

## The Chow Guide

The following restaurants, lounges and coffeehouses are chosen by our food-obsessed editors who spend more time in fine dining establishments than the drive from Apache Junction to Anthem. These are our absolute favorites. Be sure to check back next month for nearly 50 new restaurants, reviewed by yours truly. Edited by Devin Whitney. Photography by Derek A. Welte.

Entree Price: Under \$10	Entree Price: Above \$20	Vegetarian-Friendly	Outdoor Dining	Reservations Recommended
Entree Price: \$10-\$20	Large Portion Size	Late-Night Dining (After 10 p.m.)	High Noise Level	Extensive Wine List

### BREAKFAST

#### BREAKFAST CLUB

This is Scottsdale's cult classic morning hangout for eggs and gourmet ingredients, but bring the paper; you're going to wait. On the positive, there's a side barista bar where you can pick up a quick cup of Joe. The breakfast menu items are posh takes on the traditional, and the service is friendly and fast. Favorites include the portabella eggs benedict, huevos rancheros, and build-your-own omelets with specialties like goat cheese, asparagus and prosciutto.

4400 N. Scottsdale Road | Scottsdale | 480.222.2582



#### CAFÉ ZUZU

Inside the mid-century chic Hotel Valley Ho, time slows to the diner era—if only improved for today's picky palates—at Café Zuzu. Store up on vanilla poppy seed pancakes, cheesy grits, cranberry walnut French toast, or buttermilk biscuits and gravy (and mimosas!) inside or out on the shaded patio that overlooks the hotel's modern, manicured grounds. Bonus: Coffee is strong but delicious and blueberry scones come free of charge.

6850 E. Main Street | Scottsdale | 480.421.7997



#### FARM AT SOUTH MOUNTAIN

Nostalgia for home on the range? The Farm at South Mountain, an actual working farm in South Phoenix, is rustic with picnic tables and strawberry muffins that smell of home cooking. Offering sit-down brunch at The Morning Glory Café, and counter service for sandwiches, salads and sides at The Farm Kitchen, The Farm's specialty is farm-fresh baked goods and veggies. Take a good book to read under the grove of pecan trees.

6106 S. 32nd Street | Phoenix | 602.276.6360



#### HARLOW'S CAFÉ

This neighborhood eatery is a long-standing breakfast fave for ultra-hungover college students and the working class after the graveyard shift. Chicken-fried steak, biscuits and gravy, omelets, and famous huevos rancheros are served up made to order and enough to feed a whole family. Food is perfect and prompt, and the "greasy spoon" rings true but it's definitely fulfilling. In addition to top-notch country cooking, the wait staff is consistently adorable.

1021 W. University Drive | Tempe | 480.829.9444



#### MATT'S BIG BREAKFAST

Matt's Big Breakfast, run by former Bar Bianco manager and The Roosevelt owner Matt Pool, makes it necessary to stave off vegetarianism for just one more day. Thick-cut country bacon, skillet-seared Iowa pork links and divinely sliced off-the-bone ham compliment a traditional, grease-heavy breakfast menu. Everything in this place is tiny—location, tables, diner counter—except the portions, so come hungry and prepare to wait.

801 N. First Street | Phoenix | 602.254.1074



#### PALATTE

Formerly Tera's Garden, the historic Cavness House is now a breakfast eatery thanks to Christine McHale. A NYC culinary graduate, McHale returned to Phoenix only to discover few places downtown to enjoy Sunday brunch. Last month she opened Palette, which leisurely serves puff pastries, peach granola, egg scrambles, potato and griddle cakes, tartes and more along with all the trimmings (eg. chicken apple sausage, hickory-smoked bacon and crème fraîche potatoes).

606 N. Fourth Avenue | Phoenix | 602.795.2741



### LUNCH

#### CITY BAKERY

Urbanites delight at this downtown bakery, breakfast and lunch spot attached to the Bentley Projects. In the thick of Phoenix's industrial neighborhood (rather hard to find for first-timers), this Arcadia Farms Café spin-off is worth the search. Inventive sandwiches—like the muffuletta with Italian salami, sopresatta, mortadella and provolone with spicy olive spread on ciabatta—and salads rival only the selection of made-fresh-daily baked goods.

215 E. Grant Street | Phoenix | 602.253.7200



#### DUCK & DECANTER

Opened in 1972, this specialty deli, gourmet grocery, cheese shop, coffeehouse and wine bar is an epicurean's paradise. Situated in an oasis of trees in an otherwise concrete parking lot, Duck & Decanter's bi-level building exudes European character. Stop in the cafeteria-style deli for a sandwich with maple-glazed ham or smoked duck breast, or dine like the French with creamy Camembert and a vintage merlot.

1651 E. Camelback Road | Phoenix | 602.274.5429



#### GREEN

Located in an unassuming strip mall, this 100-percent vegan café that serves an eclectic mix of Asian-inspired specialties. Noodle bowls, flatbread pizzas, po-boys, appetizers and salads are healthy but they sure don't taste it. Most entrées come with a choice of either mock chicken, mock beef, crispy tofu or fresh tofu, so even if meat's not an option there's still a pack of protein. They've recently taken over the spot next door, so look for an expanded dining room and lounge area soon.

2240 N. Scottsdale Road | Tempe | 480.941.9003



#### LA GRANDE ORANGE

This Arcadia landmark is home to legendary Spanish lattes, flavorful to-go salads, gourmet pizzas, heart-healing breakfast items and Tammie Coe Cakes desserts. The menu is simple and impeccably executed—even the staff is friendly. And though the parking can be impossible, the artsy-yuppy-cool vibe is unlike anywhere else in town. Point blank, it's a comfortable place to chill, chat or commingle.

