

Coco Pazzo
RESTAURANTS

Tuscan Fare.
Italian Flare.

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wine&dine

Gourmet Gossip

By Sarah Levy

DIM ME SOME OF THIS

Most Chicagoans head straight to Chinatown for dim sum, but I recently found out that's not necessary! For all of you who live on the North Side, or are simply willing to travel anywhere for good food, **Furama** has some of the best dim sum in the city. Make sure to bring your appetite because the tantalizing carts that endlessly trek past your table are hard to resist. Among my favorites are the Steamed Shrimp tucked inside wide rice noodles (phenomenal), Barbeque Pork magically placed into the center of a puffy white dough, and the Shiu Mai—dumplings made with shrimp and pork. Furama satisfies my sweet tooth with their Egg Custard Tart and Bubble Tea. Choose from several bubble tea flavors such as mango, lychee, papaya and green tea, all complete with the giant tapioca balls! I also noted a giant stage in the middle of the dining room. No performances were in swing when I was there (just several children running in circles) but perhaps if you go at the right time, you may have your brunch served with a side of entertainment...

FURAMA, 4936 NORTH BROADWAY AVENUE, 773.271.1161, WWW.FURAMACHICAGO.NET

YOLK IT UP

The South Loop's **Yolk** restaurant serves up tasty breakfast fare. And it has quite the selection of it—the menu is one of the largest I've seen at a breakfast restaurant, featuring page after page of breakfast favorites, with myriad selections of omelets, crepes, French toast, pancakes and scrambled eggs. Try the classic Eggs Benedict, served with creamy Hollandaise sauce, poached eggs, Canadian bacon and an English muffin. The Peach-Pecan Oatmeal is a great side dish, and while the Cheese Blintzes aren't quite like my grandma's, they were still pretty good—more of a modern day version. Some of the food arrived slightly cooler than I prefer, and while friendly service can mitigate a restaurant's shortcomings, unfortunately I can't say we had service with a smile.

YOLK, 1120 SOUTH MICHIGAN AVENUE, 312.789.9655, WWW.THATSDLICIOUS.COM/YOLK



Ash-baked eggplant, white polenta, leeks, spiced pine nuts and Laura Chenel Chevre at Boka.

BOKA

Dinner at **Boka's** fantastic outdoor patio is a must-do this summer! This is one of the most beautiful outdoor seating areas that our city has to offer. But everyone knows that it isn't just the atmosphere that makes a restaurant—it's the food. Well here Boka has it all. Chef Giuseppe Tentori, who's impressive track record as Charlie Trotter's Chef de Cuisine for eight years

puts high expectations on his dishes, exceeds these expectations with flying colors. Start with the East and West coast oysters tasting as fresh as though they'd been caught only hours before being served. Mango horseradish accompanies the East Coast oysters and a Champagne granita (granita has a similar consistency to a snow cone) tops the West Coast oysters. The Ash-Baked Eggplant with white polenta and Laura Chenel Chevre is another phenomenal starter. For dinner, Soft Shell Crab season is here, and no one prepares them better than Chef Tentori—lightly breaded and cooked to a crisp with baby spinach, elephant garlic sauce and carrot-shiso slaw. Delicious. To end, the assortment of miniature cookies were quite satisfying, featuring delectable flavors such as chocolate peanut butter and double chocolate. For a lighter dessert, the Blood Orange Crème Brulee is a creamy, tart treat.

BOKA, 1729 NORTH HALSTED STREET, 312.337.6070, WWW.BOKACHICAGO.COM

CUBANO CUBANO

Café Laguardia, located in the heart of Bucktown, specializes in the best authentic Cuban food the city has to offer. My dinners always start off well due to their awesome drink selection. Make it a point to try at least one of their signature beverages—Mojitos, Caipirinhas (limes,

sugar and Brazilian rum), and Cuban Sangria are just a few from which to choose. Then start with the Nachos —each individual tortilla chip is piled with refried beans, guacamole, salsa and your choice of steak, beef or chicken. Be sure to thoroughly read the “specials” list (which, unless I’m mistaken, has remained the same for the past few years) because this is the home of my go-to dish, the Key Largo Red Snapper—lightly breaded, with just enough spice, served with white rice and black beans (which are reason enough to order the dish!). The Paella Valencia is also a signature dish, crafted with yellow rice and a variety of seafood and meat such as shrimp, clams and pork (note: this dish serves two people). My friend loves Café Laguardia’s Pulled Pork—tender chunks of pork in a spicy sauce. Though many of us will never travel to Cuba, the restaurant owners do a wonderful job of introducing diners to the food and culture of this country. CAFÉ LAGUARDIA, 2111 WEST ARMITAGE AVENUE, 773.862.5996, WWW.CAFELAGUARDIA.COM

SARAH'S NEW LOCATION

I normally don't write about my shop, but I think it's worthy to note that **Sarah's Pastries & Candies** has moved down the street to a bigger location! Located just one block east from the original store, our new 70 East Oak Street store is twice the size, allowing us to offer our customers indoor seating. SARAH'S PASTRIES & CANDIES, 70 EAST OAK STREET, 312.664.6223, WWW.SARAHSCANDIES.COM

NEWS BITES

Smoked Duck Maki Roll? The New York Times reports that a worldwide shortage of tuna caused by overfishing has frantic sushi chefs in Japan now experimenting with alternative ingredients like smoked duck, raw deer meat and avocado.

Charlie Trotter's Celebrates 20 Years Food Network star Chef Emeril Lagasse, along with Chef Norman Van Aken and wine expert Dan Duckhorn, will be on hand August 19th to celebrate two decades of great food and wine at Charlie Trotter's. Proceeds from the event benefit the Mercy Home for Boys and Girls. \$1,500. 6 PM. CHARLIE TROTTER'S, 816 WEST ARMITAGE AVENUE, 773.248.8949 x30 ■

Sarah Levy is the president and founder of Sarah's Pastries & Candies, 70 East Oak Street, 312.664.6223, www.sarahscandies.com



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