 114 Riley Ln.

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713.227.5406 | GaryGreene.com
Every sip of wine is the culmination of a long journey, and each glass has a story to tell. Thanks to Carissa and Kenneth Stephens, more people are taking that journey by visiting their tasting room Downtown. But the Stephens have their own journey to share as a married couple and owners of Pur Noire Urban Wineries, the first Black-owned winery in Houston.
THE START

"Babe, if we're always going to be working, we need to do something that we're working on together," Carissa told Kenneth one evening as the two entrepreneurs were working side-by-side on their own projects on their couch at home.

"We thought, 'What is something that we could build together and be able to share with others?' We can't scale ourselves. So we knew that a tangible product would be the answer," Carissa says.

Fast forward to a splurge purchase of a bottle of pinotage at the recommendation of a sommelier, their interest piqued after learning the wine was vinted and imported by companies owned by people of color. From this point forward, their palates and interests expanded as the couple tasted and enjoyed wine as a mutual passion.

And then in 2016, the couple took a trip to Italy and there was no turning back.

"I'd always had an interest in wine, but we fell in love with it to the point where when we got back to the States, we completely geeked out," says Carissa. "Like in our spare time we were watching wine documentaries, we were reading, we were asking each other questions, we were making wine runs and tasting wines from all over the world."

THE HISTORY

In 2019, the couple made it official, creating their own e-commerce brand, crafting, bottling and selling their wines online, shipping a limited selection to customers across 37 states.

"Originally, we were licensed in California, but we only did direct to consumers," says Kenneth. "We would do events throughout the city [of Houston], and people would drink the wine and they loved it, and we noticed a spike in sales every time. And so I turned to her and was like, 'We need to build a tasting room in Houston.'"

So the couple licensed the winery in Texas and started looking for spaces, intent on bringing the experience to an urban location.

Originally planning to open in the Meyerland area, Kenneth spotted their now-location at 802 Milam St., Suite 103, called his real estate agent excitedly, and the deal was done, though the building was not.

"We had to have a huge imagination and a very clear vision, because nothing was here," says Carissa. "There were no walls, there was no color, the ceiling was awful. There were wires hanging everywhere. It was a rough blank slate."

"If you can even call it that," says Kenneth. After noticing the paint on the century-old building's exterior matched the Pur Noire logo's colors of white, black and gold, Carissa knew it was "divine alignment." Their vision and faith kept the couple focused on moving forward, despite the challenges and unknowns of financing the project.

While Carissa honed in on operations, Kenneth went into fundraising mode, which paid off in the form of an SBA loan from Unity Bank, along with other sources of support and investments from their personal finances as well as reinvesting revenue from online sales.

"Because we're the first Black-owned winery in Houston, and it was a Black-owned bank funding it, it was really nice that they took a bet on us," says Kenneth. "We were like, 'OK, this is really going to happen.'"

"There's a lot of history being made around here," says Carissa.

"Because we're the first Black-owned winery in Houston...it was really nice that they took a bet on us."
THE WINE

There’s also plenty of wine being made by Pur Noire. What began as a selection of three wines in 2019 has tripled to nine as of 2022. To what do the Stephens attribute the growth of their product line over such a short time?

“I thought, ‘Well, we’re building a tasting room, but then people were just going to come and taste three wines?’” says Kenneth.

“And so I think the long and short of it was from necessity.”

“’It’s like what comes first, the chicken or the egg?’ says Carrisa.

Expanding the Pur Noire collection was, and still is, a labor of love, but labor nonetheless. While maintaining the customer-facing operations and building a tasting room, the Stephens were bouncing back and forth from Texas to California, where all their wine is currently produced.

“On the front end of it, it’s identifying vineyard partners, because everything is coming from California. And so after we’ve done that, it’s about figuring out where the wine is going to be made,” says Kenneth. “Normally we’re using one of two facilities. One’s in Lodi, one is in Napa, both are in California.”

When the production facility is procured, then it’s time to schedule harvest. From there, the process of aging begins, with variable timing depending on the harvest as well as the type of grapes used in the wine. The Stephens prefer to age their product in French oak barrels, a signature of the Pur Noire brand.

“And then after we’ve gone into barrel, my favorite part is the blending sessions,” says Kenneth. “A lot of people don’t know most of the wines that they drink are in fact blends even though they’re labeled as a single varietal.”

“Wine is the intersection between science and art,” says Carissa. “And so much can change your product and your wine in the winemaking process; a lot of it is subjective.”

Next comes the bottling, corking, labeling and shipping of the wine from California to Texas. Because their current footprint in Downtown is just enough space to house a tasting room and member lounge, they also lease a refrigerated space for offsite storage. As Kenneth says, “it’s an operation of a lot of moving parts.”

“Being the first Black owners of a winery in Houston is a surreal and proud feeling. We believe representation matters, so a big driver for us early on when we established the brand was to be that representation of African American vintners in the wine industry where we’ve been historically underrepresented on even a global scale. Our main hope for the future of the wine industry and the Black community is a better understanding of quality wine and a deeper appreciation for artisanal winemaking through accessible wine education. This, in turn, will attract more industry professionals of color, broadening representation of Blacks across all areas of the industry. This would also empower wine buyers of color to make more informed decisions when deciding what wines to buy.”

—Carissa Stephens
THE WORK

Despite the complex logistics and timing, personal involvement is a must for the Stephens, because creating a brand they love means putting a lot of love into the brand. “You see a lot of celebrity brands popping up where it’s just an endorsement or somebody just puts a label on a bottle. This is completely different from that,” says Kenneth. “We’re heavily investing our own time and our own energy and our own resources and our own money and ourselves.”

“Our own blood, sweat and tears,” adds Carissa. “It looks very glamorous, but people don’t see the behind-the-scenes daily grind that is required to start, grow, maintain a business like ours.”

Working hard—together—adds yet another layer to Pur Noire’s dynamism. Carissa and Kenneth’s passion for good wine is at the center of their Venn diagram, but when it comes to the business, they balance one another with complementary strengths.

From Kenneth’s point of view, Carissa brings charisma, personality, charm and a contagious level of enthusiasm about the brand. Her natural energy and passion for the company makes her a “phenomenal” salesperson, marketer and brand ambassador.

“I could never sell a product I didn’t believe in,” says Carissa.

From Carissa’s perspective, Kenneth brings equilibrium to their partnership through big-picture planning and real-world strategy execution. His ability to anticipate next steps and find ways to get them done (or tweak them if necessary) helps keep the company running and expanding efficiently.

“I’m kind of the practical person,” says Kenneth. “I’m looking for the big picture and I’m always like, ‘OK, what’s next? How do we grow this thing?’”
THE CLUB

While customers can purchase wines by the bottle ad hoc like traditional retail, one segment of Pur Noire’s continued growth is their wine club. Benefits for members include a special members-only lounge inside the winery, built-in discounts and, for certain tiers, free entry to events.

“If you love it and you want to make this a wine that you drink on a regular basis, the best thing you can do is join the club,” says Carissa. “And there’s no fee to join, so why wouldn’t you?”

“There’s that salesmanship,” laughs Kenneth.

In essence, being a club member means you commit to buying a minimum amount of Pur Noire wines in a set time period. This builds in predictability and stability for the business, and in return, the members are afforded privileges. The ultimate goal is not only growth in sales, but building a community of like-minded, wine lovers.

“You sign up for a specific level of membership, commit to spending a specific amount of money on each wine shipment (quarterly or monthly), receive built-in discounts for your loyalty, invitations to special events and gain access to the members lounge inside the Pur Noire tasting room.

Levels & Benefits

PUR INDULGENCE
A commitment to buy 12 wines per year in $125 quarterly shipments. This membership includes a 15% discount on wine orders, discounted or complimentary event admission and access to limited and new releases.

PUR LIFESTYLE
A commitment to buy at least one bottle ($40 minimum) per month. At this level, members can customize their orders before shipment and receive a 25% discount on orders, taste new vintages and pre-order before they go on sale to the general public and get VIP access to Pur Noire events, which includes complimentary wine and food.

PUR LIFESTYLE+
A commitment to buy at least 24 bottles per year, shipped monthly for a minimum of $60 per shipment, plus a monthly experience fee of $85. The highest level, this includes free shipping, 25% off orders, VIP event access with complimentary wine and food, access to premium and exclusive wines and access to specially curated luxury experiences like travel, local restaurant, hotel and spa packages and more.

“If you love it and you want to make this a wine that you drink on a regular basis, the best thing you can do is join the club.”
As the wine club and community grows, the Stephens are ready to maximize their Downtown Houston tasting room, where they feel they’ve yet to scratch the surface.

“We’re right next to the Theater District, and so there’s a lot of opportunity and a lot of channels for people to one; realize we’re here and two; make a choice to include us in their plans for the day,” says Carissa.

Busy times for the winery are—not surprisingly—evenings and weekends, but Pur Noire is hoping word of mouth will help bring in more Downtown residents as well as Houston tourists to schedule tastings for daytimes (they open at 1 p.m.) and weekdays.

“I really would like to see the folks in the city plan on their Wednesday or Thursday when they’re leaving work to stop in and do a tasting with us and get that experience because we’re right here,” adds Kenneth.

The couple understands the urban location is a twist on tradition, since most tasting rooms are associated with tourist-frequented areas located on estate wineries, but that’s the point. “We wanted to bring a traditional tasting room experience, but in a nontraditional setting,” adds Carissa. “This is a very deserving market, a very deserving community.”

Even though Houston is the focus for the immediate future, the Stephens are eyeing expansion within Texas once things are humming along at their flagship in Downtown. "Our logo says ‘Pur Noire Urban Wineries,’ plural,” says Carissa. "As far as we’ve come, this is still just the beginning of our story.”

How is a tasting room different from a wine bar?

“It is a fully guided tasting experience. It is interactive. You have somebody servicing you, accommodating you the entire time. It’s between a 30- to 45-minute tasting experience, depending on what flight you choose, sometimes an hour. You ask as many questions as you possibly can. Our friendly and knowledgeable staff are also equally as passionate as we are. They really believe in what we’re doing here, and they’re so excited to talk about wine on a daily basis.”

