

Remembering Pat Renick,
Monumental Artist

by CEDRIC ROSE

Tim Goldsmith's Got
Such Good Manners

by POLK LAFFOON IV

THE PROTEIN THAT COULD
STOP CANCER
IN ITS TRACKS P.56

Cincinnati

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WHERE TO EAT NOW

It's time to dig in. Our annual list of the best restaurants in Cincinnati includes some familiar spots, but this year a new establishment reigns supreme. Plus: The search for good line cooks, jalapeños in cocktails, and perfect pozole.

COOKS, ILLUSTRATED P. 82

For nearly six months, a curious librarian subjected himself to burnt thumbs, good-natured ribbing, and hours of *mise-en-place* preparation, all in the name of understanding life as a stage in the kitchen at Salazar.

BY HOLBROOK SAMPLE

CINCINNATI KID: JUSTIN DOELLMAN P. 86

Former Ryle High School and XU hoops star Justin Doellman has established himself in Europe's best leagues, earning himself the nickname Captain America. Clearly the sistas are working. BY JASON COHEN

MOTHER ART P. 90

Pat Renick's sculptures rankled some contemporaries and reflected her persona: brash, political, feminist, and prolific. But how did the Florida-born creator of *Triceracopter* become a Cincinnati arts icon?

BY CEDRIC ROSE

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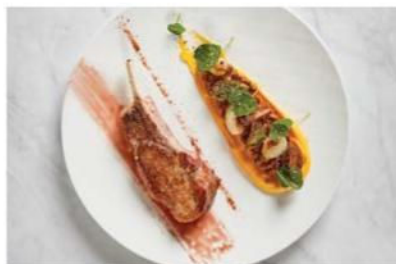


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the 1980s



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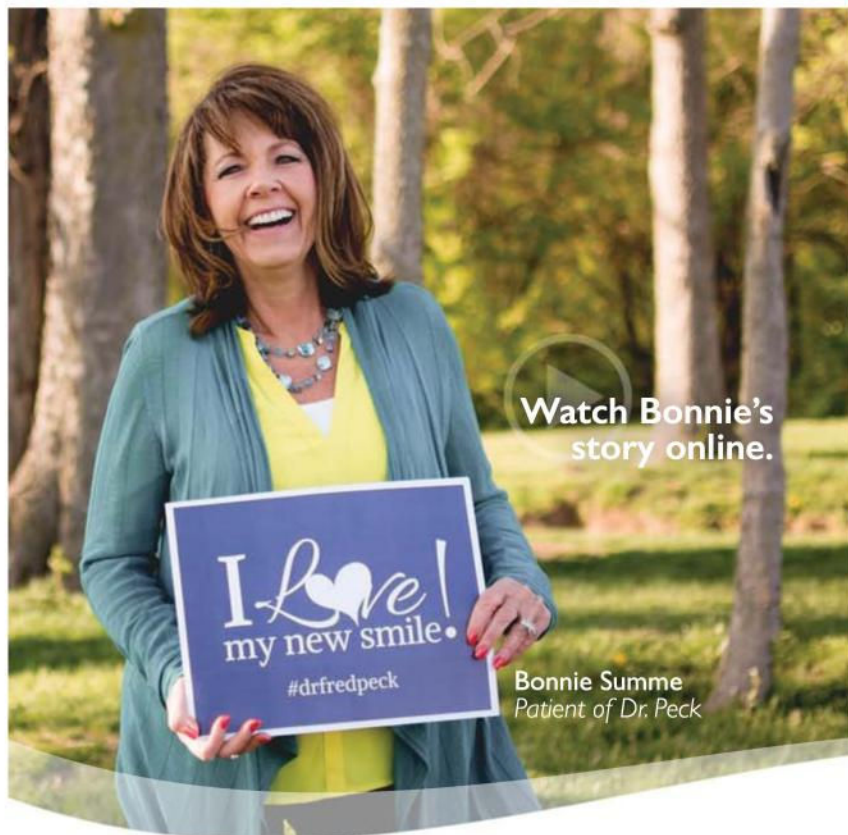
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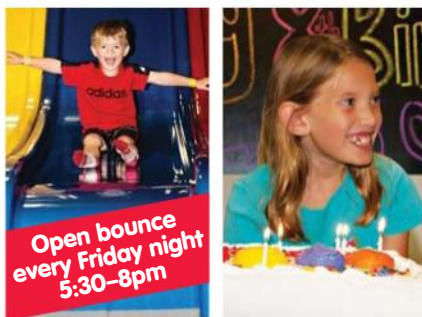
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→ **WHAT MAKES A CITY A CITY? IS IT THE ARCHITECTURE? THE ROADS AND BRIDGES? THE HOSPITALS, universities, factories, businesses, schools, and places of worship? The parks and hills and neighborhoods? All of these are components that make up the modern urban machine. But the thing that makes the machine go, the fuel, is people. Before the City of Cincinnati could exist at all—before it even existed as a vague idea in some 18th century pioneer’s brain—it had to have people. Without people, there’s no city.**