4410 N. 40th Street | Phoenix | 602.840.7777



#### MANDALA TEAROOM

With daily eats prepared with fresh and seasonal organic ingredients, this vegan tearoom in Old Town inspires with tasty, healthy dishes. The menu depends on the goods available for the day, but some faves include their version of nachos: blue corn chips with whole adzuki beans, guac and roasted corn salsa. Fusion blends for recipes like the curry vermicelli rice bowl, tempeh fajitas and Masala Indian spiced platters make gobbling up the green stuff easy. The holistic teas are an added incentive.

7027 E. Fifth Avenue | Scottsdale | 480.423.3411



#### PANE BIANCO

Everyone's favorite pizza man, Chris Bianco, is an organic-food evangelist, which means fantastic eats at both Pizzeria Bianco and his lunchtime spot Pane Bianco. We prefer this smaller venue that serves fresh mozzarella, tomato and basil sandwiches, and crisp specialty salads with the same pizzazz, just not the hour-long dinner wait. Fresh-baked breads—made in Bianco's standard wood-fired oven—are just as divine as his James Beard Award-winning pizzas.

4404 N. Central Avenue | Phoenix | 602.234.2100



## PHOENIX RANCH MARKET

*Mexican.* This Phoenix staple is one part market, one part restaurant. The former is more of a department store packed with traditional breads, seafood (they'll fry a fish while you wait), meat, fresh tortillas, hot foods and more produce than the Garden of Eden. While the latter is superb Mexican cuisine, with the highlight being a \$14.99 Sunday brunch from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. A march down the buffet aisle can leave your belly full for a week.

1602 E. Roosevelt Street | Phoenix | 602.254.1719



## THAT'S A WRAP

Eight years ago owner Damon Brasch converted this historic home into healthy food for a hip downtown. Wraps like the Teriyaki 90210 (grilled teriyaki chicken, mixed vegetables, fresh ginger slaw, jasmine rice in an Asian ginger tortilla), salads like the Foo Man Chew (with crunchy wonton noodles and sesame dressing) and rice bowls are as playfully named as they are heart-healthy and delicious. Be sure to order the pasta salad and take advantage of their vegan options.

2022 N. Seventh Street | Phoenix | 602.252.5051



## DOWNTOWN/MIDTOWN PHOENIX

### AVANTI

*Italian.* The Valley's premier Italian restaurant for more than 30 years, Avanti is the brainchild of Benito Molino and Angelo Levi. All pasta dishes—such as tortellini portofino and linguine with clam sauce—are made from scratch; the seafood (really) is top flight; and the duck, veal and lamb are flawlessly prepared. To round out the meal, the wine list and bar menu are extensive, while the dining room is quiet with classic black-and-white trim design.

2728 E. Thomas Road | Phoenix | 602.956.0900



### BARRIO CAFÉ

*Mexican.* The gourmet evolution in the Valley has been monumentally aided by the runaway success of this diminutive bistro. Its aptness for stylish and provocative Latin dishes taught folks around town that there is more to Mexican food than the Filiberto's drive-thru. The carnitas are so famous they actually sell out, and the duck in a spicy tamarind sauce will melt in your mouth. Add a margarita to all of this and you're golden.

2814 N. 16th Street | Phoenix | 602.636.0240



### CALICO COW

*Comfort Food.* It's got a funny name, but chef/owner Susan Greenhalgh is very serious about what she calls her "Grandma's Kitchen" cuisine. Family-owned and -operated, the Calico Cow is housed in a 1912 building with a beautiful patio where Greenhalgh grows herbs and vegetables. Classic comfort foods like meatloaf, a lunch salad bar, fresh seafood, steaks and great homemade desserts are the specialty.

8525 N. Central Avenue | Phoenix | 602.235.9480



### CAMUS

*Contemporary American.* This Midtown Phoenix hotel restaurant is swank and the food is sublime thanks to chef Cullen Campbell and mixologist Carson Quinn. Friday and Saturday nights are hopped up with hipsters noshing while DJs spin; the atmosphere will make you think you're living it up à la NYC. The location at the Clarendon Hotel has its advantages; if you imbibe and want to avoid the slammer, get a room.

401 W. Clarendon Avenue | Phoenix | 602.212.2687



### CIBO

*Italian/Pizza.* With satisfying gourmet pizzas and arguably the city's best antipasto platter, it's hard to go wrong at Cibo. The wait staff is amazingly dedicated, without ever being obtrusive (a walk by the kitchen is a spirited endeavor since everyone seems really, really happy). Linger in the tree-filled garden, delve into a dessert crepe with a cappuccino and realize what everyone is smiling about.

603 N. Fifth Avenue | Phoenix | 602.441.2697



### CIRCA 1900

*Contemporary American.* Things keep getting better and better in Historic Heritage Square. Circa 1900—the second restaurant from quaint Coronado Café's owners—sits cozy in the early-20th-century Silva House. Northern California chef Chris Curtiss perfects comfort food with a twist, utilizing locally grown produce and organic poultry. Start out with cured meats and then move on to thin-sliced duck breast, scallops or a melt-in-your-mouth beef ribeye.

628 E. Adams Street | Phoenix | 602.256.0223



### CORONADO CAFÉ

*Contemporary American.* This 1915 Craftsman bungalow is a dining gem in the Coronado Historic District. Chef Aaron Miller serves enhanced comfort food like meatloaf with portobello mushrooms and a hatch green chili sauce, and bing cherry barbecued chicken. Make a special trip for a hearty Saturday brunch complete with pomosas—sparkling wine and pomegranate juice.

2201 N. Seventh Street | Phoenix | 602.258.5149



### COUP DES TARTES

*French.* For French on a first date, there's no better bistro than Coup des Tartes. Situated in a 1930s farmhouse among traffic-laden 16th Street, this quintessential romance-inducer is a guaranteed deal breaker. Choose the Cordon Bleu-style chicken with smoky ham and Gruyère cheese or pork tenderloin with roasted pear and brandy crème sauce. For large parties, reserve Rendez-Vous, the restaurant's private dining room across the courtyard. BYOB.