— Carissa Stephens

“When I’m here and I see people that normally don’t drink wine, a lot of times we get the big, tough guy that comes in with his girlfriend or his wife or his friends and they’re like, ‘Yeah, I don’t really drink wine.’ And then it’s just amazing watching my staff wear them down. By the third glass they’re smelling and swirling and looking and they get into it. And it’s like, ‘See, this is an experience.’ It’s a learning experience, but it’s also an enjoyable and entertaining experience.”

— Kenneth Stephens

“We wanted to bring a traditional tasting room experience, but in a nontraditional setting.”
plate.

THE GUIDE TO EATING DOWNTOWN

TORO TORO
Benihana of Tokyo Japanese
While some restaurants allow their guests to view the kitchen, this Japanese grill brings the kitchen to you. Benihana chefs set up shop right in front of your table. The meal is made from scratch, and you can witness the entire show.


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

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

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. L Mon–Fri. $ $$

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 ITX letters that hang illuminated on an exposed brick wall. Highlights from the menu include brisket tacos, meatloaf muffins on top of jalapeño 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. L Sat–Sun; D & LN Nightly. $$

Brasa’s Brazilian Steakhouse Steakhouse
Open for lunch and dinner, Brasa’s Brazilian Steakhouse brings an authentic churrascaria dining experience to Downtown. In keeping with tradition, the menu comprises various types of meat including beef, pork, chicken and seafood. brashouston.com, 705 Main, L & D Mon–Sat. $$$

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. brassereduparc.net, 1440 Lamar. L & D Mon–Sat. $$$

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 Pasta & Pizza and Kokoro. The chef hall also houses three bars including Bravery Wine Bar and Secret Garden.


Brown Bag Deli Fast Casual
Located in the Houston Club building, Brown Bag Deli serves up tasty, fresh sandwiches “just like you like it.” Known for its fluffy, soft bread you won’t be disappointed and neither will your wallet.

thebrownbagdell.net. 702 Main, 713.224.7000. L Mon–Fri. $

BurgerIM Fast Casual
BurgerIM is an Israel-based mini-burger concept known for serving 3oz. patties in a mix-and-match format. Choose from options like dry-aged beef, chorizo, turkey, salmon, veggie and more. The unique eatery also offers two different bun options, nine sauces and 10 different toppings making for an extremely customizable burger experience. BurgerIM also offers chicken strips and wings, milkshakes, family boxes and a variety of sides including onion rings and sweet potato fries.

burgerim.com, 800 Preston, 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! 1616 Main St. B, L, D & LN. $$$

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, L & D Tue–Sat. $ $$

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

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

Common Bond Brasserie American
The delicious baked goods and coffee you know from their new location in the Bank of America Tower. Enjoy a sophisticated full-service experience in a colorful and sleek dining room. The French-inspired fare curated by Chef Jason Goud can be enjoyed in the brasserie or on the expansive outdoor patio. From smoked duck rillettes to delicious sandwiches and shoestring fries, you’ll find fresh and amazing cuisine any time of the day.

commonbondcafe.com, 800 Capitol, B, L & D Mon–Fri. $ $$

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

cornerbakery.com, 1000 Main, B & L Mon–Fri. $
Cultivated F+B American
Cultivated F+B is the perfect spot for a meal with friends, a power breakfast or post-performance nook. Dine al fresco on the patio or soak in the contemporary art indoors as you indulge in a sophisticated American menu that features braised short rib tacos, Fernando’s chilaquiles and other exquisite items. themanciolo.com. 701 Texas Avenue, B, L & D Daily. $$

Diana American Grill American
Nestled inside the Hobby Center, this is an ideal place for pre-show dining. hobbycenter.com. 800 Bagby. D Show nights only. $$$

Diana American Grill American
Nestled inside the Hobby Center, this is an ideal place for pre-show dining. hobbycenter.com. 800 Bagby. D Show nights only. $$$

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! thedistricthtx.com. 610 Main St. L & D Daily. $$

Domino’s Pizza
doninos.com. 975 McKinney. $

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. L & D Daily. $$

Eats Mesquite Grill Classic American
Craving 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. L Mon–Fri. $

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. einsteinbros.com. 1200 Louisiana. 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 chock full of tasty tacos with fresh toppings like pomegranate salsas, charred scallions, pumpkin seeds and more. elbigbad.com. 419 Travis. D & LN Nightly. $$

Fabian’s Latin Flavors Latin
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. D & LN Thu–Sun. $$

Finn Hall Food Hall
The upscale food hall serves delicious cuisine from 10 independently operated eating establishments including Craft Burger, Dish Society, Lit Chicken, Papalo Taqueria, Pizza Zquare, Pho Binh, and Yong. Come eat your heart out during breakfast, lunch, and dinner or enjoy a cocktail at either of Finn Hall’s elevated bars during happy hour. 712 Main. B, L & D Mon–Fri, L & D Sat. $$

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. beerknurd.com. 705 Main. 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 hob.com. GreenStreet, 1204 Caroline. D Wed–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. L & D Daily, LN Thu–Sat. $

Georgia James Tavern
This casual offshoot of Georgia James Steakhouse features dishes you want to eat every day—salads, sandwiches, burgers, and yes, cast-iron seared steaks, along with entrees cooked in a wood-burning oven and simple desserts. Indulge in their fun cocktail menu at happy hour or peruse the extensive wine list, which features small producers in a wide variety of regions. georgiagjames Tavern.com. 777 Preston. L Fri-Sun, D Tue–Sat & BR Sun. $$$

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 and Discovery 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. L Mon–Fri, 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. L & D Tue–Sat. $$$

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 co-workers or friends. Great happy hour specials. guadalajarahacienda.com. GreenStreet, 1201 San Jacinto. L Tue–Fri, D Tue–Sat. $$

Guard and Grace Steakhouse
A take on the modern steakhouse, prominent Denver Chef Troy Guard’s first foray into the Houston dining scene features rows of wood-burning grills with a bright, airy atmosphere that differs from the usual dark tone of a steakhouse. Guard and Grace boasts a menu offering everything from charcuterie and sushi to pan-roasted halibut and a filet mignon flight for one deliciously contemporary dining experience. One Allen Center, 500 Dallas. L Tue–Fri, D Tue–Sat. $$$

The Halal Guys Fast Casual
The Halal Guys is a fast casual restaurant franchise that began as halal carts on the southeast and southwest corners of 53rd Street and Sixth Avenue in Manhattan, New York City. The Downtown outpost serves their famous lineup of sandwiches, gyros and platters. thehalalguys.com 609 Main. L & D, Mon–Sat. $

Hearsay Gastro Lounge New American
Located in a beautifully refurbished historic building, this upscale restaurant and lounge serves up delicious sandwiches, salads and entrées. They feature an extensive wine list, numerous beers on draft and bottle and premium liquors with a focus on Scotch whisky. hearsayhouston.com. 218 Travis. L & D Daily. $$

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

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. L & D Daily. $$

Irma’s Mexican
Irma 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 Cheniever. B & L Mon–Fri, D Fri & Sat. $$
Irmã’s Southwest Grill  Mexican
Irmã’s second location is a hip spot to satisfy a Mexican food craving. Enjoy tasty foods and great drinks for lunch or dinner. Only a few short blocks from Minute Maid Park.  irmassouthwest.com. 1475 Texas. L & D Mon–Sat. $$

Jackson St. BBQ  Barbecue
This laid-back spot by renowned Houston chefs Bryan Caswell, Bill Floyd and Greg Gatlin offers smoked brisket, ribs, chicken, sausage and classic southern fixins like potato salad, baked beans, collard greens and cole slaw! Conveniently located across from Minute Maid Park, stop by this Downtown favorite before or after Astros games! jacksonstbbqhouston.com. 209 Jackson St. L Mon–Fri & Astros home games.

Island 1515 Kitchen & Rhum Bar  Caribbean
A short distance from the Toyota Center, enjoy authentic Caribbean dishes like Rastaman Pasta or sweet plantains at Island 1515. At their bar, sip on cocktails that feature runs from various regions of the Caribbean. Feel like you’re sitting on a sandy Island beach as you enjoy flavorful and vibrant dishes for dinner! Island1515.com. 1515 Pease, L & D Tues–Sat. $$$

Jason’s Deli  Deli
Order to please, Jason’s will make your sandwich or salad exactly how you like it. jasonsdeli.com. 806 Main St. L & D Daily.

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

Lone Star Taco  Tex-Mex

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 Wed–Sun. $

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. jwmarriotthotellouston.com/main-kitchen. 806 Main St. B, L, D Daily. $$$

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. L Mon–Fri, D Daily. $$$

The Melt on Wheels  American
Located inside Craft Beer Cellar, The Melt takes a childhood classic and gives it a gourmet twist! From the birria grilled cheese with chuck and brisket on artisan Texas toast, monte ray and chihuahua cheese and dripping broth on the side, to the mama mia featuring prosciutto, gouda, goat cheese and basil with a honey drizzle, all on potato bread, these sandwiches give you that classic cheesy taste you love with a hint of sophistication. meltonwheels.com. L & D Daily. $$$

Mendocino Farms  American
California-based Mendocino Farms is a one-stop shop for gourmet sandwiches and salads. This fast-casual concept offers twists on classics like a Vietnamese Bahn Mi, Cubano, tuna melt and more. Drawing inspiration from both its homestate and many cities across the nation, Mendocino Farms strives to introduce fresh, unique ingredients in approachable adventurous foods. mendocinofarms.com. 609 Main, L & D Mon–Fri. $

MKT BAR  International
Part of Phoenixia 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 Phoenixia is known. phoeniciafoods.com. 1001 Austin. B, L & D Daily. $

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

Morton’s Steakhouse
This award-winning steakhouse offers an outstanding menu. The downtown location features its new bar concept, Bar 12-21, which includes an impressive wine and martini menu along with its specially priced “bar bites.” mortons.com. 1001 McKinney. L Mon–Fri, D Daily. $$$$
Pappadeaux Seafood
This local favorite serves up some of the finest and freshest seafood with a Cajun twist! Start with the crispy fried alligator or a bowl of gumbo, try the Chilean Sea Bass or the pasta mardi gras, and top it all off with the praline bread pudding soulful. pappadeaux.com.