Native Americans were the first to see the advantages of settling on the hills that surround what we now call the Ohio River. Next came the fur trappers, prospectors, and pioneers, looking to eke out an existence via trade and subsistence farms. Then came the surveyors, who carved up the land, along with the U.S. military, who built Ft. Washington, an outpost of “civilization” on the far edge of colonial America’s expansion into the interior.



The town that became Cincinnati was founded in 1788, but it took a while for that municipal dream to manifest itself as more than just a stockade on the muddy banks of a river surrounded by vast forests and understandably nonplussed Native Americans. It took more people—most of whom uprooted themselves from crappy situations in foreign countries to build the proverbial “better life” in a new land. Many of the Germans and Irish who made up the first wave of immigrants to settle here were fleeing internecine strife, religious persecution, and profound economic hardship. So too were the African-Americans who crossed the river to escape slavery in the South...and the second wave of Jews, Italians, and Greeks who followed later...and the Latinos, Indians, Asians, and Russians who have followed since.

Mayor Cranley’s recent declaration that we are a “sanctuary city” may strike some as a distinction without a difference, but it’s an important distinction. Cincinnati has from its very beginning been a place of sanctuary, a refuge for anyone seeking to pursue life, liberty, and happiness. And while we as citizens grapple with President Trump’s recent misbegotten attempts to temporarily halt the flow of immigrants and refugees from seven majority Muslim nations (and his subsequent threats against sanctuary cities), it’s even more important for us to remember where we came from. We came from an idea, and the idea doesn’t succeed without people.

JAY STOWE
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

twitter.com/JayStoweCM

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HOLBROOK SAMPLE

After spending six months juggling his day job as a librarian and his apprenticeship in Salazar’s kitchen (“Cooks, Illustrated,” page 82), Holbrook Sample gained insight into things most diners never experience. “It’s such a different world,” he says. “People who are not in the food industry don’t really get to see all that goes on or how intense it is.” Sample lives in Clifton. This is his first story for *Cincinnati Magazine*.



RAMI NIEMI

Before diving into his illustrations, Rami Niemi reads through subject material and selects his favorite scenes and characters to sketch. In “Cooks, Illustrated” he depicts several of the story’s characters in their element. “My favorite part was how organized everything needs to be in a professional kitchen,” says Niemi. “It sounds nice—I quite like order myself!” Niemi’s work has appeared in *GQ*, *Men’s Health*, *Runner’s World*, and *Vanity Fair*. He lives in Sweden.



MICHELLE SULLIVAN

Contributing writer Michelle Sullivan gravitates towards classic, indie, and punk rock. However, she got classical with her story on the Constella Festival (“New Wave,” page 26). “While I do love music and arts festivals, I’ve never really been into classical music,” says Sullivan, who recently moved to Paris with her husband. “I do, however, love fine arts, which makes my proximity to Le Louvre and Musée d’Orsay very delightful indeed.”

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"BUTCHERS" ISSUE

FEEDBACK



→ CALLING THE DOCTOR

I am disappointed that the entire specialty of Allergy and Immunology was left out of your 2017 Top Doctors list. Training for Allergy and Immunology consists of four years of medical school, then three years of either Internal Medicine or Pediatrics followed by a two-year fellowship in Allergy and Immunology where we study in detail the workings

and disorders of the immune system in order to best care for our patients. Encouraging these patients to seek care from other specialists, by including them but not us, is a disservice to your readers. —JOHN SEYERLE, M.D. **Via e-mail**

Editor's Note: No disservice was done—the list of Top Doctors who practice in the Allergy and Immunology field appeared on page 66 of our January 2017 issue, and is online at our website.