4626 N. 16th Street | Phoenix | 602.212.1082



### DURANT'S

*Steakhouse.* This legendary Phoenix chophouse has martinis that will knock you silly, ambiance that rivals *Goodfellas* and food that's as delicious as the day it

opened in 1955. Serving fresh oysters on the half shell and some of the Valley's best mesquite-broiled steaks and chops, Durant's (named after baseball great Jack Durant) is a great place for business, a hustle or amoré. Bonus: Stop by during happy hour for cheap drinks and single servings of meat and cheese *por gratis*.

2611 N. Central Avenue | Phoenix | 602.264.5967



### ELIANA'S RESTAURANT

*Salvadorian.* One of our all-time favorite comfort foods is the Salvadoran specialty pupusas—thick, corn tortillas stuffed with cheese, vegetables, beans or pork and garnished with crema, a tart tomato sauce and vinegar cabbage slaw. The other entrées are great as well, and everything is so well priced, you can afford to order extra pupusas for breakfast in the morning (they're devilishly good reheated and smothered with a fried egg).

1627 N. 24th Street | Phoenix | 602.225.2925



### FATE

*Chinese.* Housed in an eclectic little house downtown, Fate's service can be esoterically vacant but the fried tofu will charm your pants off (the smell sticks to the rest of your clothes). Among the classic Asian dishes, vegetarians rejoice in the multitude of animal-friendly fine eats. Order up a bottle of the Korean beer OB, which goes well with the crab and cream cheese-stuffed mega-wontons. With very reasonable prices, it's a fine finish to a long night of gallery hopping during First Fridays.

905 N. Fourth Street | Phoenix | 602.254.6424



### FEZ

*Mediterranean.* A step in the right direction for Midtown Phoenix, Fez fulfills all the requirements of a big-city canteen: cool décor, inventive martini list and delicious Moroccan-style food that's light enough for pre-party fare and substantial enough to soak up the impending alcohol. Lettuce wraps with grilled chicken, dried pears and cherries, dates, almonds, and pomegranate vinaigrette are an ideal starter while the apricot salmon or pesto and Dijon lamb chops satisfy a heartier appetite.

3815 N. Central Avenue | Phoenix | 602.287.8700



### LISA G'S WINE BAR CAFÉ

*Italian/American.* Lisa Giungo brewed her recipe for success at Arcadia Farms Café and City Bakery before opening her own haunt last year. Serving gourmet sandwiches, salads and appetizers like her now-famous bowl of balls, Lisa G's is set against the mid-century home's creaky wooden floor, intimate fireplace and Giungo family photos. With a new patio out front, patrons can enjoy wines and antipasto plates alfresco.

2337 N. Seventh Street | Phoenix | 602.253.9201



### LOLA TAPAS

*Spanish Tapas.* Serving arguably the best crème brûlée west of New York and the best sangria north of the border, little Lola Tapas is as charming as it is chic.

Owned by the couple who made Lux Coffee Bar a destination, Lola dishes out delightful small plates such as Moorish pork skewers, mortaditas and potato tortillas—each served with soft-boiled eggs. And though the ambiance is *España* authentic and the menu affordable, the wait can be brutal.  
**800 E. Camelback Road | Phoenix | 602.265.4519**  
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## LOLO'S CHICKEN AND WAFFLES

*Soul Food.* Down-home, country cookin' doesn't get any better than this hip spot started by Larry White Jr., whose grandma is Elizabeth White of Golden Rule Café. Of course the star is the plump golden-fried chicken. But with fried catfish, red velvet cake, mac and cheese, and yummy waffles hinted of cinnamon, you'll wish Mrs. White were your grandma, too. Wash it all down with some red Kool-Aid.  
**10 W. Yuma Street | Phoenix | 602.340.1304**  
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## LOS DOS MOLINOS

*Mexican.* Scared of spice? Better stay away from this legendary South Phoenix restaurant, which carries a reputation for tongue-searing that is seriously upheld. If you do hurt after a bite, however, the margaritas will ease the pain. (Note: Be careful about ordering pitchers, you'll need a cab and the bill seems to skyrocket.) One of the top-tier Mexican restaurants in the Valley, Los Dos Molinos offers a carne adovada that literally drops off the bone.  
**8646 S. Central Avenue | Phoenix | 602.243.9113**  
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## PORTLAND'S RESTAURANT & WINE BAR

*Contemporary American.* The continental flair of this Central Avenue eatery comes to life under the direction of chef Fabian Desloriers who hails from France. His motto is: "Everybody gets treated like a VIP," which he says in a very Inspector Clouseau-esque accent. Although the list of boutique wines is extensive, Portland's is also a good place to take your steak- and potato-loving friends. Plus the white cheddar cheeseburger is divine.  
**105 W. Portland Street | Phoenix | 602.795.6315**  
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## ROSITA'S PLACE

*Mexican.* A machaca beef chimichanga smothered in sour cream and guac at Rosita's is a blessing indeed. A Valley institution for more than three decades, Rosita's serves up tasty Mexican favorites such as chicken mole and menudo. The prices are low and the food is incomparable. If you feel like swaggering out, visit the hidden bar in the back for super-potent margaritas. Some Sundays, local Latino artists display their work; on a recent visit we were impressed by Technicolor bullfighters painted on burlap.  
**2310 E. McDowell Road | Phoenix | 602.244.9779**  
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## THE STOCKYARDS RESTAURANT

*Steakhouse.* This former cattle compound-turned-restaurant has been serving seared steers since 1947, but the recent polishing of the elegant décor

is straight-out Dallas, as in power lunches with J.R. Ewing. The steaks are thick, well seasoned and served with a choice of three sauces including a bourbon peppercorn. They also serve up a pecan pie that would make Miss Ellie proud.  
**5001 E. Washington Street | Phoenix | 602.273-7378**  
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## TICOZ RESTO-BAR