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

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

Pappatito’s Cantina Tex-Mex
One of Houston's most popular casual Tex-Mex restaurants, Pappatito's specializes in sizzling fajitas, creamy queso and tortillas that almost melt in your mouth! The Downtown location offers six unique ceviches and crudos that can't be found at any of the other restaurants. pappatitos.com. Hilton Americas-Houston, 1600 Lamar St. L & D Wed–Sun. $

Perbacco Italian
An adorably small 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. L Mon–Fri, D Fri & 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 variety of flavors. phoeniciafoods.com. 1001 Austin. B, L & D Daily. $$

Post Market Food Hall
Located in the newly renovated historic Downtown Post Office, POST Market is a foodie lover's dream with an array of Texas and International vendors. This food hall and market is the hub for delicious vendors like Andes Café, ChónnBleek, O'raj Mahal, Roberta's and more! posthtx.com/eat. 401 Franklin. 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. D Mon–Sat. $$$$

Quinto’s Fast Food

Rachel’s Café French
Rachel's Café is an old-fashioned hambager joint inside the historic Londale Building. This quaint little cafe has an expansive menu with lots of simple classics like burgers, fries, sandwiches and salads—all made fresh! rachelscafehouston.com. 421 San Jacinto. L & D Mon–Fri. $

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. L & D Daily. $

Rosalie Italian Soul Italian
Located in the C. Baldwin Hotel, Rosalie Italian Soul is named after and inspired by Chris Cosentino's great-grandmother, a first-generation Italian immigrant who he credits for his cooking career. With a menu featuring classic red sauce dishes, traditional Italian starters and other staples of this cuisine like pizzas, house made pastas and shared plates, Rosalie blends traditional Italian cuisine with the ingredients of Houston. rosielititanian soul.com. C. Baldwin Hotel, 400 Dallas. L & D Daily, BR Sat–Sun. $$

Russo's New York Pizzeria Italian
Inspired by the traditional Italian values of family, friends & food, this Houston 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. L & D Daily. $

Saint Arnold Beer Garden & Restaurant
Saint Arnold's Beer Garden & Restaurant is a must-see 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. saintarnold.com. 2000 Lyons. 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. L & D Daily. $

Saltgrass Steak House Steakhouse
Most famous for its Certified Angus Beef steaks, Saltgrass is an award-winning steakhouse with a menu featuring a variety of fresh seafood, chicken, burgers, sandwiches and more including favorites like BBQ Baby Back Ribs, Surf & Turf and Chicken Fried Steak. For delicious bar bites and beverage specials, swing by their No Bull Lounge during Happy Hour Monday through Friday from 3 pm to 7 pm. George R. Brown Convention Center, 1001 Avenida de las Americas. 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. sambucarestaurant.com. 909 Texas. L Mon–Fri, D Mon–Sat, LN Thu–Sat. $$$$

Sapporo Japanese Sushi & Bar Asian
Sapporo Japanese Sushi & Bar offers everything from sushi and yaki soba to shrimp vegetable tempura and smoked taipan yaki filet mignon. Daily happy hour favorites include hot sake, fried oysters and an assortment of house wines. sapporohouston.com. 801 Congress. L & D Daily. $$

Shake Shack Burger Asian
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. $

The Shops at Houston Center Food Court

Shula's Steakhouse American

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

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

Sol Cafe Mejicano Mexican
Stop in Solecita Churreria y Taqueria and enjoy delicious tacos and tortas made with fresh ingredients. Sip on refreshing agua frescas, frozen margaritas or beer with you satisfy your sweet tooth with handmade churros and Mexican hot chocolate for dessert. solecitahouston.com. 413 Travis. L Mon–Sat. $

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. D Tue–Sat. $$$$

SPRING 2022
TORO TORO ELEVATES THE PAN-LATIN STEAKHOUSE EXPERIENCE AT FOUR SEASONS

By Shelby Roth

As you walk up the stairs to the third floor of the Four Seasons Hotel in Downtown Houston, anticipation builds for a one-of-a-kind experience at our neighborhood’s most recent addition—Toro Toro, the acclaimed pan-Latin steakhouse by Chef Richard Sandoval.

Houston is the sixth city to welcome Sandoval’s steakhouse concept, following Dubai, Qatar, and Miami. The location is unique as it focuses on Texas’ best: steaks, seafood and exotic game, all influenced by Sandoval’s background in central American cooking.

The menu features a variety of small plates for the table, such as smoked guacamole, sweet corn empanadas, blackened tuna tacos, and our personal favorite—swordfish dip. While fish dips have their place in our city, don’t skip on this iteration at Toro Toro. Served with house-made pickled jalapenos and fresh-cooked plantain chips, this swordfish dip is spectacular.
Toro Toro isn’t another hotel restaurant, it’s fully able to stand on its own, creating a destination worth visiting time and time again.

For those who balk at the idea of fish dips, we get it. Toro Toro’s dinner menu has several offerings from their ceviche bar that should be a bit more to taste. From the traditional Peruvian ceviche to more unique sushi rolls, there’s something for everyone when it comes to sharing a seafood starter.

The real standout from Toro Toro’s dinner menu is the 52-ounce mezcal-flambeed prime tomahawk steak. Yep, it’s a handful—both in words and in size. But the tableside presentation is worth every penny to impress your group (again, emphasis on “group” because this is not something you’ll want to tackle alone!).

The restaurant recently opened for breakfast and lunch, offering items you won’t find elsewhere Downtown. We’ve stopped by for a quick lunch service, but also dined as a group, and Toro Toro surpasses all biz-lunch expectations. If the Brussels sprouts side isn’t calling your name immediately, order them anyway— you won’t be disappointed. From the Cubano sandwich to the beautiful Spanish Caesar salad, we welcome you to try something a bit different when in the office this week.

Food, atmosphere and hospitality are consistent at the Four Seasons, and the luxury hotel has become a retreat amidst the hustle of our neighborhood. Toro Toro isn’t another hotel restaurant, it’s fully able to stand on its own, creating a destination worth visiting time and time again.
Stack Burger American
This Downtown burger joint is far from ordinary. Serving more than just your everyday burgers, Stack Burger also offers coffee, breakfast, fusion sandwiches and a whole lotta Houston art. stack-burger.com.
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. B & L. S Sweetgreen American
With locally sourced greens + grains and a menu that follows Mother Nature’s lead, sweetgreen is making a sustainable impact on the future of food. Choose from their deliciously curated warm bowls and salads, or create your own. sweetgreen.com. 820 Main. L Mon–Fri. $ 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. district7grill.com. 720 Fannin @ The Club Quarters. 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. B Mon–Fri, L & D Mon–Sat. $$$ Thai Cafe Asian
Make your way to the Historic District and treat your tastebuds to the authentic flavors of Thai fusion at this local hub. Menu favorites include a variety of Thai dishes including their crispy shrimp & spicy tamarind sauce and kao soi. thaicafehouston1x.com. 917 Franklin. L & D Daily. $ Theodore Rex American
Enjoy an intimate dining experience at James Beard Award–winning Chef Justin Yu’s modern American bistro, Theodore Rex. Expect fresh local produce in your dishes coupled with warm hospitality as you walk in. trexhouston.com. 1302 Nance St. D Thu–Mon. $$$ Toro Toro Steakhouse
Located in the Four Seasons Hotel, Toro Toro is an exciting new elevated dining experience. This pan Latin steakhouse features vibrant flavors and encourages the convivial dining culture rooted in Central and South America. The menu boasts signature dishes like the South Texas antelope tenderloin and the Toro Toro churrasco. torotorohouston.com. Four Seasons Hotel, 1300 Lamar. B, L & D Tue–Sat.$$$$ Treebeards Southern
A downtown institution for more than 30 years, Treebeards offers tasty Cajun dishes that are sure to satisfy. Favorite menu items include the chicken and shrimp gumbo, red beans and rice and étouffée. For dessert, try the famous butter bar. treebeards.com. 315 Travis. L & D Mon–Fri. $ Underground Hall American
Located in the Historic Market Square District, Underground Hall is the latest food hall to hit Downtown Houston. Offering everything from pizza and beer to tacos and tres leches, this foodie paradise truly has a little something for everyone. The casual establishment features locally known dining spots including Wokker, Hotline Burger, Birdhaus, The Pho Fix and Treacherous Leches. undergroundhall.com. 1010 Prairie. L & D Daily. $ Understory Food Hall
Located at the base of Bank of America tower, this expansive 40-foot atrium which doubles as a lively food hall is filled with natural light, an abundance of community gathering spaces and features diverse food and drink experiences such as Seaside Poke, Farro, Flip n’ Patties, Boomtown Coffee, MONA Fresh Italian Food, Mama Nina’s Tacos & Tortas, East Hampton Sandwich Co and Silver Lining Bar. understoryhouston.com. 800 Capitol. B, L, D Daily. $$$ 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 Ballard Park District and across from Minute Maid Park, Vic & Anthony’s is the ideal spot for entertaining business clients, a special celebration or a pre/post-game dinner. vicandanthonys.com. 1510 Texas. L Fri, D Nightly. $$$ Walker St. Kitchen American
Walker Street Kitchen serves the freshest offerings from the Gulf Coast, fusing cultural and geographical influences into a culinary feast. Marriot Marquis Houston, 1777 Walker. 713.654.1777. B, L & D Daily. $$$ Wimpy’s Hamburgers Fast Food
Wimpy’s serves up a pretty good burger but they also have many other down-home favorites. 632 Polk. B & L Mon–Fri. $ 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 piedra, an ancient traditional fish and shrimp soup. ¡Buen provecho! xochihouston.com. 1777 Walker. D Tue–Sat, BR Sun. $$$ 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). L & D Mon–Sat. Zero’s Sandwich Shop Deli
This cafeteria-style Cajun joint brings Louisiana dishes to the Hospital District of downtown Houston. Traditional Cajun items such as po-boys, jambalaya and gumbo make Zydeco a great lunch stop. A casual atmosphere adds to the enjoyment. zydecolouisianadiner.com. 1119 Pease. L Mon–Fri. $
3 Fibs Coffee & Wine Bar | 104 Main
3 Fibs serves up wonderfully aromatic single origin arabica beans and blends. Their innovative morning and lunch menu is all about the Liege waffles and will include not only sweet waffles, but savory twists on the classics such as Benedict, BLT, caprese and more. In the evenings, the vibe changes. Stop by for an espresso or glass of wine paired with a charcuterie board. 7 am–10 pm daily. 3fibswinebar.com