→ MEDICAL MARVELS

Our Top Doctors issue is now entirely online, and the reception has been encouraging. On Facebook, Meredith McClain declared, "I spy a few gems here! Honored to have the care of Blake Smith, James Cranley, Jennifer Lobert, and Patrick Muck!" Medical stories from the issue have earned their fair share of attention as well. Facebook user Laura Whited Feldt commented on "Go Team," which detailed the efforts of TriHealth Cancer Institute physicians to treat Debra Hogsten's pancreatic cancer: "Thank you Alyssa Brandt and Cincinnati Magazine for this article. Pancreatic cancer needs to be talked about so we can hopefully have more outcomes like Debra's."

→ THAT'S GOOD EATIN'

Joanne Drilling's "Ode on a West Side Diner" (November) caught fans' eyes online. Facebook follower Jay Hardin let us know that he "Ate there [Santorini] almost every weekend for breakfast when we lived in Cheviot."

We recently shared Amy Brownlee's CincinnatiMagazine.com story "Behind the Scenes at the Graeter's Ice Cream Factory" on Facebook. Peggy Duffy Gallagher let us know that Graeter's is, "One of our absolute favorite places to visit in Cincinnati!" Darrell Holt simply noted, "Very cool," which we're choosing to interpret as commentary on both the story and the factory's typical temperature.

→ LET'S TALK ABOUT METZ, BABY

In January, Pete Metz spoke with Cedric Rose about the Brent Spence Bridge, Red Bike, and building a regional transportation system ("Ride Along"). When the story made its way to Facebook, Scott Ponder noticed our illustrator's hard work. "This illustration

is so good," Ponder said. "I was thumbing through, and stopped because it looked like Pete... and it was!" The story also gifted us Jim Belmont's witticism "Has the city thought about building a streetcar?"

→ OUR TOWN

Last October, in the Radar "Fall Travel Guide," Amanda Boyd Walters gave us a glimpse of all that Waynesville, Ohio, has to offer. That story recently became a topic of attention on Facebook, where readers chimed in to share their favorite memories about the town. Valerie Wheeler noted, "there are so many fun stores to explore!" while Jack Riley posted, "I bought most of my furniture there and still love it to this day." Frank Downie, who has attended the sauerkraut festival in Waynesville for many years, said: "It is indeed an interesting little burg. This article does it justice, but visiting brings it to life."

→ A PLEASANT THROWBACK

When we re-shared our story from November 2015 breaking down why Pleasant Ridge was one of the "next hot neighborhoods," people who lived in and loved the area were quick to respond. "Good value, lots of neat places, and a great neighborhood school," commented Suzi Ensminger on Facebook. Rose Jones Baker seconded that emotion: "Great neighborhood! Raised my daughters there." Erin Harper, who is much cooler than us, posted, "Next? It's been hot for a while..."