*Latin.* Fez's baby sister just a few miles up the road, Ticoz Resto-Bar is—believe it or not—even more cool than the original. This thin, rectangular space is divided into four separate rooms, each demanding to be seen: the plant-strewn outdoor courtyard, the long bar with lounge seating, the main dining area, and a rather post-modern private dining room. The atmosphere is red and sexy, and the tasty Latin food competes only with the saucy sounds from the speakers.  
**5114 N. Seventh Street | Phoenix | 602.200.0160**  
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## TRENTE-CINQ 35

*Belgian.* Don't feel bad about botching the entrée names at the city's only Belgian restaurant. Trente-Cinq 35's owner/chef Lionel Geuskens—born and raised in Liege, Belgium—won't hold it against you. Succulent seafood dishes such as the waterzooi (salmon, halibut, shrimp, scallops and mussels in a saffron cream sauce), and starch-heavy entrées like the bouchee a la reine (puff pastry filled with chicken and mushroom veloute) are plentiful and rich.  
**2333 N. Seventh Street | Phoenix | 602.254.0244**  
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## VIA DE LOSANTOS MEXICAN CAFÉ

*Mexican.* Get your rocks off with one of the city's largest selections of tequila alongside inventive dishes like zucchini and corn enchiladas. VDL has some excellent side dishes, including many that are vegetable-based—an unexpected nicety for a Mexican joint. Service can be hit or miss, but the drinks and grub are good enough to slow down and enjoy.  
**9120 N. Central Avenue | Phoenix | 602.997.6239**  
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## WELCOME DINER

*Diner Fare.* Forget Route 66, Welcome Diner is all the truck-stop fare you'll need, only a hell of a lot better. This 1930s refurbished diner grills up hamburgers, BLTs, Coney Island dogs and grilled cheese sandwiches alongside fresh-cut russet potato fries. But don't expect soggy lettuce or green tomatoes, Welcome Diner's ingredients are from local markets and organic, free-range farms. Sure, it's still greasy diner fare, but at least the food miles are low.  
**924 E. Roosevelt Street | Phoenix | 602.495.1111**  
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## BILTMORE/ARCADIA

### ASI ES LA VIDA

*Mexican.* This colorful spot will broaden your horizons

to what constitutes good Mexican cuisine. No Americanized faves here; instead gourmet dishes from Mexico's central and southern regions line the menu, like poached shrimp in soft crepes with a spicy white sauce and their famous Yucatán pork. Lunch specials are a deal for around \$10, while white linen tablecloths, candles and live music add romance to evening dining.  
**3602 N. 24th Street | Phoenix | 602.952.1255**  
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## BACKSTREET WINE SALON

*French.* Inconspicuously located in the aft of Gaslight Square stands a wine shop and bistro of five-star French panache. The wines by the glass and dinner menu change daily. Stop by for a bottle on the go, or revel in the marble tiles, chandeliers and elegant table settings in the restaurant's dining room. Recent selections have included Mediterranean lamb chops and a Brazilian coffee and pepper-roasted fillet.  
**3603 E. Indian School Road | Phoenix | 602.550.7990**  
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## DICK'S HIDEAWAY

*Southwest.* They don't call it Dick's Hideaway for nothing. Situated in an unmarked location adjacent to Richardson's and Rokerij, this miniscule bar and restaurant cooks up spicy New Mexican-style specialties that are grilled to perfection. Daily offerings are marked on the chalkboard—but trust us, the fall-off-the-bone lamb, pork tenderloin and beef fillet can't be outdone. Perfect for a first date.  
**6008 N. 16th Street | Phoenix | 602.241.1881**  
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## ELEMENTS

*Contemporary American.* High up on the hill overlooking pristine Paradise Valley, Elements at Sanctuary on Camelback Mountain is sleek in both food and setting. Like the hotel itself, classic American menu items are modernized with Asian flair (spiced venison loin, olive oil poached albacore, ginger-cured pork loin, etc.). Most dishes are made from locally organic meats and vegetables, so the food's always farm-fresh and seasonal. For a nightcap, saunter to the adjacent Jade Bar for vintage port.  
**5700 E. McDonald Drive | Paradise Valley | 480.607.2300**  
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## ELÉVÉ

*Contemporary American.* Ensnconed in the northwest corner of a strip mall, Elévé is one of the Camelback Corridor's hidden treasures. Opened by chef Michael Mishkin, Elévé was recently sold to Jeffrey Beeson, formerly of Convivo. He plans on revamping the menu slowly, so check back in a month or so, and don't be surprised by a name change as well.  
**3118 E. Camelback Road | Phoenix | 602.952.0733**  
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## FENIX EATERY & BAR

*French.* Smack-dab in Arcadia, this two-year-old French bistro is far too refined for its strip mall

locale. Serving some of city's best French onion soup gratinee, coq au vin and escargot, Fenix Eatery is swanky, dark and delicious. Don't miss the blackberry cabernet sorbet for dessert. Since May 17, the city has been abuzz over Fenix's new late-night dining, where a select menu is served until 2 a.m. all week. **3943 E. Camelback Road | Phoenix | 602.952.0013** \$\$\$ 🍷 🍴 🌙 🍷

## LOON'S AT THE HERMOSA

*Southwest.* Decidedly one of Phoenix's most established authentic Southwestern eateries, Lon's at the Hermosa oozes in charm and ambiance. For the full effect, ask for a spot on the patio, surrounded by wood-burning fireplaces and candlelight in the Hermosa Inn courtyard. Hearty dishes such as sun-dried tomato-crust rack of lamb are impeccably prepared. But leave room for a traditional favorite with a twist: truffle scented mac and cheese. **5532 N. Palo Cristi Road | Scottsdale | 602.955.7878**

