

FIRST ON THE **scene**



OUR FIRST LOOK
AT WHAT'S NEW
HIP AND HAPPENING
KATIE PICCIRILLO

PROOF

PROOF

1045 N. RUSH, 312.397.1045,
PROOFCHICAGO.COM

Proof, the new two-level lounge in the central heart of Gold Coast, is proving to be a sophisticated destination. A large, winding staircase connects the two levels with an open interior

from top to bottom. A catwalk-type atmosphere sets the tone for well-heeled, gorgeous gals to strut their stuff. Floor to ceiling windows overlook Rush Street to provide the perfect view for people-watching as Chicagoans parading around town. Proof's specialty cocktail list includes classics pulled from the Prohibition era, spiced fruit martinis and efferves-

cent Champagne cocktails. With a motto that "Sundays are for Sin" at Proof, it is a perfectly delicious kick-off to a lurid week.

BANGERS & LACE

1670 W. DIVISION, 773.252.6499

Wicker Park has a new gourmet sausage spot and craft beer locale in the form of Bangers & Lace. Partner Matt Eisler (who consulted on this new venture with owners of Lumen and Duchamp, Jason Freiman and Nick Podesta) promises an extensive beer list with 30 drafts as well as a hefty bottle list. In fact, a house cooler will hold six draft selections from local brewpubs. With 48 hours notice, Bangers & Lace will brew a small keg for parties held in their back room! While the word sausage conjures images of country breakfasts, Eisler promises a variety of gourmet pub classics not necessarily served on a bun. In fact, a vegetarian option will be a fixture on the menu.

BALANI CUSTOM CLOTHIERS

55 W. MONROE, 312.263.9003

With the sheer romance and thrill of fashion week behind us, even clothing connoisseurs can admit that menswear gets the short end of the stick. Let's be honest, even the most devote fashionista fails to recognize the genius that is behind custom tailored menswear. How-



BALANI CUSTOM CLOTHIERS

ever, this Fall, we've been reminded with the inception of the second Balani Custom Clothier location in the Loop. With an entrepreneurial spirit, the organization approaches the traditional business of custom tailoring in an unexpected fashion. Working directly with Apple's Business Development Unit, Balani created high tech look books to present modern wares. "Learning Kiosks" are positioned throughout the new location to peruse different fabrics and develop your own style. "Our team is as cohesive and forward thinking as they come," Owner Sony Balani confirms. "This poises us for growth." But while shopping has become high tech, Balani ensures traditional tailoring practices are followed.

CHICAGO q

1160 N. DEARBORN, 312.642.1160

Executive Chef of the newest urban barbecue restaurant, Lee Ann Whippen, is a connoisseur of BBQ. She's spent over 14 years

FIRST ON THE scene

perfecting pork recipes competitively as a member and lead pit master for the Wood Chick's BBQ Competition Cooking Team. Whippen has won a series of titles in Virginia, North Carolina and Georgia. Her prowess in the pit resulted in a starring role on the TLC show "BBQ Pit masters." By using familiar recipes (including three house-made sauces: Original Mild, Spicy and East North Carolina Vinegar) and quality ingredients (the menu features Kobe brisket and "competition" quality slabs) Chicago q has ensured a winning recipe among foodies. If choosing an entrée is difficult, start your meal with the BBQ Flight – a combination of Kobe Brisket, Pulled Pork and Pulled Chicken. For an entrée, opt for the combo platter q2 (a pulled meat of choice and either a half chicken or half slab). Sides shouldn't be avoided. While patrons get a choice of coleslaw, cornbread or fries; we recommend indulging in the Bruleed Macaroni and Cheese. Yum!



HENRI

18 S. MICHIGAN, 312.578.0763

When funds are running low and you can't afford airfare to Europe – be thankful you live in a city chalked full of quality culinary delights with European aesthetics. The newly opened, Henri, is the perfect substitute for the French Riviera. The restaurant is reminiscent of a European salon – complete with settees lining the walls, Herringbone hard wood floors, upholstery that resembles Sullivan's stencil drawings (the American born architect for whom the restaurant garnered its name) and French flavors. Innovative dishes including Lobster Wellington and a short rib burger are featured alongside traditional fares such as oyster mignonette, steak tartare, Dove sole and roasted chicken. Henri will also feature daily specials that highlight seasonal ingredients. Executive Chef Dirk Flanigan honed his culinary prowess at the Ritz Carlton, La Tour and Echo. Now he perfects techniques along-

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side noteworthy Chef de Cuisine Christopher Cubberley, Mixology Master Clint Rogers and Pastry Chef Carly Sullivan.

SAWTOOTH RESTAURANT AND LOUNGE

1350 W. RANDOLPH, 312.526.3320

West Loop's restaurant row has a new addition that is all about authenticity. Sawtooth Restaurant and Lounge features authentic Vietnamese cuisine with dishes served as small plates. This produces a communal feel – which hones in on the Vietnamese mindset. In fact, even their name has original Vietnamese decent. Sawtooth takes its name from the culinary herb Ngo Gai – also known as the Sawtooth for the long slender leaves commonly used in Asian cooking. Executive Chef

Nick Nguyen ensures quality by using the freshest ingredients to produce traditional Vietnamese fares infused with local flavors. We recommend sampling the Salted Jumbo Prawns seasoned with roasted garlic and scallions on a pineapple bed or the Clay Pot Catfish simmered in caramel sauce with a small salad and steamed rice.

ARAMI

1829 W. CHICAGO, 312.243.1535

Diners are raving about West Town's newest addition to the sushi scene, Arami. Like many Asian restaurants, Arami's décor produces an urban vibe with exposed brick and bamboo tables. Their standout quality, however, is a direct result of a menu chalked full of harmonious compositions. Truth be told, the beauty of Arami is their ability to produce unpretentious delicacies while paying careful attention to detail (note the house-made soy sauce). Their menu is stacked with starters, shooters and speciality spirits. Start your meal with the mussels – steamed in sake and seasoned with ginger and scallion garlic. If you love noodles, nosh on the Arami Ramen – a combination of pork belly, braised beef, house tsukemono, Kamaboko and eggs. End your meal with the Maguro Geunkang – king crab wrapped in tuna. The seafood is unbelievably fresh and the prices are reasonable despite high quality ingredients. **scene**



SAWTOOTH RESTAURANT AND LOUNGE