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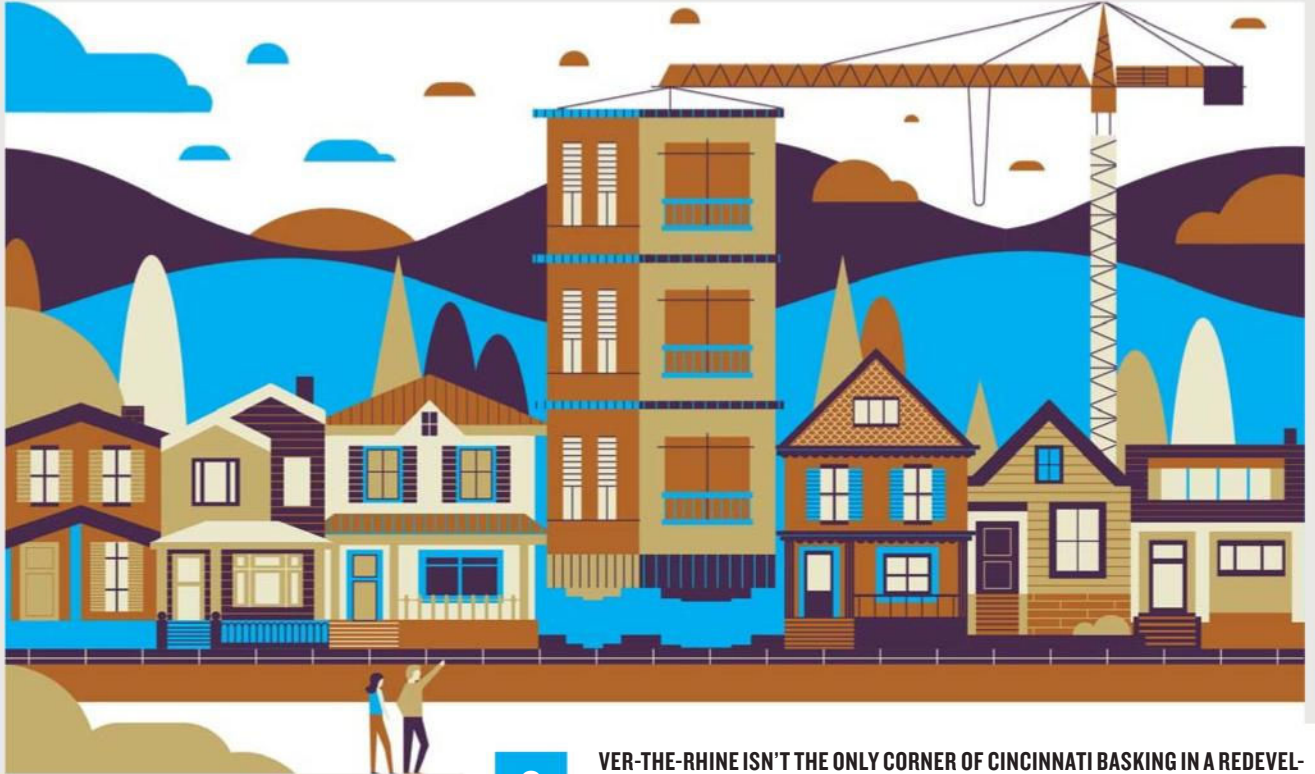
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FRONT LINES

A SAUSAGE QUEEN SPEAKS P. 24 ● CONSTELLA FESTIVAL P. 26 ● IN THE DARKROOM P. 28 ● POWEL CROSLY'S STATION WAGON P. 30



HOME IS WHERE YOU MAKE IT

The growing trend of luxury infill developments is changing the face of the city's hottest neighborhoods—whether they like it or not. → LISA MURTHA

0

VER-THE-RHINE ISN'T THE ONLY CORNER OF CINCINNATI BASKING IN A REDEVELOPMENT renaissance. The walkable, business-lined squares of first-ring east side neighborhoods like Mt. Lookout, Oakley, and East Walnut Hills have been en vogue for some time now, but as available housing stock has dwindled, interest has remained steady. Fueled by baby boomers looking to right-size and millennials with growing pockets, the demand has triggered a surge in the supply of “luxury infill developments”—real estate developers and investors wedging brand-new high-end homes among a neighborhood’s more established (read: older) abodes.

Take Hyde Park’s Grandin View, a 16-acre development at the confluence of Grandin and Edwards. It includes two historic homes (the former Corbett and Barrett estates) and 12 half-acre-plus single-family lots. In a neighborhood that’s been pretty much built-out since modernists Carl Strauss and Ray Roush tackled its hillsides in the 1960s, the development is distinct because it involves no teardowns, instead making use of never-developed land. The plan was implemented by Grandin View LLC, which already held the Barrett family’s 1906 limestone castle-style house and the accompanying 12 acres when it purchased the neighboring estate of late philanthropist Patricia Corbett in 2015, a sprawling Frank Lloyd Wright protégé—designed ranch sitting on six acres.