Angel Share HTX | 924 Congress
An incredibly unique bar, every drink or purchase earns patrons a vote that goes toward select charities. All of the charities benefit from increased awareness about their efforts and for some, financial support! You’ll find a creative cocktail menu along with beer, wine and light bites, including their baked-to-order chocolate chip cookies. Sun–Wed 4 pm–midnight, Thu–Sat 4 pm–2 am. angelsharehtx.com

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, Angels’ Share private dining room, and personalized bourbon lockers.
Mon–Sat 5–11 pm, Sun 3–11 pm. fourseasonsho.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 PLINKO board which decides your fate when the time comes to take a shot! Fri & Sat 9 pm–2 am. bootsnshootshouston.com

Buzz Barista | 811 Main
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 beer, wine and light bites, including their baked-to-order chocolate chip cookies. Sun–Wed 4 pm–midnight, Thu–Sat 4 pm–2 am. angelsharehtx.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 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 bits on their menu. Daily 11 am–11 pm. district7grill.com

Cezanne Jazz & Blues Club | 500 Louisiana (inside Birraporetti’s, downstairs)
Located in the heart of the Theater District, Cezanne is Houston’s only “listening room”—a cozy intimate place where people came primarily to hear amazing live jazz and blues music.
Fri & Sat 8:11 pm. cezzannejazz.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–2 am. twitter.com/TheCharBar

Cherry Bar | 308 Main
From the minds that brought you The Commoner comes this ’80s-themed nightclub and bar. Decked out with neon lights, vinyl records and vintage TVs, Cherry brings the all-night dance parties of the eighties to Main every weekend.
Fri & Sat, 9 pm–2 am. cherryhtx.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! Sun–Thu 11 am–10 pm, Fri & Sat 11 am–midnight. houston.craftbeercellar.com

CRU Lounge | 311 Travis
CRU Lounge is a restaurant and bar known for its craft cocktails and CBD-infused offerings. In addition to hookah and crutials, the menu offers small plates including wings, lollipop lamb chops and baby burgers. Mon–Wed 5 pm–1 am; Thurs & Fri 5 pm–2 am; Sat 2 pm–2 am; Sun Noon–11 pm. crulounge.com

Day 6 Coffee Co. | 910 Prairie Street, Suite 100
Day 6 Coffee Co. is a family-owned and operated business located in the Historic Market Square District. Serving up everything from coffee classics to specialty lattes, the brewhouse strives to serve the community and provide a platform to emerging artists. Mon–Thu 8 am–6 pm; Fri 8 am–10 pm; Sat & Sun 8 am–10 pm. daysicoffee.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.
Nightly 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.
Nightly 6 pm–2 am. dirtbarmh.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 Joystrix 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.
Nightly 4 pm–2 am. 1820lounge.com

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

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. Sun–Thu 11 am–10 pm, Fri & Sat 11 am–midnight. beerknurd.com

Henke & Pilott | 809 Congress
Where past meets present, and drinks and dining blend in flawless harmony. Henke & Pilott is more than a dynamic Downtown cocktail lounge. Named after the Houston grocery store chain that occupied the space in the 800 block of Congress over 150 years ago, the simple yet sophisticated setting offers patrons inspired cocktails that are paired with mouthwatering dishes.
Thu–Sat 10 pm–2 am. hkhouston.com

High & Dry Rum Bar | 306 Main, Suite 200
Offering more than 50 different types of rum behind the tiki-themed bar, High & Dry is your go-to destination for all your rum-based cocktail needs. Order a classic or try out the bar’s upgraded infusions of the Mai Tai and Hurricane, or maybe both! Wed–Sat 4 pm–midnight. highanddryhtx.com

La Cantina by La Calle | 909 Franklin
This authentic Mexican sports bar is draped in vintage lucha libre threads, and is the perfect hangout to throw back a few Micheladas, enjoy your fix of tacos and catch your favorite soccer, boxing or UFC match on one of their large 82” screen TVs. If you get too carried away, drop by La Canta’s sister concept, La Calle the next morning or the perfect hangover cure—a big bowl of menudo or caldo!
Mon–Fri 7 am–2 am, Sat & Sun 9 am–2 am. lacalletacos.com

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

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 glistening style, featuring revolutionary cocktails accompanied by comfortable finger foods and satisfying bites. Wed 5 pm–midnight, Thu–Sat 5 pm–2 am. lawless.com

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

Little Dipper | 304 Main
This spot is a cool, blue neighborhood bar with pinball machines, cheap bourbon and a bad-ass jukebox. Sun–Thu 4–10 pm, Fri & Sat 4 pm–2 am. twitter.com/LittleDipperBar

Lone Star Saloon | 1900 Travis
The Lone Star Saloon is a true classic Texas dive bar that seems misplaced in its 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 1 pm–2 am.

McIntyre’s | 901 Commerce
Situated in an early 1900s building, this three-story sports bar is home to food trucks, plenty of seating, three full-service bars and killer views of Buffalo Bayou. Blanketed with over 50 of the latest high-definition televisions designed so every patron can watch multiple games simultaneously, McIntyre’s newest location is a destination for playing, game watching and having a great time in Downtown Houston. Mon–Wed 2 pm–midnight, Thu & Fri 2 pm–2 am, Sat 11 am–2 am, Sun 11 am–midnight. mcnintyresusa.com/downtown

Minuti Coffee | 909 Texas
The coffee shop located in a cozy master in Italy, before making its way into the hands of talented baristas. This is the perfect place to bring the laptop and take advantage of Minuti’s free Wi-Fi. They also have beer and wine, which makes it a great pre/post theater spot. Be sure to sample some of the fresh-baked pastries and smoothies, too. Daily 7 am–5 pm. minuticoffee.com

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–7:30 pm, Thu & Fri 11 am–8 pm, Sat 10 am–8 pm, Sun 9 am–6 pm. mkbar.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. Mon–Sat 11 am–2 am. mollyspubs.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. Mon–Sat 11 am–2 am. mollyspubs.com

Notsohu | 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. Nightly 7 pm–2 am. notsohu.com

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 4–2 am. themwhitehallhouston.com

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

Pris | 108 Main
A stylish, low-ceiling atmosphere, fun music, friendly service and great drinks. With more to offer than a basic watering hole, Pris has a welcoming atmosphere for anyone. Thu–Mon 7 pm–2 am. prishtx.com

Reserve 101 | 1201 Caroline
Experience Downtown’s first Black-owned winery and tasting room. Sip and savor various wines from the Pur Noble wine collection, while learning about the wine-making process. Tue–Thu 12 pm–9 pm, Fri & Sat 12 pm–10 pm, Sun 12pm–6pm. purnoarrenewines.com

Saint Arnold’s Beer Garden | 2000 Lyons
Saint Arnold’s newish outdoor space is a beer-lover’s paradise with bocce ball courts, cornhole and a wide variety of seating options with breathtaking views of the Houston skyline. In the center of the Beer Garden, an upside down brekewellttox flows with water adhering to its sides and a big screen is rolled out for the big games. Sun–Thu 11 am–9 pm, Fri & Sat 11 am–11 pm. saintarnold.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. Daily 11 am–2 am. mcelroyspub.com

Starsbucks | 723 Main, 914 Dallas, 1600 Lamar
Offering staples such as macchiatos, lattes and teas, pastries, oven-warmed food and other light bites. Daily. starbucks.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. Foosball, darts and shuffleboard are in the back of the house to keep you entertained. Wed–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–midnight.

VAULT | 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. Sat 10 pm–2 am. facebook.com/VaULTDownTownHTX

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. Daily 2 pm–2 am.

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. Tue–Thu 4–10 pm, Fri & Sat 5 pm–midnight. lemeridienhoustondowntown.com

Zenaku | 410 Main
From the minds of Cherry Bar, visit the new anime-inspired nightclub in the Historic District for an energetic night with delicious cocktails. Fri–Sat 9pm–2am. zenakuhtx.com

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PERFORMING ARTS

HAMILTON
Feb 22–Mar 20  Witness the story of America then, told by America now. Featuring a score that blends hip-hop, jazz, R&B and Broadway, Hamilton has taken the story of American founding father Alexander Hamilton and created a revolutionary moment in theater—a musical that has had a profound impact on culture, politics and education. The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, 800 Bagby. houstonbroadway.com

STAR WARS: RETURN OF THE JEDI IN CONCERT
Mar 4–6  You’ll feel the full splendor and “Force” of John Williams’ incredible score—from 20th Century Fox fanfare to closing credits—as the Houston Symphony accompanies the movie, live. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. houstonsymphony.org

SENSE & SENSIBILITY
Mar 4–27  A playful new adaptation of Jane Austen’s beloved novel follows the fortunes (and misfortunes) of the Dashwood sisters—sensible Elinor and hypersensitive Marianne—after their father’s sudden death leaves them financially destitute and socially vulnerable. Set in gossipy late 18th-century England, with a fresh female voice, the play is full of humor, emotional depth and bold theatricality. Sense and Sensibility examines our reactions, both reasonable and ridiculous, to societal pressures. Alley Theatre, 615 Texas. alleytheatre.org

SYLVIA
Mar 10–20  After two glorious and critically acclaimed premieres in Houston and Sydney, Stanton Welch’s Sylvia makes a fierce return to the Wortham Theater Center stage for story ballet bliss. Welch brings his own interpretation to the classic story of the strong mythological heroine, the huntress Sylvia and her love for a mortal shepherd. The ballet follows her journey as she’s torn between her duty and her desires. Wortham Theater Center, 501 Texas. houstonballet.org