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## SOPHIE'S BISTRO

*French.* One of the finest French restaurants in town, Sophie's Bistro is known for its discerning ambiance, complete with white linen, crystal and candlelight. Chef Reginald Clemente's authentic dishes, such as the escargot in butter sauce and poulet saute minute au beurre truffe—chicken with a truffle and garlic cream sauce—are exquisite. Entrées are well priced considering the quality and classic bistro atmosphere. **2320 E. Osborn Road | Phoenix | 602.956.8897**

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## TOMASO'S

*Italian Steakhouse.* Catering to councilmen and Biltmore's upper crust (as well as those on special occasion), Tomaso's Tuscan-style cooking has been a staple for 27 years. Exceptional regional Italian cuisine is highlighted in dishes like the Sicilian feast (house-made sausage, meatball and braciola simmered in beef and veal meat sauce) and Florentine ravioli (ricotta-filled ravioli with wild mushroom and parmesan truffle sauce). The slightly condensed lunch menu is perfect for a power powwow. **3225 E. Camelback Road | Phoenix | 602.956.0836**

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## ZEN 32

*Sushi.* Kimono-adorned waitresses are the stars at this sleek sushi bar and Japanese restaurant, but the sushi is a close second. Spice-lovers will want to try the samba roll with eel, tempura jalapeño and cream cheese. And while sushi is not known as an unhealthy snack, Zen 32 caters to carb watchers with soy paper rolls. The bar's open seven days a week and sushi is served until midnight. **2501 E. Camelback Road | Phoenix | 602.508.9449**

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## NORTH VALLEY

### ACACIA

*Steakhouse.* Sure Ruth's Chris and Capital Grille are closer to town, but for melt-in-your-mouth steak there's no better place than Acacia at Four Seasons

Scottsdale. Serving such delicacies as Piedmontese beef with wild mushroom mélange and cabernet reduction, and prime filet and lobster tail with black truffle stuffing and lobster cognac sauce, this place is not messing around. Paired with the serene desert landscape that surrounds Troon North (sit outside on the patio to smell the wood-burning fireplaces), there's no more romantic spot in the Valley. **10600 E. Crescent Moon Drive | Scottsdale | 480.513.5086**

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## DESEO

*Latin.* The proclaimed "creator of Nuevo Latino cuisine," James Beard award-winning chef Douglas Rodriguez is seasoned in Spanish and Latin specialties like ceviche—the menu features 10 varieties from white soy to Ecuadorian shrimp—and fresh fish and carne dishes like the churrasco of beef with crab mojo, camote and herb chimichurri. Wash them down with a selection of sweet mijitos in flavors such as strawberry and Grand Marnier. **6902 E. Greenway Pkwy | Scottsdale | 480.624.1000**

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## FUEGO BISTRO

*Latin-Southwestern.* Finally a worthy Cubano sandwich, with sliced roast pork, ham, Swiss cheese, dill pickle and yellow mustard on a fresh baguette—pressed and grilled. The ensalada pollo, with masa-encrusted chicken and black bean salsa on the lunch menu is so good, we wonder why it's only available in the afternoon. There are only seven tables inside with a couple more in the courtyard patio, so call ahead on a weekend. **713 E. Palo Verde Drive | Phoenix | 602.277.1151**

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## MARCELLINO RISTORANTE

*Italian.* Since relocating to the Valley from New York, this husband and wife team has redefined Italian in the desert. Handmade herb-infused pastas, reduction sauces, heaps of crustaceans, wild game, truffles and the perfect balance of flavors have made this restaurant the toast of the town. The service is personalized (Sima, the chef's wife, often greets guests herself) and the interior small but not cramped. Bonus: Order their new Gourmet To Go for a three-course dinner on the fly. **1301 E. Northern Avenue | Phoenix | 602.216.0004**

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## RADDA CAFFE-BAR

*Italian Fusion.* There aren't many places in Scottsdale that feel like home, but Radda is inviting and comfortable—you'll often find yourself at the bar chatting with chef/owner Lori Hassler. In addition to outstanding takes on the traditional, including herbed ricotta-stuffed chicken medallions wrapped in bacon and filet balsamico, Hassler hosts monthly wine tastings on the last Saturday of the month. Wine reps pour freely while antipasto plates are available to munch free of charge. **7000 E. Shea Blvd. | Scottsdale | 480.778.0800**

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## SOL Y SOMBRA

*Spanish Tapas.* Since opening mid-2006, Sol y Sombra has become a DC Ranch power player. The menu—divided into cold and hot small plates, and bocaditos—is rich in flavor and Spanish authenticity, which is shown in dishes like snails and artichoke in parsley broth and smoked sturgeon. A hip, dark atmosphere complements the stylish clientele who lounge on the second-story patio and mingle at the bar on the weekends. **20707 N. Pima Road | Scottsdale | 480.443.5399**

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## TAPINO KITCHEN & WINE BAR

*Tapas.* We have a hard time deciding which we like better, the interior sit-down service or the tapas and wine lounge on the patio. One thing's for sure: the attention to detail on each and every small plate item is remarkable, making flavor combinations the belle of the ball. Seared scallops, coconut Thai curry, sour apple relish and lotus root? Delicious. Sonoma duck leg confit relleno, char-grilled salsa fresca and shaved Manchego? Equally good. Who knew? **7000 E. Shea Blvd. | Scottsdale | 480.991.6887**

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## OLD TOWN SCOTTSDALE

### ATLAS BISTRO

*World Cuisine.* Atlas Bistro may be hidden in a bland-looking strip mall, but the recipes are the ethos of genius: madness and beauty seamlessly intertwined. With specials like sweetbread spring rolls and daring meat choices (black bear?), it's easy to feel like a dignified barbarian. Every meal is a definitive experience, seeing as though specials change daily. Being a BYOB, the locale comes in handy (hint: it's actually located inside the AZ Wine Company store). Stop by Twisted, the new sister restaurant, next door. **2515 N. Scottsdale Road | Scottsdale | 480.990.2433**