“John [Barrett]’s father’s idea was always to develop the property so others could enjoy the beautiful setting,” says Julie K. Back, the Sibcy Cline agent who holds listings on all 12 parcels and both estates. At press time, the Corbett home’s sale was pending (asking price: \$2.6 million); seven of the 12 → **CONTINUED ON P. 24**

lots, ranging from \$525,000 to \$900,000, were also under contract. (To be clear, those amounts don't include the cost of building a home; the buyers are simply paying for the land.) "We're in A-plus territory," says Back. "River views, woods, and the best neighborhood in the city."

Hyde Park is hardly alone. Five new single-family homes and townhomes on Cleinview Avenue in East Walnut Hills, just a couple of blocks from DeSales Corner, are priced between \$475,000 and \$637,677; and the "2940 At The Square" development is well underway on Markbreit Avenue at the edge of Oakley Square, with two of the four forthcoming single-family townhomes already active on the market for just shy of \$700,000.

The allure of these structures is obvious—a brand-new house, without the hassles of renovation—but it's not all cork-popping and tax abatements. Infill development can become contentious, in part because of the inherent noise and traffic the construction requires, but also because of the aesthetic impact. "There's some possibility that what goes up is not going to be consistent, especially stylistically, with what was up before," says Andy Scarpitti, a Hyde Park resident and president of the neighborhood council. Even more concerning to neighbors, he says, are developments where one older, preexisting house is torn down and replaced with multiple new ones, which happened last May with a 91-year-old Mt. Look-out home on Herschel Avenue near Kilgour School. "Not only are you losing character," says Scarpitti, "you're starting to stress the infrastructure and changing the dynamic of the community itself."

Increased stress on existing infrastructure is arguably the biggest (and least-discussed) issue with infill development. Douglas Hinger, president of Traditions Building Group, which is handling the Cleinview Avenue project, says the city's sewer system is basically "from the 1800s," evidenced by many a flooded basement → **CONTINUED ON P. 26**



Business Expense
Other neighborhoods are hoping revitalized business districts will entice home buyers. Westwood is working to renovate its town hall area with city funds, and Silverton has signed on for a nearly \$50 million mixed use redevelopment project.



SPEAK EASY

ROYAL LINKAGE

► Of all the wonderfully weird rituals of Bockfest, the Sausage Queen coronation is the crown jewel. Before she helps lead the parade and anoint her successor at the festival's 25th anniversary celebration this month, 2016 Queen **Rachel Appenfeller** reflects on her reign.

How did you get involved? *I had been going to Bockfest for a long time—I'm German, so it's the natural thing to do. I'd always watched the finals and thought it looked so fun, so I finally decided, I'm doing it, I'm winning this thing.*

Were you attached to a specific bar for the preliminaries? *Not at first. I tried out at Washington Platform. Didn't win. Tried out at Rhinehaus, same thing. So I went to Milton's. I'm a room mom, so I made gift bags for each of the judges, because I have no shame—balloons, bubbles, candy, pint glasses with a sticker*

→ **CONTINUED ON P. 26**

BODY & MIND

MAT TRICK

Dark Asana Yoga gives your tree pose a bit more metal. —ALYSSA KONERMANN

YOGA IS GOOD. But yoga in the dark with candles, light incense, and heavy music is even better. This is what you and your mat will be welcomed with at Dark Asana Yoga. Melissa Matz, who initiated the program, is a fan of metal music. "That's what makes me calm," she says, adding, "I've always wanted to do yoga, but never felt like I would fit in, really." So she took matters into her own hands. She found an instructor, Lisa Snowden; Wave Pool art center in Camp Washington offered her space for free; and classes kicked off last February.

It's a 90-minute Vinyasa class, suitable for beginners and those with more experience.

The darkness and the music—we're talking space doom; black, stoner, and atmospheric metal; drone, noise, and ambient—drown out distractions and make the whole thing deeply meditative. "Not everyone can relate to it, but [metal] really has the ability to connect us to body awareness, to feel these vibrations of the music moving in our bodies," says Snowden. "It's a first step to mindfulness. Those vibrations are subtle, but they become distinct. It becomes a nice break from the daily chitchat of the mind."

To partake, enter through Wave Pool's side door, drop some dollars in the donation tin (\$5 suggested), and go with the flow.