SEONG-JIN CHO PLAYS CHOPIN
Mar 11  Seong-Jin Cho became a rising star in 2015 when he won first prize at the Chopin International Competition in Warsaw. In January 2016, he signed an exclusive contract with Deutsche Grammophon. Now in great demand, with engagements including the Boston Symphony and Berlin Philharmonic, he’s made his mark as a consummate talent of his generation. Wortham Theater Center, 501 Texas. spahouston.org

THAT GOLDEN GIRLS SHOW
Mar 11–12  A brand-new show that parodies classic Golden Girls moments—with puppets! The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, 800 Bagby. thehobbycenter.org

RACHMANINOFF'S SECOND
Mar 11–13  Rachmaninoff’s rapturous and romantic Symphony No. 2 unfurls a never-ending cascade of lush, opulent melodies, each one bound to speak directly to the heart. Plus, immerse yourself in Toru Takemitsu’s beautiful and mesmerizing homage to the ocean, Toward the Sea. houstonsymphony.org

ANDRÉS FEST: A SYMPHONIC CELEBRATION
Mar 18–27  From showstoppers like Boléro and The Carnival of the Animals to superstar pianist Emanuel Ax, world premières and dazzling solos by orchestra musicians, this special two-week festival encapsulates the inspired music making and joyful, engaging spirit that has defined Andrés Orozco-Estrada’s remarkable eight-year tenure with the Symphony. houstonsymphony.org

IS GOD IS
Mar 19–Apr 2  Is God Is is a modern myth about twin sisters who sojourn from the Dirty South to the California desert to exact righteous revenge. Winner of the 2016 Relentless Award, Aleshea Harris collides the ancient, the modern, the tragic, the Spaghetti Western and Afropunk in this darkly funny and unapologetic new play. Rec Room, 100 Jackson. recroomarts.org
COME FROM AWAY
Mar 22–Apr 3 This New York Times Critics’ Pick takes you into the heart of the remarkable true story of 7,000 stranded passengers and the small town in Newfoundland that welcomed them. Cultures clashed and nerves ran high, but uneasiness turned into trust, music soared into the night and gratitude grew into enduring friendships. The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, 800 Bagby. tuts.com

ARS LYRICA HOUSTON: AN UNCOMMON CHEVALIER
Mar 27 With a tuneful violin concerto from Saint-Georges, a comparable work from a contemporary, and a symphony commissioned by the chevalier, this program transports us to a lively Parisian concert hall in the mid 1780s, just before the Revolution changed everything. The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, 800 Bagby. thehobbycenter.org

DACAMERA: ELIAS STRING QUARTET
BEETHOVEN CYCLE II
Apr 1 Part three of a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to hear the complete Beethoven Quartet Cycle, a rare presentation which follows Beethoven’s life and work, from the earliest to the final, late quartets. The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, 800 Bagby. thehobbycenter.org

MARVEL STUDIOS’ BLACK PANTHER IN CONCERT
Apr 2–3 Relive the excitement of T’Challa becoming king and battling Killmonger all while the Houston Symphony performs Ludwig Göransson’s Oscar-winning score live to picture. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. houstonsymphony.org

DRUM TAO 2022
Apr 4 Drum Tao’s programs are dramatically physical performances featuring the incomparable sounds of Wadaiko drums and the melodies of Japanese flutes and harps. It’s entertainment that completely surpasses expectations and a Houston favorite for all ages! Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. spahouston.org

DACAMERA: ELIAS STRING QUARTET
BEETHOVEN CYCLE V
Apr 8 Part six of a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to hear the complete Beethoven Quartet Cycle, a rare presentation which follows Beethoven’s life and work, from the earliest to the final, late quartets. The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, 800 Bagby. thehobbycenter.org

JE’CARYOUS JOHNSON PRESENTS: NEW JACK CITY LIVE
Apr 8–10 Set to the soundtrack of some of the most classic songs from the film, New Jack City Live will give audiences across the nation an opportunity to experience classical theater storytelling of their favorite 90s movie that can only be experienced the Je’Caryous way . . . live on stage. The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, 800 Bagby. thehobbycenter.org

SWING OUT DIRECTED BY CALEB TEICHER
Apr 9 Hello, roaring 2020s. Acclaimed choreographer and Dance Magazine cover star Caleb Teicher brings the best of the swing dance world to the concert stage. With live music by Eyal Vilner’s Big Band, Lindy Hop champions bring the joy, fire and fight of competitive and social swing dance to prove that there’s no better time in history to swing out! Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. spahouston.org

DANIEL TIGER’S NEIGHBORHOOD LIVE
Apr 10 Following the hugely successful Daniel Tiger’s Neighborhood Live: King for a Day tour that traveled to more than 50 neighborhoods in 2019, Daniel Tiger and all his friends from the beloved Emmy Award-winning PBS KIDS television series are hopping back aboard Trolley for a fun performance. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. spahouston.org

KANAN GILL: IS THIS IT?
Apr 10 Kanan Gill’s meteoric rise to the top echelon of Indian comedy has been nothing short of spectacular, though five minutes into his comedy will clear any doubts of the praise that comes his way. The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, 800 Bagby. thehobbycenter.org

TRIXIE AND KATYA LIVE
Apr 11 Thelma and Louise, Romy and Michele, Barb and Star, and . . . Trixie Mattel and Katya? Hollywood’s pantheon of iconic road-tripping women will welcome two drag superstars into the mix as the UNHhhh hosts and RuPaul’s Drag Race alums rev up their first-ever joint tour Triage and Katya Live. The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, 800 Bagby. thehobbycenter.org
BEETHOVEN’S EROICA & LISZT
Apr 15–16 Experience the power and grandeur of Beethoven’s immortal Eroica Symphony, led by one of today’s biggest young conducting stars, Rafael Payare. Liszt is synonymous with finger-flying piano fireworks and his dramatic Piano Concerto No. 2 is in good hands with returning favorite Jean-Yves Thibaudet. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. houstonsymphony.org

DEAD MAN’S CELL PHONE
Apr 15–May 8 An incessantly ringing cell phone in a quiet café. A stranger at the next table who has had enough. And a dead man. So begins Dead Man’s Cell Phone, a wildly imaginative comedy by MacArthur Genius Sarah Ruhl (The Clean House). An off-the-wall play about the odyssey of a woman forced to confront her own assumptions about morality, redemption and the need to connect in a technologically obsessed world. Alley Theatre, 615 Texas. alleytheatre.org

ARETHA: QUEEN OF SOUL
Apr 22–24 Aretha Franklin captured our hearts with her powerhouse voice and soulful refrains about love, pain and triumph. Capathia Jenkins, Ryan Shaw and the Symphony hail the Queen of Soul who demanded the world’s R-E-S-P-E-C-T, performing showstoppers like Chain of Fools, You Make Me Feel Like A Natural Woman, and Respect. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. houstonsymphony.org

SWEENEY TODD
Apr 22–May 8 Burning with desire for revenge, ex-barber Benjamin Barker returns to 19th-century London to avenge his late wife and rescue his young daughter from the clutches of the vile Judge Turpin. Art Factory, 112 Providence, artfactoryhouston.com

TURANDOT
Apr 22–May 6 Full of arresting pools of color, breathtaking lighting design and highly stylized movement, this masterful new production could only have been created by visionary director Robert Wilson. Considered Puccini’s finest musical masterpiece, the opera transports audiences to a fantasy ruled by the titular princess, who doesn’t want to marry. Wortham Theater Center, 501 Texas. houstongrandopera.com

AFRICAN ADVENTURE
Apr 23 Embark on an African adventure, symphony style, with music from The Lion King and more! Associate Conductor Robert Franz leads the orchestra in two family-friendly matinees perfect for kids 3 and up. A morning of musical fun comes complete with kid-friendly activities, including our always-popular Instrument Petting Zoo. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. houstonsymphony.org

TURANDOT

FIDDLER ON THE ROOF
Apr 26–May 1 Director Bartlett Sher and the team behind South Pacific, The King and I and the 2017 Tony Award-winning Best Play Oslo, bring a fresh and authentic vision to this beloved theatrical masterpiece from Tony winner Joseph Stein and Pulitzer Prize winners Jerry Bock and Sheldon Harnick. The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, 800 Bagby. houston.broadway.com

DAVID SEDARIS
Apr 28 With sardonic wit and incisive social critiques, David Sedaris has become one of America’s pre-eminent humor writers. The great skill with which he slices through cultural euphemisms and political correctness proves that Sedaris is a master of satire and one of the most observant writers addressing the human condition today. Wortham Theater Center, 501 Texas. spahouston.org
ANDRÉS’S FAREWELL: MAHLER’S RESURRECTION SYMPHONY
Apr 29–May 1 For his final concert as Houston Symphony music director, Andrés Orozco-Estrada leads Mahler’s monumental Symphony No. 2, Resurrection. Contemplating the meaning of life and the mystery of death and culminating in a blaze of transcendence that shakes the rafters and soars to the heavens above, it is, quite simply, a concert experience unmatched in all of music. More than 200 orchestra and chorus members fill the stage for this must-see Houston event. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. houstonsymphony.org

ROMEO AND JULIET
Apr 29–May 11 Gounod’s sweeping adaptation of Shakespeare’s timeless tragedy, Romeo and Juliet, returns to the Wortham in a dazzling new production that will transport audiences to an evening at the London Globe. With a large chorus, big, rich harmonies, intricate dance numbers and sumptuous costumes, this is French grand opera at its finest. Wortham Theater Center, 501 Texas. spahouston.org

YOTAM OTTOLENGHI
May 2 For chef, writer and restaurateur Yotam Ottolenghi, food is about more than what we eat. It is about joy, pleasure and surprise. It is about a sense of place and home. It is about commonality, an act that brings people together. Ottolenghi is widely beloved for his beautiful, inspirational and award-winning cookbooks, which have been named among the best books of the year by The New York Times, San Francisco Chronicle and NPR. Wortham Theater Center, 501 Texas. spahouston.org

JEFF GOLDBLUM & THE MILDRED SNITZER ORCHESTRA
May 4 With film credits including Jurassic Park, The Grand Budapest Hotel, and Thor: Ragnarok, and television appearances including Portlandia, Jeff Goldblum also happens to play jazz with his band, The Mildred Snitzer Orchestra. Goldblum will take your questions, ask you trivia questions, play classic jazz and make you laugh—a lot. The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, 800 Bagby. spahouston.org

HURRICANE DIANE
May 5–28 Meet Diane, a permaculture gardener dripping with butch charm. She’s got supernatural abilities owing to her true identity—the Greek god Dionysus—and she’s returned to the modern world to gather mortal followers and restore the Earth to its natural state. Where better to begin than with four housewives in a suburban New Jersey cul-de-sac? Pulitzer Prize finalist Madeleine George pens a hilarious evisceration of the blind eye we all turn to climate change and the bacchanalian catharsis that awaits us, even in our own backyards. Rec Room, 100 Jackson. recroomarts.org

DIA DAY!
Apr 30 Join Houston Public Library in celebrating World Book Day with story time, games, crafts and free children’s books! 10:30 am–12:30 pm.