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### AZ88

*Contemporary American.* Go for the burgers but stay for the buzz. The choice spot to sip strong cocktails (we mean it) is on the patio, which faces SMOCA and the Scottsdale Mall. On weekends, the under-21 crowd is banned, which makes for a cool adult scene that's artsy and intelligent. Sadly, the servers have a reputation for being inept, which is strange because the management and bar staff is incredibly mindful. The DJs keep the lounge music spinning and the kitchen stays up late. **7353 Scottsdale Mall | Scottsdale | 480.994.5576**

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### COWBOY CIAO

*Contemporary American.* Without a trip to Cowboy Ciao at least once, you can't consider yourself a Phoenician. It's like a rite of passage into foodie-hood to nosh exotic mushroom pan fry, TM soup and any one of the exceptional main dishes. The service is knowledgeable and witty, and even the menu is quirky (actual guest quotes add the pizzazz). And the wine list is so über-extensive it's almost scary. Ask your server for recommendations or you could be there

all night.

7133 E. Stetson Drive | Scottsdale | 480.946.3111



## DRINKWATER'S CITY HALL STEAKHOUSE

*Steakhouse.* Scottsdale's see-and-be-seen steakhouse (doesn't every city have one?), Drinkwater's City Hall has the pedigree and the goods to back it up. Rare prime beef is served on sizzling-hot plates to ensure a perfect doneness, but honestly the food plays second fiddle to the people-watching and entertainment in the front bar. A dark red interior and frequent celebrity sightings make a drink at the bar almost as satisfying as dinner. Almost.

6991 E. Camelback Road | Scottsdale | 480.941.4700



## GRAZIE PIZZERIA WINEBAR

*Italian/Pizza.* The first restaurant by Maurizio Cristiani (Cibo and Grazie Verrado have followed), Grazie Pizzeria Winebar is a hidden gem in the Scottsdale Main Street arts district. Showcased in a quaint abode, front and side-wrapping patios boast bougainvillea and twinkling white lights. Order up a pizza—such as the quattro stagioni with salame, mushrooms, ham, olives and basil—and a bottle of Italian red table wine.

6952 E. Main Street | Scottsdale | 480.663.9797



## MALEE'S ON MAIN

*Thai.* Because Thai in the Valley is seriously lacking, it's wishful thinking to find some hole in the wall that'll blow your socks off. But high-class joint Malee's on Main will set you straight. Try the tom ka gai with rich coconut milk broth offset by the tang of vinegar and chunks of poached chicken breast, served flaming at your table. The spicy crispy pla is another favorite—two whitefish fillets flash-fried and topped with sweet-hot chili, jalapeño, garlic sauce and cilantro.

7131 E. Main Street | Scottsdale | 480.947.6042



## METHODE BISTRO

*Mediterranean.* This Riviera-inspired restaurant thinks "outside the box" with dishes of sensory focus. Chef and co-owner Matthew McLinn is not only a creative force but rules his kitchen with an iron fist when reinventing classic fare. The osso bucco with garlic risotto and farm veggies is one of their more popular dishes. A nice after-work date involves sitting at the bar and noshing on \$5 tapas while having one of the best martinis of your life.

6204 N Scottsdale Road | Scottsdale | 480.998.8220



## SEA SAW

*Japanese.* Utilizing traditional Japanese techniques with the most modern of ingredients makes this a Scottsdale standout. But beware, if you're starving, prepare to order one of everything on the menu as portions are small and the fare is light. But isn't ordering to share half the fun? The menu's divided into cold and warm small plates so feel free to order a

few of each. But leave room for green tea ice cream, one of only a handful of local establishments that carry it.

7133 E. Stetson Drive | Scottsdale | 480.481.9463



## STINGRAY

*Sushi.* Another trendy spot in Old Town Scottsdale, but this one's actually high on style *and* substance. Among the beautiful human decorations, lava rolls and delicious fire dragon rolls mix sublimely with the Godzilla, an aptly named cocktail for mega-thirsty scenesters. Ultra-clean, healthy fish is the specialty, but the bright mandarin décor is also one of the most well-designed around.

4302 N. Scottsdale Road | Scottsdale | 480.941.4460



## EAST VALLEY

### CAFFE BOA

*Italian.* A standard in Tempe for hearty pasta dishes, happy hour and tiramisu, Caffe Boa is consistently satisfying. The crab raviolis with a sage-infused burnt butter sauce and crowd favorite pola pola are insatiable. The only complaint is the constant up-selling by the wait staff; it sometimes makes you feel accosted (maybe to make up for the happy hour prices?). Live jazz in a historic renovated building makes it an ideal place to be seduced.

398 S. Mill Avenue | Tempe | 480.968.9112



### CAPISTRANO'S

*Italian.* Easy on the pocket book, this family-owned Italian deli has been serving up quality paninis, pasta dishes and fresh soups for years. Don't miss the not-too-sweet creamy rice pudding (offered with or without raisins). It's housed in a strip mall with the entrance in the rear, so slow down or you may miss it.

31 W. Southern Avenue | Tempe | 480.968.0712



### CORNISH PASTY CO.

*English.* The only good thing about being a miner in England a century ago was the creation of the pasty (meat-filled pie). The house-made sausage is a hit, but the variety of possibilities is downright thrilling. There is the traditional meat and cheese fillings, but the options run the gamut from carne adovada to Indian vindaloo with mango chutney. At happy hour, get down and dirty with a slim-priced Irish car bomb. Be careful, it's difficult to have just one.

960 W. University Drive | Tempe | 480.894.6261



### CYCLO VIETNAMESE

*Vietnamese.* Enjoy yourself at the most authentic and affordable place to get your pho fix in the Valley. The ambiance is crisp in its modern and clean aesthetic. And the staff is swift and helpful to Vietnamese foodie first-timers. Serving large, aromatic portions of broth with noodles and gigantic spring rolls with crave-worthy dipping sauces, how can it get any better? BYOB with no corkage fee.