→ SCHEDULE VARIES, CHECK THE CINCINNATI DARK ASANA YOGA FACEBOOK PAGE FOR CLASSES

LIFE & TIMES

AS THE WORLD TURNS
BY JASON COHEN

MICK CRONIN

LAST YEAR
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IN VEGAS

THIS YEAR
SWEET 16 PICK
IN VEGAS

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→ after last August's hundred-year rain storm. The Grandin View Development has its own, brand-new sewer system, and the city asked Hinger to install a new section to the water main in a previous O'Bryonville development he worked on—but eventually, the new line will always tie back into the over-taxed, outdated, existing one.

Hinger, for one, says he's pleased overall with the way the city operates and has grown its zoning and planning departments, but Scarpitti worries that city officials too often allow new developments to cut corners. "There is a zoning code and it's not always followed," says Scarpitti, who's seen questionable "waivers and variances issued" on infill projects thanks to the persistence and clout of some developers' attorneys. "Those are what we're most concerned about," he notes, "because once the exception is made, it is frequently cited as precedent to make future changes."

The changes are likely to continue, warts and all. Real estate markets are still driven by the same tried-and-true adage—"location, location, location," says Back—and right now, it's those established, walkable, city-adjacent neighborhoods that are in high demand. The home you're looking for may not be there, but if you're willing to pay for it, someone will find a way to build it. ☺



CORNER SHOT To those of a certain age, "I saw the sign" carries special meaning. To those of any age, so does the magic of the American Sign Museum. Rest assured: These signs will also open up your eyes. With neon. *Monmouth Avenue, Camp Washington - A. K.*

↓
of me on it. I was the hostess with the most-est. And I won.

What was your plan for the finals? Fun. All the time. You get to be in the parade—I practiced my wave longer than my dance routine. I cannot dance or sing, and that was my talent. There were confetti cannons and outfit changes. You ever see the *Friends* episode when Joey puts on all of Chandler's clothes? That's what I felt like. Finished with the lederhosen—my lady-hosen, as I called it.

How did you react when you won? I pulled the *Legally Blonde* "Me!" move and then just started hugging and kissing random people.

What perks are bequeathed to the Sausage Queen? I made so many lifelong friends, especially in the German community. And getting involved with things like Cincideutsch—I got to volunteer at Christkindlmarkt on Fountain Square. I'm going to be sworn into Germania Society of Cincinnati...

Was there a prize? Yup, \$250 in cash. And because Hustler sponsored it, you get a Hustler gift card—I was like, *Hmm, OK, that's a lot of body lotion.* But [winning] opens doors to a lot of activities. That's the best part. And it's fun. We'll go to Kroger, and my 4-year-old, she'll scream out, "Look mommy, sausage! You're the sausage queen!" We're loud people.

Once a Sausage Queen always a Sausage Queen, right? Always. I'm not giving that crown back, my friend.

—JUSTIN WILLIAMS

MUSIC

NEW WAVE

Classical music is cool. That's what the organizers of Constella Festival hope to convey through their week-long music, fine arts, and dance festival this month. "Our goal is to challenge misconceptions that classical music and fine arts are for an older, more sophisticated audience," says Evan Sikes, director of operations at Constella Arts. How do they do it? Loads of variety, hip venues, and (yes!) affordable tickets. —MICHELLE SULLIVAN



MARCH 18

Everybody Loves Opera
In the acoustically immaculate Covenant First Presbyterian Church, soprano Jessica Rivera and tenor Scott Wyatt will perform an original set as well as crowd favorites from operas *The Magic Flute* and *La Bohème*.



MARCH 23

From Russia With Love
Constella founder and violinist Tatiana Berman will perform against the backdrop of intense, poetic video vignettes that tell "a compelling story of the historically rocky relationship between America and Russia," Berman says. A fine arts exhibition will follow the performance.



MARCH 25

Duo Scofano/Minetti featuring Tatiana Berman and Jeff Greene
Expect Argentinian music and high energy at the festival's finale at Gallery 708. Stick around after the concert for a traditional *milonga*—food, drinks, and tango dancing late into the night.



MARCH 9

Cincy
This year's festival kicks off at 21c Museum Hotel with the premiere of *Cincy*, a 15-minute documentary film by Maestro director David Donnelly that explores Cincinnati's cultural renaissance, past and present.