AAPI FESTIVAL
May 14 Celebrate Asian-American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month with performances that reflect China’s rich cultural heritage from Young Audiences of Houston. Learn about the history and customs while enjoying the festival with food, art and music!

HOUSTON IN HARMONY: FEATURING THERESA BEHENNA
May 14 Listen to the musical sounds created by Theresa Behenna. An acclaimed pianist, Behenna has performed throughout the world, including the 2006 Winter Olympics in Italy. She has tickled the ivories before numerous celebrities such as Princess Grace, Elton John, and “James Bond” just to name a few. 2–3 pm.
A.I.M BY KYLE ABRAHAM: AN UNTITLED LOVE
May 6  An Untitled Love is Kyle Abraham’s newest evening-length work. Drawing from the catalogue of Grammy Award-winning R&B legend D’Angelo, this creative exaltation pays homage to the complexities of self-love and Black love, while serving as a thumping mixtape celebrating our culture, family and community. Wortham Theater Center, 501 Texas. spahouston.org

COPLAND 3 + HIGDON WORLD PREMIERE
May 6–8  Often called the Great American Symphony, Aaron Copland’s monumental Symphony No. 3 takes listeners on an extraordinary journey, culminating in the stirring and euphoric Fanfare for the Common Man. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. houstonsymphony.org

BORN WITH TEETH
May 6–Jun 5  An aging authoritarian ruler, a violent police state, a restless polarized people seething with paranoia: it’s a dangerous time for poets. Two of them—the great Kit Marlowe and the up-and-comer Will Shakespeare—meet in the back room of a pub to collaborate on a history play cycle, navigate the perils of art under a totalitarian regime and flirt like young men with everything to lose. One of them may well be the death of the other. Developed in the Alley All New Reading Series. Alley Theatre, 615 Texas. alleytheatre.org

DR. ZAHI HAWASS: RAMSES THE GREAT AND THE GOLD OF THE PHARAOHS
May 9  Travel back 3,200 years across the sands of the Sahara Desert to a god amongst men—Rameses the Great. Your guide this evening, Egyptian archaeologist and former minister of state for antiquities affairs, Dr. Zahi Hawass, will untangle truth from the myth as he discusses the magnificent life, death and conquests of this beloved and charismatic pharaoh. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. spahouston.org

JERSEY BOYS
May 10–22  They were just four guys from Jersey, until they sang their very first note. They had a sound nobody had ever heard… and the radio just couldn’t get enough of. But while their harmonies were perfect on stage, off stage it was a very different story—a story that has made them an international sensation all over again. The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, 800 Bagby tuts.com

ITZHAK PERLMAN: MOZART + TCHAIKOVSKY 4
May 12, 14–15  Houston Symphony Artistic Partner Itzhak Perlman leads the orchestra in one of the best-loved masterpieces of all time—Tchaikovsky’s fiery, fateful Fourth Symphony. Plus, hear Perlman perform beautiful music of Mozart. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. houstonsymphony.org

ARTEMIS
May 13  The Jazz Journalists Association Mid-Sized Ensemble of the Year, Blue Note recording artists Artemis is an all-women supergroup of six of the most acclaimed musicians in modern jazz. Wortham Center, 501 Texas. dacamera.com

BLACK VIOLIN
May 17  Black Violin is the Grammy-nominated band led by classically trained string players Wil B. (viola) and Kev Marcus (violin). Joining them onstage are DJ Spooky and drummer Nat Stokes. The band uses their unique blend of classical and hip-hop music to overcome stereotypes while encouraging people of all ages, races and economic backgrounds to join together to break down cultural barriers. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. spahouston.org

MUSIC DIRECTOR DESIGNATE JURAJ VALČUHA CONDUCTS BEETHOVEN 9
May 20–22  Celebrated conductor Juraj Valčuha leads orchestra, chorus and vocal soloists in Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9. Experience one of classical music’s most moving, uplifting and inspiring journeys, a rallying cry to hope, humanity and universal fellowship culminating in the exuberant Ode to Joy. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. houstonsymphony.org

PRETTY THINGS
May 20–29  This program of Houston-born ballets showcases Houston Ballet’s continued tradition of supporting the world’s most respected choreographers, featuring works by Jorma Elo, Christopher Bruce and Trey McIntyre. Elo’s ONE|end|ONE reflects the dance maker’s quirky and unexpected movements to create an atmosphere of playfulness. Wortham Theater Center, 501 Texas. houstonballet.org

NEIL GAIMAN
May 22  Today, as one of the most celebrated writers of our time, his popular and critically acclaimed works, including Good Omens (with Terry Pratchett), Coraline, American Gods and the Sandman comics, bend genres and reach audiences of all ages. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. houstonsymphony.org

THE BEST OF JOHN WILLIAMS: STAR WARS & MORE WITH CHORUS
May 27–29  Enjoy themes from all your blockbuster favorites—Superman, Star Wars, Harry Potter and more—as the Houston Symphony and Chorus celebrate the master of film scores, John Williams. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. houstonsymphony.org

ARS LYRICA HOUSTON: DIDO AND AENEAS
May 21–22  The 2021/22 Ars Lyrica season concludes with a new production of the first masterpiece of English opera. Henry Purcell, early modern England’s greatest musical dramatist, infused his chosen texts with both beauty and pathos. His Dido and Aeneas is a miracle of operatic economy, with lively dancing, memorable choruses and at its center a noble heroine who loves too well: her demise is both tragic and transcendent. The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, 800 Bagby. thehobbycenter.org

Photo by Sarah Meyer
The events listed are confirmed at the time of printing. For a full listing of Discovery Green’s spring 2022 events, please visit the calendar at discoverygreen.com

Blanks, 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.

**PIXAR PUTT**
*Daily, through Mar 20* Grab your kids, family or friends for the perfect socially distant outing that will appeal to Pixar fans of all ages. Check the calendar for Pixar After Dark, Early Birdie deals and other special events. $26–$33. pixarputt.com

**THE RINK OPENING NIGHT**
*Mar 4* Enjoy music by DJ Mohawk Steve and roller derby demonstrations. The first 50 skaters in line skate for free. (Don’t purchase tickets ahead of time.) $12 plus tax. 5–11 pm. www.discoverygreen.com/rollerink

**RECYCLING SATURDAYS FEATURING HAPPY EARTH COMPOST**
*Mar 5–Jun 25* Bring your sorted glass, paper, plastic and aluminum to a recycling station provided by the City of Houston. Happy Earth Compost will pick up your compost free of charge. 11 am–2 pm.

**FUNOMENAL SPRING BREAK**
*Mar 14-18* Celebrate spring break with five days of fun for the whole family. Activities will include performances, Mad Science shows and other STEM activities. Free. Noon–4 pm.

**PROJECT DANCE HOUSTON**
*Mar 19* Enjoy a family-friendly dance concert at Discovery Green. Free. 11 am–5 pm. projectdance.com

**FLEA BY NIGHT PRESENTED BY GREEN MOUNTAIN ENERGY**
*Mar 19, Apr 16, May 21 and Jun 18* Treasure hunt for one-of-a-kind vintage, handmade, recycled and local goods and enjoy live music and food trucks. Free. 6–10 pm.
THE RINK—ROLLING AT DISCOVERY GREEN
Mar 4–Apr 10 Houston’s first outdoor roller rink thrives under the lights of Downtown! Enjoy five weeks of roller-skating fun (including weekly theme nights) at Discovery Green. Tickets must be purchased online. Non-motorized wheelchairs are welcome. $12 plus tax. www.discoverygreen.com/rollerrink

CHEAP SKATE NIGHTS
Mar 7, 21 & Apr 4 On select Mondays, skate around the rink for just $8 plus tax per person. 5–10 pm.

TIME WARP TUESDAYS
Mar 8–Apr 5 Skate to your favorite songs from decades past curated by DJ Mohawk Steve. 7–9 pm.

CLUTCH CITY WEDNESDAYS
Mar 9–Apr 6 Skate to music by Houston artists and wear any Houston sports team gear to receive $2 off admission. Discounted tickets must be purchased in person. If the desired time is fully booked, there may be a wait. 5–10 pm.

THROWBACK THURSDAYS
Mar 10–Apr 7 Skate to songs from decades past curated by DJ Mohawk Steve. 7–9 pm.

FUNOMENAL FRIDAYS
Mar 11–Apr 8 Music by DJ Mohawk Steve, a light show and roller skating make for FUNomenal Friday nights. 7–10 pm.

SKATE PARTY SATURDAYS
Mar 12–Apr 9 Listen to the coolest pop hits by DJ Boris while skating on the rink. 7–10 pm.

UHD THURSDAY NIGHT CONCERT SERIES
Grab a buddy and get ready to groove with live music outdoors at the beautiful Discovery Green at 7 pm! Free.

Apr 7 Ren Patrick and Oliver Penn
Apr 14 Negami and Amanda Solis
Apr 28 AJ McQueen and American Psychos
May 5 Las Fenix and Morena Roas
May 12 Girl Ultra and Tee Vee
May 19 Paul Wall ft. Doc Loc & The Swangers with DJ Mac

BANK OF AMERICA’S SCREEN ON THE GREEN
Enjoy family-friendly movies with a view of the Downtown Houston skyline. Blankets, lawn chairs and picnics are encouraged. Food, beer and wine are available for purchase at The Lake House. No glass containers or outside alcoholic beverages. Free.