1919 W. Chandler Blvd. | Chandler | 480.963.4490



## FOUR PEAKS

*Pub Fare.* Considering beer is the focus, the food is surprisingly well-crafted and the specialty menu is fantastic. Sip a Hop Knot, Eighth Street or Kilt Lifter while taking in the college crowd on the expansive, kick-ass front patio. Young and old minions lap up nearly 20,000 kegs of the brew per year. Bonus: Stop in for brunch on Sundays until 2 p.m. for gourmet pub breakfast items.

1340 E. Eighth Street | Tempe | 480.303.9967



## HOUSE OF TRICKS

*Contemporary American.* With the most romantic patio around, prepare to fall in love with House of Tricks (or your dinner date). Many of the city's young superchefs have honed their skills here, starting out in the kitchen with elegant dishes that change daily. The bar typically has very cerebral conversations bouncing around, so grab a glass of wine and chat. Don't pass up on the dessert tray; there's always a rich cheesecake in some variation to be had.

114 E. Seventh Street | Tempe | 480.968.1114



## LEE'S SANDWICHES

*Sandwiches.* This ain't your average sandwich chain. Lee's is a Vietnamese hoagie eatery that takes inspiration from the country's French Colonial roots (think lots of fresh baguettes). The bánh mì—packed with barbecued pork and finished with thinly sliced pickled carrots, daikon radishes, onions and cilantro—is super cheap, but oh so good. They also offer a healthy selection of vegetarian options.

1901 W. Warner Road | Chandler | 480.855.1778



## THE SALT CELLAR

*Seafood.* Don't drive too fast or you might pass the bombshelter building of SoSco's seafood-lover hideout. The massive menu is stuffed with seafaring favorites flown in from across the globe—oysters on the half shell, Maryland crab cakes, B.C. king salmon, mahi mahi and baked stuffed lobster. If you're looking to skip the price tag, drop by for happy hour from 4 to 7 p.m. and 10 p.m. to 1 a.m. for half-off apps and \$2.50 well drinks in the bar. Ahoy!

550 N. Hayden Road | Scottsdale | 480.947.1963



## UDUPI

*Indian.* This Tempe ethnic eatery is named after a famous district in India where the vegetarian dishes are praised (legend has it they were created for the big man himself, Lord Krishna). All vegan, all the time in this little café. But we promise you won't even miss the meat. After all, if it's good enough for a supreme deity ... well, you get the point.

1636 N. Scottsdale Road | Tempe | 480.994.8787



## WEST VALLEY

## RESTAURANT 28

*Soul Food.* This tiny BBQ joint is as charming as Southern belles in the Carolinas, where the owner hails from. The sauce here is a little more sugar-based than traditional vinegar, but no matter; this stuff is finger-lickin' good. The hot links, ribs and smoked pork are tasty vittles, while the fried catfish and side dishes are not to be missed. The red velvet cake with cream cheese frosting for dessert is good to go for a midnight snack.

5025 W. Olive Avenue | Glendale | 623.934.0920



## LOUNGES/WINE BARS

### CASEY MOORE'S

Deep within the shaded historic Maple-Ash neighborhood, Casey's is cool, calm and collected. College kids, emos and intellectuals swizzle down killer cocktails (bartenders don't mess around) and microbrews on one of the Valley's best patios. Don't be surprised if you see the same people there every visit. Bonus starring college student feature: a free weeknight buffet for happy hour.

850 S. Ash Avenue | Tempe | 480.968.9935

### CHEUVRONT WINE & CHEESE CAFÉ

Proving once and for all that cool politicians do exist, Cheuvront's—named for owner and District 15 democrat Ken Cheuvront—is a shining star on Central Avenue. Located on the bottom floor of Artisan Lofts, this wine bar shares the spotlight with an impressive cheese selection that features fromage from across the globe. Those who crave more than a mere nosh can find a menu rich with small pizzas, salads, appetizers and hearty entrees.

1326 N. Central Avenue | Phoenix | 602.307.0022

### GEORGE & DRAGON

If you're looking for a traditional English pub, this Central Avenue staple is it. Real imperial pints of imported and domestic beers (try the John Courage), real darts, real British accents—in fact, even the patrons here are “real.” Take in a game of pool, choose a few tunes on the juke box or test your useless knowledge on Thursdays for Trivia Night. Just don't call it an Irish bar.

4240 N. Central Avenue | Phoenix | 602.241.0018

### JADE BAR

Adjacent to Elements in the Sanctuary on Camelback Mountain, this hilltop bar has astounding views of the Valley below. During the chillier months, cozy up next to the outdoor fireplaces and revel in the romantic surroundings. A perfect nightcap or a place to settle in for the evening, Jade Bar has an impressive selection of wine, whiskey and accompanying cigars.

5700 E. McDonald Drive | Paradise Valley | 480.607.2301

### KAZIMIERZ WORLD WINE BAR

Envision a speakeasy where F. Scott and Zelda would have been regulars. KazBar entrance is hidden in the

back and the crowd is copiously varied. The highlight is ambiance: live jazz, dark lighting and plush sofas. The bar nibbles are hit or miss, but excellent wine list. Don't miss the Lambic Framboise on tap; we've never met anyone who doesn't love it. Dress sharp, it's the type of place where Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned* comes to life.

7137 E. Stetson Drive | Scottsdale | 480.946.3004

### MERC BAR

Named after famed Mercer Street in New York, where this bar's sister has a home, the Merc is a Phoenix staple where lounge and jazz music mingle with hip, like-minded patrons. Belly up at the bar to chat with some of the city's friendliest bartenders or hide away in the corner among leather couches and mid-century lamps. Not to be outdone, the drinks hold their own: stiff and perfectly poured.