MARCH 19

Piano 2.0: Melding of Man & Machine
What happens when you mix a pianist, artificial intelligence, and cocktails? Dan Tepfer's mind-blowing performance at New Riff Distillery, where he'll improvise against his own instrument, which will respond in real time with its own compositions.



MARCH 24

Luminous Dance
Dance, music, and lasers collide in this performance featuring artists from the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, MamLuft&Co., and Constella's own ensemble at The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center.

PHOTOGRAPH BY LUANNE DEMEO

PHOTOGRAPHS: (JESSICA RIVERA) BY SHAWN FLINT BLAIR / (DAN TEPPER) BY JOSH GOLEMAN / ALL OTHERS COURTESY ARTIST/CONSTELLA FESTIVAL



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GOOD CHEMISTRY

Get back to the business of film at Manifest Drawing Center's community darkroom. —ALYSSA KONERMANN

→ Photography, as you may recall in the pre-Instagram, pre-selfie recesses of your brain, is a fine art. And once upon a time, there was mystery involved.

Light made its mark on the film, but there was no knowing what had been produced until chemical processes made the image appear. Which explains why the word *magic* keeps coming up talking to the minds behind Manifest Drawing Center's darkroom, which opened in Madisonville in November.

The darkroom got its start four years ago when photographer Michael Wilson approached Jason Franz, the founding executive director of Manifest Gallery, with the idea. Wilson had inherited six enlargers as darkrooms were shutting down and wanted them to have a next life. Franz

was immediately on board. He'd always taught drawing not just as a way to make a picture, but as a means of learning to see. "I thought photography was similar as a process, and wanted to see the two explored in parallel," he says. Two years later, the Drawing Center had grown enough to require a dedicated staffer. They nabbed Kate Cunningham (above) for the role, who conveniently holds multiple photography degrees. Things began to roll on the darkroom.

In addition to open lab four nights each week, there will be introductory and intermediate classes, plus visiting artists. The Drawing

Center's setup allows for what Cunningham calls horizontal learning—a community develops and mutual instruction naturally occurs. They're also running a 16-week course for high school students, a pilot project for the Ohio Arts Council and Ohio Civil Rights Commission, "using photography as a form of social—or personal—voice," says Cunningham.

But why invest in an analog technology? "Why draw with graphite and charcoal?" says Franz. "The analog [does something] to the artist. It involves time and your body in ways that digital divorces people from." Besides: You get an actual *object*.

MUSEUMS

GAME ON

► Gallery Games, a year-long collaboration between Cincinnati Art Museum and 21c Museum Hotel, is looking to make your night at the museum a bit more exciting. With happy hour drinks, for one, but also with competitive (but casual) games and prizes. There's been trivia, cornhole-meets-film-screening, and a murder mystery. Here's what's up next. —A. K.



#CINCINNATIARTMEMES

March 16, 21c

→ It's the best of the internet, IRL. Make your own art memes and vote on the winner.



MINDFUL MAKERS

April 20, CAM

→ Popped Art Gallery (a 1963 rainbow caravan camper!) will cover a gallery with Post-Its, then turn them into a sculpture. You will help, and make art with found materials (e.g., old ticket stubs).



ART-SPEAK SPELLING BEE

May 18, 21c

→ Museum texts and art literature can use some... specialized language. See if you can spell it. You don't even have to pretend to know what the words mean.

BOOKS

BEHOLD YOUR TONGUE

Think you don't have an accent? Think again. —RJ SMITH

G OETTA," SAYS EDWARD McCLELLAND, his mouth savoring the word. "I've heard people say Jeezle Pete! But goetta—I've never heard anybody say it outside of Cincinnati." In *How to Speak Midwestern* (Belt Publishing), McClelland, a Michigander, looks at how Midwesterners sound—as well as various accents and the way they express themselves—and shows that strong regional distinctions prevail even today. Ohio is central: McClelland holds up Governor John Kasich as an example of what linguists call the Midland accent. Kasich refers to his "fawther" "Big Jawn," yet most listeners think the guy has no accent at all. The Midland accent, via quirks of history, came to be seen as the great American average. "His is the least othered of Midwestern accents," says McClelland.

