

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

By Cody Fulford

Hey there fellow Midtowners! If you're like me, you like food and beer. If you're feeling hungry on Tuesday nights, **Community Bar** at 2703 Smith Street is the best spot to be for a cold one and a great steak night. Its casual atmosphere and great outdoor patio will keep you long after you're finished with the beer and the food. The 14 oz ribeye is even served with a tasty garlic mashed potato mix and some steamed veggies. Mix that with your favorite bottle of beer, and you've started your week off well.

If Wednesday night is more your style, check out **Barcadia**, 2600 Travis Street. The draft beer selection is one of Houston's best, \$3.00 on Wednesdays with half-price appetizers. Try the Fried PBJ, yes, you translated that correctly, and a Dogfish Head 90 Minutes IPA, all for under \$10. Monday nights at Barcadia rock as well with 1/2 priced food and \$2.00 bottles. This isn't your typical bar. If you love PAC-MAN, skee ball, arcade Mortal Kombat, Giant Jenga and a great eclectic crowd, this is your place. Find the manager, Johanna, and tell her Cody sent you.

13 celsius at 3000 Caroline, is a terrific, little European wine bar. It doesn't have that pretentious feel that other wine bars have, and the vino selection is marvelous. They are open nightly Sunday-Wednesday 4 p.m. - 12 a.m. and Thursday, Friday, and Saturday 4 p.m. - 2 a.m., but Sunday is my favorite day to join in the vino madness; all opened bottles from Friday and Saturday are 50% off! This is a great night to relax outside your normal frugal budgetary constraints and delve into a vino tinto that you ordinarily wouldn't spring for! Grab a cheese plate, one of the excellent paninis, or one of their home-brewed beers and enjoy.

Thursday night means the weekend is almost here and why not show up to work Friday with circles under your eyes from the night before? **Shot Bar** at 2315 Bagby Street has it going on for you! Spin the roulette wheel like you're in Vegas, but gamble on shots. Choose up to 4 FREE shots and the color, if it lands, you and your friends just won 4 free shots! Be ready to show some moves and mingle with the single people. There's plenty of dance space upstairs and a large front outdoor patio if you need some air. If you can't get a phone number here, something is seriously wrong with your game! Go to the hair salon and see if they can help you out!

Farrago WORLD CUISINE

AN ESTABLISHED MIDTOWN EATERY

By Elizabeth C. Searcy

When attorney Howard L. Steele Jr. walked into Farrago World Cuisine for the first time, he ordered the Latin pork and hominy stew with green chilies. He loved it so much—you could say the Posole stole his heart. The result? He eventually bought the place and instructed the chefs to never alter the recipe.

An established Midtown eatery, diners have desired the eclectic food in the relaxing, yet urban vibe for over 11 years. In November, Farrago turns one year old under Steele's management.

Chefs Scott S. Dolman and Christofer Dilán

are at the helm of your culinary cruise through intercontinental fare. On the day I visited Farrago, I savored dishes that made my palate sing.

Being a lover of seafood, I've never had the courage to try one dish—until now. Start your meal with the Curried Mussels, prepared with the correct technique. They're fork tender and luscious; bathed in a generous bowl of light and silky Thai coconut cream sauce. Make sure to sop up all the goodness with the Slow Dough artisan baguette and don't miss a drop. The marriage of basil, cilantro and lime in the sauce is not spicy, but wonderfully fresh and aromatic.

You won't soon forget your first bite of the curried chicken empanada with the red pepper, yogurt-dipping sauce. A successful light and crispy, yet flaky dough, it fills the bill—not a large one either—only \$9. Don't forget the Daily Specials and the Soupe du Jour. Today's was Cheddar Ale Soup—a velvety cheese base with diced vegetables, lightly kissed with St. Arnold's Christmas Ale. Even non-beer drinkers like myself will enjoy this smooth and satisfying offering.

"We bring so many different influences to the table—American, Asian, Indian, Italian, Mexican, Southern, and Thai," explains Chef Dilán.

If you fancy fish, the Gulf offerings are

fresh and diverse—speckled trout, red-fish, salmon, and shrimp, and the 'market fish' special. The Hawaiian Red Sashimi Tuna, prepared as an appetizer for \$12 or tacos for \$15, is flown in from the Aloha state several days a week. An extensive champagne and wine list is available, including nine varieties of Malbec. The

owner's favorite? Red. Wines are \$4 a glass during Happy Hour, and I'm told the frozen mojito is infamous. (\$7)

"We like to give every palate a chance," shares D'Angela Hill, Catering and Event Manager.

Every bite of the Goat Cheese Brulee' arugula salad is scrumptious and

pure satisfaction on the lighter side for only \$5 or \$8. A tender mix dressed with a sambal citrus vinaigrette, tomatoes and pecans, it's a delightful winner.

Weekend brunch anyone? Relish the all-you-can-eat omelet station (\$15) with a choice of 20 toppings, fresh from the Farrago Farmer's Market on the back patio, or indulge in the decadent Stuffed French Toast with maple cream cheese, pecan syrup and a side. (\$10)

To round out the Farrago experience, the management doesn't miss a beat. Enjoy live entertainment on Saturday nights and a DJ on Sundays. The staff aims to please and welcomes special events; even engagements. Consider the 88-seat private room; where even a belly dancer performed.

To date, three couples will forever remember Farrago as the place where they pledged their love, while I'll forever remember Farrago for the sheer love of fine food.



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FARRAGO WORLD CUISINE
318 GRAY ST
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SEND INFORMATION TO:

Design & Production:
Quantum/SUR
12818 Willow Centre Drive, Suite B
Houston, Texas 77066
281-955-2449 • www.quantumsur.com

Editor
Mary Chavoustie, mary@quantumsur.com

Publisher / Art Director
Leonel E. Mejia, leo@quantumsur.com

Contributing Writers
Jeri Brooks
Cody Fulford
Katherine Mestousis
Elizabeth C. Searcy
Sara C. Strong

Accounting Manager
Marta M. Mejia, marta@quantumsur.com

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MIDTOWN MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Todd Triggs
Chairman of the Board

Matt Thibodeaux
Executive Director for Midtown Management District
& Midtown Redevelopment Authority (TIRZ #2)
mattt@houstonmidtown.com

Cynthia Alvarado
Managing Director
cynthiia@houstonmidtown.com

Katherine Mestousis
District Assistant
kmestousis@houstonmidtown.com

MIDTOWN REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND TAX INCREMENT REINVESTMENT ZONE #2 (TIRZ #2)

Robert Sellingsloh
Chairman of the Board

Kandi Schramm
Administrative Manager
kandis@houstonmidtown.com

Marlon T. Marshall
Senior Project Manager
marlonm@houstonmidtown.com

713-526-7577 (tel) • 713-526-7519 (fax)
houstonmidtown.com

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