Mar 18 Luca (PG) 2021, 101 min, 8 pm
Apr 2 A League of Their Own (PG) 1992, 128 min, 8:15 pm
May 7 Encanto (PG) 2021, 102 min, 8:30 pm
Jun 11 Sing 2 (PG) 2021, 110 min, 9:00 pm

HEALTHY-LIVING
CORE-FOCUSED YOGA
Tuesdays, Mar 1–Jun 21 6:30–7:30 pm
HIIT CLASS WITH FITMIX COMMUNITIES
Wednesdays, Mar 2–Jun 29 6:30–7:30 pm
PILATES
Thursdays, Mar 3–Jun 30 6:30–7:30 pm
HATHA YOGA
Saturdays, Mar 5–Jun 30 6:30–7:30 pm
TAI CHI
Saturdays, Mar 5–Jun 25 9–10 am
FESTIVALS & SPECIAL EVENTS

SOUND HEALING MEDITATION IN THE CISTERN
Every Saturday & Sunday
Find your center and practice meditation in the spacious and tranquil Buffalo Bayou Park Cistern. Offered in collaboration with Union is Creation and Youniversoul this meditation series will feature the use of singing bowls and wind chimes to encourage mindfulness and connectivity. Guests should bring their own cushion or mat. $15. Buffalo Bayou Park Cistern, 105 Sabine. buffalobayou.org

WELLNESS WALK
Every Wednesday
Join Buffalo Bayou Partnership on a free Wellness Walk led by Laura Conely, founder of Urban Paths. Anyone and everyone is invited to walk through the paths of Buffalo Bayou Park while discussing topics including mental and physical health as well as the benefits of being exposed to nature. Free. 105 Sabine. 6:30–8 pm. buffalobayou.org

50TH ANNUAL BUFFALO BAYOU PARTNERSHIP REGATTA
Mar 5
On your marks. Get set. Paddle! From canoe and kayak novices and professionals to families just looking for a fun adventure, the Buffalo Bayou Regatta is for everyone! In its 50th year, the race twists and turns for 15 miles finishing at Downtown’s historic Allen’s Landing with vendors, music for everyone to enjoy! 7:30 am–2:30 pm. 7700 San Felipe. buffalobayou.org

SONGS ON THE WATER
Mar 12, 13 & 26
Saturday evenings in March, tour Buffalo Bayou via pontoon boat while being serenaded by melodic voices from Houston Grand Opera. 4–5:30 pm. Allen’s Landing, 1001 Commerce. buffalobayou.org

62ND ANNUAL ST. PATRICK’S DAY PARADE
Mar 12
The Houston St. Patrick’s Day Commission presents the 62nd Annual Houston St. Patrick’s Day Parade, one of the biggest in the nation, with over 100 entries to delight both the Irish and the Irish-at-heart. Noon. downtownaquarium.com

NATURE WALK
Mar 19, Apr 16 & May 21
Discover Buffalo Bayou’s ecosystem with Nancy Greig, former director of the Cockrell Butterfly Center at the Houston Museum of Natural Science. Learn about the bayou’s native plants and the insects that pollinate them. $5. 9–10:30 am. Lost Lake, 3422 Allen Pkwy. buffalobayou.org

TOUR DE HOUSTON
Apr 3
Grab your bicycle and ride through Downtown in the Annual Tour de Houston presented by Apache Corporation! Catch unique views of the city with routes that wind through Houston’s historic and scenic neighborhoods. All participants can enjoy a free post-ride party with food, music and drinks. Registration is required. 7 am. Hermann Square, 901 Bagby. houstontx.gov/tourdehouston

SUNRISE YOGA
Apr 8 & 22, May 13 & 27
Flow into the weekend with Sunrise Yoga on Buffalo Bayou. We’re partnering with The Breathing Room for a series of 45-minute early-morning yoga sessions with a spectacular view of Downtown. Yogis of all levels and ages are welcome. $10 donation. 6:30–7:15 am. The Water Works, 105 Sabine. buffalobayou.org

ART CAR PARADE
Apr 10
Watch over 250 decorated cars, bikes and other wheeled entries from throughout the country fill the streets of Downtown. Free. Noon–4 pm. thehoustonartcarparade.com

BREAKFAST WITH THE EASTER BUNNY
Apr 16
Dine on more than just carrots with Peter Cottontail! Enjoy a delicious breakfast and take pictures with him. Reservations required. Downtown Aquarium, 410 Bagby. downtownaquarium.com

EASTER SUNDAY BRUNCH
Apr 17
Celebrate Easter with an egg hunt, photos with the Easter bunny and a delicious buffet with over 40 items to choose from! Reservations required. Downtown Aquarium, 410 Bagby. downtownaquarium.com

WHAT’S GROWING ON BIKE RIDE
Apr 30
Join BBP’s newly assembled conservation team on a bicycle trek along the bayou. These experts will share insights on flora and fauna, conservation initiatives and ways you can positively impact the waterway. The bike ride will consist of two tours, one from 9–11:30 am and 10 am–noon. $10. 105 Sabine. buffalobayou.org

UNDERGROUND SOUNDS: ROCO
May 7
Underground Sounds returns to the Buffalo Bayou Park Cistern with a day of musical performances by ROCO. This unique set of site-specific performances will capitalize on the resounding echo that is only found in Houston’s spacious, historic venue. Performances are held in the Cistern at 10 am, noon, 2, 4 and 6 pm. $20. Buffalo Bayou Park Cistern, 105 Sabine. buffalobayou.org

ST. PATRICK’S DAY PARADE
Photo by Morris Malakoff
50
downtownhouston.org
MOTHER'S DAY BRUNCH
May 8 Show Mom you care and take her on an underwater dining adventure with the family! Reservation required. Downtown Aquarium, 410 Bagby. downtownaquarium.com

LATIN BEATS
May 27–Aug 12 Strap on your dancing shoes! Join us for live music and free salsa lessons every Friday night this summer from 7–11 pm. Event tentative, please check updates online. Downtown Aquarium, 410 Bagby. downtownaquarium.com

CONCERTS

TOYOTA CENTER
Mar 4 Maxwell with Anthony Hamilton and Joe
Mar 19 Chris Brown with Monica and Bryson Tiller
Mar 25 New Edition with Charlie Wilson and Jodeci
Mar 26 John Mulaney
Mar 27 Tyler the Creator
Apr 7 Hillsong United + Chris Tomlin
Apr 9 Ricardo Arjona
Apr 16 Maze featuring Frankie Beverly with special guests The Isley Brothers John Mayer
Apr 23 Bon Jovi
Apr 29 Justin Bieber
May 6 J Balvin
May 14 The Eagles
May 19 New Kids On The Block With Very Special Guests Salt N Pepa, Rick Astley And En Vogue

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

HOUSE OF BLUES
Mar 2 Joan
Mar 2 Yungblud
Mar 3 Del Water Gap
Mar 8 Kyle
Mar 10 Enjambre
Mar 12 Sevendust
Mar 14 Doodle
Mar 16 Fletcher
Mar 18 The Molly Ringwalds
Mar 19 Chelsea Cutler
Mar 20 Charlotte Day Wilson
Mar 21 Jojo
Mar 22 Laundry Day
Mar 23 Santa Fe Klan + C-Kan
Mar 24 Ours
Mar 25 Maisie Peters
Mar 26 Buddy Guy & Colin James
Mar 27 Forester
Mar 28 Kaleo
Mar 29 Tate McRae
Mar 30 Lil Tecca
Mar 31 Pech Pit
Mar 26 The Airborne Toxic Event
Mar 27 Koo Koo Kanga Roo
Mar 28 Beach House
Mar 29 Terror Reid
Mar 30 Todrick Hall
Mar 31 Kill Bill, Rav & Scquare
Apr 2 Iya Terra
Apr 3 Ministry, Melvins & Corrosion of Conformity
Apr 4 Barns Courtney
Apr 5 Lucky Daye
Apr 6 Girl In Red
Apr 7 Culture Wars
Apr 8 Claudia Oshry
Apr 9 Tommy Genesis
Apr 10 Eric Johnson
Apr 11 The Score
Apr 12 Lucki
Apr 13 Charli XCX
Apr 14 Porches
Apr 15 Apocalyptica

BAYOU MUSIC CENTER
Mar 2 The Dropkick Murphys
Mar 3 Maina
Mar 18 Dream Theater with Special Guest Arch Echo
Mar 24 Subtronics
Mar 25 Daughtry
Mar 26 Jesse & Joy
Apr 1 Rezz
Apr 2 Kountry Wayne
Apr 10 Clairo with Arlo Parks
Apr 15 Lil Durk
Apr 16 Vir Das
Apr 23 Beth Hart
Apr 30 Snoh Aalegra
May 11 OMD Souvenir
May 14 Royal Blood

713 MUSIC HALL
Mar 4 Jazmine Sullivan
Mar 5 Lupita D’alesio y María José
Mar 14 Willie Nelson & Friends
Mar 22 Jimmy Eat World & Dashboard Confessional
Mar 25 Oliver Tree
Mar 26 Little Fet
Apr 2 Old 97s & Reckless Kelly
Apr 8 Whitney Cummings
Apr 16 Nikki Glaser
Apr 21 Billy Strings
Apr 28 Death Cab for Cutie
May 6 HAIM
May 12 Olivia Rodrigo
May 14 Bunbury Tour 2022

Apr 13 Eric Bellinger x Sammie
Apr 14 Nigel Ng: The Hayyaa World Tour
Apr 15 Saba
Apr 16 Hovvdy
Apr 17 Ashe
Apr 20 Watch What Crappens
Apr 22 Great Good Fine
Apr 23 Jerry Cantrell
Apr 24 Jacob Collier
Apr 26 The Chats with Special Guest Mean Jeans and Thick
Apr 28 Pup
Apr 29 The Talbott Brothers
May 1 James Arthur
May 6 Clinton Kane
May 11 Give Them LALA Live
May 12 Amber Mark
May 14 LP
May 15 Damien Escobar
May 20 Lauren Sanderson
May 20 Jessie James Decker
May 21 An Evening with They Might Be Giants
May 22 Ally & AJ
May 24 Bleachers
May 25 Restless Road

SPRING 2022 datebook.