2501 E. Camelback Road | Phoenix | 602.508.9449

### POSTINO WINEBAR

Despite the lack of parking, this post-office-turned-wine-bar is Arcadia's claim to fame (alright, not really, but it's a contributor). Hip 30-somethings meet here for well-priced wines by the glass and the city's best bruschetta, served four different kinds to an order (enough for a party of four). Contemporary décor and a seductive selection of lounge music make this a chill spot to commingle sans the rowdy bar crowd.

3939 E. Campbell Avenue | Phoenix | 602.852.3939

### THE ROOSEVELT

We're absolutely enamored with this new wine and beer bar by Matt Pool. Housed in an old brick building with soaring ceilings and very little indoor space, The Roosevelt is quintessentially chic. But don't get the wrong impression; it's chic in the quaint, artsy, hip vibe that Scottsdale lacks. A great place for friends.

816 N. Third Street | Phoenix | 602.254.2561

### THIRSTY CAMEL

This classy hotel lounge at the Phoenician is filled with world travelers as well as leisure-seeking Valley denizens. Enjoy a well-crafted cocktail and a cigar while overlooking the manicured gardens and pool from the second-story patio. The service here is impeccable and the clientele mature—this is not a party atmosphere.

6000 E. Camelback Road | Scottsdale | 480.941.8200

### THE VIG

Opened late December, The Vig is already a bonafide gathering spot (hell, they even have valet). It is pretty stunning, though, with plush cubes and glassy concrete floors. On a nice day, kick it on the patio in wooden lounge chairs near the bocce ball court (seriously) or enjoy the fireplace come nightfall.

4041 N. 40th Street | Phoenix | 602.553.7227

## COFFEEHOUSES

### COPPER STAR COFFEE

This Seventh Avenue coffee shop, opened in summer 2006, is just what the up-and-coming neighborhood

needed. Roll-up doors on the side let in a breeze during the nicer months, keeping the atmosphere as airy as the drinks. Our pick: the rare pear smoothie that's so authentic it's disturbing (in a good way).

4220 N. Seventh Avenue | Phoenix | 602.266.2136

### DRIP COFFEE LOUNGE

If Allen Ginsberg was alive today he'd be howling praise and ordering up a cappuccino in this chic, organic coffee shop. Drip cultivates Seventh Street's metamorphic feel with artisans and mod Eames furniture, while its healthy breakfast items, sandwiches and snacks—like the cream cheese and Nutella panini—add the sustenance.

2325 N. Seventh Street | Phoenix | 602.363.2900

### HAVA JAVA

Spot hot soccer moms, Arcadia's business elite and freelance writers at Hava Java, one of Phoenix's most popular indie coffeehouses. Blame it on the prime 32nd Street and Camelback residence or owner Jake Cranston's camaraderie or the selection of roasts. Whatever the reason, Hava Java is always hoppin'.

Take up residence on the patio and let the people-watching begin.

3166 E. Camelback Road | Phoenix | 602.954.9080

### JAMAICAN BLUE

Across the street from Starbucks—and a whole lot cooler—lies a hidden Scottsdale gem that's packed with colorful characters. Order a flavored latte or a microbrew, as they're served side-by-side in this laid-back haven. Curl up on one of the many mismatched couches. You're not in Scottsdale anymore.

4017 N. Scottsdale Road | Scottsdale | 480.947.2160

### LUX COFFEE BAR

Singularly responsible for the hip gathering of indie stores on Central Avenue just north of Indian School Road, Lux Coffee Bar is a shining example of where Phoenix's future lies. The real joy is gathering with friends inside or out to talk about art, politics and world hunger (or the cute, locally designed outfit you just picked up at neighboring Passage Boutique).

4404 N. Central Avenue | Phoenix | 602.266.6469

### MAMA JAVA'S

Located in one of the most interesting strip malls in town (next to Famous Wings, a book store and a fine-dining French restaurant), Mama Java's is more than a coffeehouse. Showcasing local bands nearly every night of the week, it's also a gathering space for those tired of the bar scene. The service is friendly and the sandwiches are surprisingly tasty. And the coffee's fantastic, too.

3619 E. Indian School Road | Phoenix | 602.840.5282

### MANDALA TEAROOM

Kudos to Old Town Scottsdale for allowing this holistic tearoom to open on otherwise bar-stricken Fifth Avenue. Partiers can detox with an assortment of black teas, decaf teas, chai teas, green teas, white teas, herbal teas ... you get the drift. Pair one with an organic, vegetarian sandwich, salad or starter

(beware: this is truly granola-esque eating).  
7027 E. Fifth Avenue | Scottsdale | 480.423.3411

## PAISLEY VIOLIN

We love the artsy/hostel vibe at this downtown gallery/coffeehouse. The décor is rather random (water fountain on the back patio, thrift-store finds?), but the charm is undeniable. Stop in for live music and a snack—pizzas, paninis and soups are usuals on a menu that changes daily.

1030 NW. Grand Avenue | Phoenix | 602.254.7843

## ROYAL COFFEE BAR

Big props to this newbie for opening just ahead of the curve in Downtown Phoenix. Owned by acclaimed local architect Hayes McNeil and his wife and brother-in-law, Royal Coffee Bar is small, industrial and chic. Black leather couches contrast the slick cement floor, and the fresh flowers add an organic element. Stop by neighboring Sweet Pea bakery for a pick-me-up.

209 W. Jackson Street | Phoenix | 602.374.8044

## WILLOW HOUSE

Think Phoenix is void of cool, artsy coffee shops? Think again. Willow House feels straight from Seattle with acoustic singers, computers for customer use and comfy couches perfect for curling up with a good book—even though it's not raining outside. Bonus points for the local jewelry and clothing sold inside.

149 W. McDowell Road | Phoenix | 602.252.0272