SPRING 2022
Marketsquarepark.com

PARK INFORMATION

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. Most events are free unless otherwise noted. Metered on-street parking is available and free after 6 pm. 301 Milam.

Spring Calendar

ST. PATRICK’S DAY PARADE & DOWNTOWN BLOCK PARTY
Mar 12 Sláinte! Celebrate the luck of the Irish at the 62nd Annual St. Patrick’s Day Parade (noon–1:30 pm), now with a new route in Historic Market Square. Continue the fun at Market Square Park with food, games and live music until 3 pm and then head out dressed head to toe in green to the neighborhood’s eclectic bars and restaurants for drink specials on all your Irish favorites. Noon–3 pm

BLANKET BINGO
May 19, Jun 16, Jul 21 & Aug 18 Blanket Bingo is back for another season filled with music, laughs and—of course—awesome prizes! $10 admission includes one bingo packet (nine games, cash only). Additional games and daubers can be purchased for $1 each. Blankets and lawn chairs encouraged. Packets go on sale at 6 pm; bingo starts at 7 pm. Proceeds benefit Market Square Park and Buffalo Bayou Partnership.

ROAD TO RIVER REVIVAL
Jam to live music at Market Square Park as we countdown to Texas’ most intimate camping and music festival, River Revival. Brought to you by Splice Records, Saint Arnold Brewing Company and the Downtown District, dance and sing to regional heavy hitters with a new lineup each month. Doors open at 6 pm, and live music begins at 7:30 pm.

EXPOS

Mar 7–9 Herc Rentals ProExpo
Mar 12–14 Cross Court Classic
Mar 17–19 Lifestyles Unlimited Real Estate Expo
Mar 20–21 IEEE Appliies Power Electronics Conference
Mar 23–27 Houston Fishing Show
Apr 9–10 Texas Bridal & Wedding Expo
Apr 27–28 ENTELEC 2022 Conference/Expo
May 4–5 Esri Energy Resources GIS Conference

The George R. Brown Convention Center’s online calendar is updated regularly. Visit their website for more info and to purchase tickets. George R. Brown Convention Center, 1001 Avenida De Las Americas. houstonconventionctr.com
PUPPIES FOR BREAKFAST
Apr 30 Celebrating 11 years as Houston’s original dog festival, this one-of-a-kind event brings everything “dog” to one place. Guaranteed to be the biggest pup party you’ve ever experienced, this year’s event comes jam packed with 40+ vendors, dog-centric brands and creative pop-up shops (plus the city’s best food trucks for our human counterparts). 10 am–3 pm

CINCO DE MAYO KICKOFF AT MARKET SQUARE PARK
May 5 Begin your Cinco de Mayo festivities by taking a swing at the world’s largest Pinata “Chiquito” at Market Square Park! We’re pulling out the big dogs (literally) to get the party started—from live mariachi music and DJ to a Cinco de Mayo mini-market. Join us from 5:30–7 pm and then explore the bars and restaurants in Houston’s most historic neighborhood.

HEARTMADE ART MARKET
May 14 Treat yourself with works and wares from a curated market featuring more than 60 regional artists, makers and creatives. Mimosas all day, live DJ and interactive crafts for the kiddos on the lawn during this celebration of Texas art! 10 am–5 pm

MOVIES UNDER THE STARS
Ditch the traditional theater and bring your blanket and lawn chairs to Downtown! Join us for a free screening of these classic films under the stars:

Apr 8 Ferris Bueller’s Day Off (PG-13) 1986, 103 min, 8 pm
May 6 Big (PG) 1998, 104 min, 8 pm
Jun 10 A Raisin in the Sun (PG) 1961, 128 min, 8:30 pm

MOVIES
Apr 16 Aaron Stephens (headliner) with LaTasha Lee Rock out to the funky beat of Texas guitarist, Aaron Stephens and powerhouse soul artist, Latasha Lee.

May 21 Honey Island Swamp Band (headliner) with Colin Lake Groove to the New Orleans-style sounds of Honey Island Swamp Band and the soulful guitar playing of Colin Lake.

Jun 18 Prepare for the energetic brass, country get down and jazzy notes of quintet, The Texas Gentleman (headliner), along with Hector Ward’s eight-piece band’s exciting horn lines and guitar riffs.

July 9 *SPICE RECORDS ANNIVERSARY PARTY*
Feel the blues take control with soulful instrumental band, Tamar and the FCs (headliner) and electric cumbia band, Gio Chamba.
BLACK HISTORY HISTORIC HOUSE TOUR
Mar–May  The tour consists of three historic structures including the 1847 Kellum-Noble House, 1870 Jack Yates House and the 1866 Fourth Ward Cottage. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designated these three historic house sites located in Sam Houston Park as part of its Slave Route Project. Ticket prices vary. The Heritage Society, 1100 Bagby. heritagesociety.org

SPRING BREAK PASS
Mar 4–20  Three parks—one pass! Enjoy unlimited admission for $69.99 on rides at the Kemah Boardwalk, Galveston Island Historic Pleasure Pier and Downtown Aquarium (exhibits at Aquarium also included)! Tickets can be found on our website. Downtown Aquarium, 410 Bagby. downtownaquarium.com

TRANSFORMING URBAN SPACES BUS TOUR
Mar 19  This new bus tour includes an overview of Buffalo Bayou Partnership’s unique historic and industrial sites, along the 10-mile stretch from Shepherd Drive to the Port of Houston Turning Basin. $50. Meet at 105 Sabine. buffalobayou.org

BUFFALO BAYOU BOAT TOURS
Mar 19, Apr 16 & 30, May 21 & 28  Cruise approximately seven miles from the old port of Houston to the new port of Houston with a knowledgeable bayou guide. This historical tour of the upper channel of Buffalo Bayou focuses on the historic significance of the industrial stretch of Houston from Allen’s Landing to the Port of Houston Turning Basin. $45. Allen’s Landing, 1019 Commerce. buffalobayou.org

MINUTE MAID PARK/ASTROS TOURS
astros.com

African-American History Tours
Discover the stories of important African-American baseball moments like Jackie Robinson’s early days, Satchel Paige’s later one and the founding of National League by a Texan. Slide into history with an hour-long tour that gives a unique perspective and unexpected look into our past. Tickets $25.

Clubs and Lounges
In this 30–45-minute tour, get an inside look of the Houston Astros clubhouse. Fans will explore Astros sites like the Astros locker room, batting cages, dugout, gym, player lounge, press conference room and more. Tickets $50.
ALL-STAR TOUR
Spend two hours being the all-star you are! Fans will visit the upper deck, Gallagher Club, Bank of America Suite level, Honda Club level, press box and Houston Methodist Hall of Fame alley. During this tour you will also check out the visitor’s clubhouse and batting cage, the Astros dugout, take a lap around the warning track and conclude their tour by getting an inside look at the manual scoreboard. Tickets $25.

ULTIMATE FAN TOUR
For Astros super fans, this is for you! During this two-hour tour, check out the Lexus Field Club, Michelob Ultra Club, the Union Station roof deck and on non-game days visit the Diamond Club and Astros dugout. Also on non-game days, visit the Diamond Club and Astros Club for a tour to remember! Tickets $25.

A MINUTE IN MINUTE MAID
Do you have your heart set on exploring the ballpark, but your plans only call for a few minutes? This tour takes fans on a fun and quick walk to the Lexus Field Club in center field and back along the warning track from the ivy-covered batter’s eye past the manual scoreboard in left field. Tickets $10.

HOUSTON ASTROS
Mar 31–Apr 3  Astros vs Phillies
Apr 4–6  Astros vs New York Yankees
Apr 18–20  Astros vs Los Angeles Angels
Apr 22–24  Astros vs Toronto Blue Jays
May 2–4  Astros vs Seattle Mariners
May 5–8  Astros vs Detroit Tigers
May 19–22  Astros vs Texas Rangers
May 23–25  Astros vs Cleveland Guardians

HOUSTON DYNAMO
Mar 12  Dynamo vs Vancouver White Caps
Mar 19  Dynamo vs Colorado Rapids
Apr 9  Dynamo vs San Jose Earthquakes
Apr 16  Dynamo vs Portland Timbers
Apr 30  Dynamo vs Austin FC
May 14  Dynamo vs Nashville SC
May 18  Dynamo vs Seattle Sounders

HOUSTON ROCKETS
Mar 1  Rockets vs Clippers
Mar 2  Rockets vs Jazz
Mar 6  Rockets vs Grizzlies
Mar 9  Rockets vs Lakers
Mar 11  Rockets vs Mavericks
Mar 16  Rockets vs Suns
Mar 18  Rockets vs Pacers
Mar 20  Rockets vs Grizzlies
Mar 21  Rockets vs Wizards
Mar 28  Rockets vs Spurs
Mar 30  Rockets vs Kings
Apr 1  Rockets vs Kings
Apr 3  Rockets vs Timberwolves
Apr 10  Rockets vs Hawks

Photo by Alex Trautwig
With a fusion of culture, lifestyles and commerce, life around here is anything but typical. Look up and discover soaring skyscrapers designed by icons like Philip Johnson and I.M. Pei. Turn a corner and bump into Houston's historic past or uncover a piece of contemporary public art. Enjoy major league sports, world-class theater, innovative chefs, funky hotspots, movies in the park, sidewalk cafés, outdoor festivals, pontoon boat tours and more.

Welcome to Downtown Houston!
Public garages, surface lots and metered on-street parking are abundant in Downtown. Reminder: on-street parking is free after 6 pm Monday–Saturday and all day Sunday.
Download the RideMETRO App

Contactless fare payments & more

Plan your trip
Pay your fare*
Track your bus

*Requires previous download of the METRO Q Ticketing app

713-635-4000 | RideMETRO.org