He also scrutinizes what we say—for instance, how outsiders can be confounded by whether a Midwesterner is giving a compliment or an insult. "I noticed that when I saw a clip of Betsy DeVos, from Michigan, at her hearing to be Secretary of Education. Bernie Sanders asked what she thought of his plan guaranteeing a free college education, and she said 'That's a really interesting idea.' When a Midwesterner says your idea is interesting, it's DOA."

How to Speak Midwestern breaks down *devil's strip*, the Cincinnati *please*?, and much more. It's supremely interesting—in the non-Midwestern sense.



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TOMORROWLAND The Crosley Corporation also pioneered the use of shelving in refrigerator doors, and Crosley himself helped design an affordable portable radio. "In so many respects, Crosley was way ahead of his time," says David Conzett, Cincinnati Museum Center's curator of history objects and fine art.



MILES AHEAD Crosley's cars—which could go 36–50 miles per gallon—fell out of popularity in the late 1940s, and production halted in 1952 when gas was 20 cents per gallon.



WEIGH IN

The Super Station Wagon was not only affordable (it would cost about \$9,700 today), but also decidedly lightweight—at roughly 1,400 pounds, the car weighs half as much as a 2017 Honda Civic.

FRAME JOB The Museum Center acquired the car in 2000, but a lack of funds prevented its restoration until early 2016. Eventually, Madeira-based Chase Creek Restorations serviced the car into running condition; the frame, the four-cylinder engine, and the transmission proved to be the big fixes.

WARM WHEELS

The Crosley car has arrived at CVG.

—GRANT FREKING

Powel Crosley Jr. is perhaps best known locally as a long-time owner of the Reds and the founder of WLW, but he was also a technological trailblazer, particularly in the automobile industry. The Crosley Corporation produced a line of fuel-efficient vehicles that became popular during World War II due to gas rationing. Thanks to the Cincinnati Museum Center, airport visitors can now peek into one of Crosley's bygone creations—his personal 1951 Crosley Super Station Wagon—which will be on display in the baggage claim area through late 2018.

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Dr. Know is Jay Gilbert, weekday afternoon deejay on 92.5 FM The Fox. Submit your questions about the city's peculiarities at drknow@cincinnati-magazine.com



Q When I was a kid, my grandfather told me that his earliest memory was of a tornado in Hyde Park. He remembered taking a horse-drawn buggy ride the next day to look at the destroyed homes. Did Hyde Park really experience a tornado or was Pop getting his memories mixed up?

—TWISTERED MEMORY

→ DEAR TWISTERED:

Insert your own joke here about tornados and Hyde Park trailer parks. Yes, your grandfather's memory was accurate. One hundred years ago this month, stately Hyde Park did indeed experience the vulgarity, the insult to neighborhood propriety, the plain *rudeness* of a tornado.

The cyclone barged into the area on a Sunday evening, long after the civilized hours of Sunday afternoon deejay had concluded. Like a drunken commoner it trespassed through dozens of homes without so much as a calling card or thank you note. Thank goodness the tornado at least had the decency to conduct its business in Hyde Park first before moving on to (shudder) Eastern Avenue.

At his tender age, your grandfather was probably spared the details of deaths and injuries, and of worse devastation elsewhere. Recovering Hyde Parkers may have been consoled knowing that their neighborhood had the notoriety of enduring Cincinnati's very first confirmed tornado. Whether or not this "debut" deserves an entry in the Blue Book is still under consideration.

Why does the Marathon gas station at Euclid and Camargo in Indian Hill have insanely high prices? I know that isolated stations like this charge more, but we're talking 15 to 25 cents per gallon higher sometimes. Is it because it's in Indian Hill? —PETROL POUNDED

→ DEAR POUNDED:

Please see the previous item; we have reached our monthly quota of upscale smuggling. Regardless, that Marathon station sits on the border between the villages of Indian Hill and Madeira, and chooses to align itself with the latter.

On the day the Doctor checked local gas prices, this location did have the area's highest: 12 cents per gallon above the next-ranked one. It could be blamed partly on the value of the property, which officially is in Indian Hill. Another factor could be, as you suggest, that no competition is nearby. Maybe their strategy is the unusually plentiful selection of soft drinks; that pulls people in, and then, well, my tank is almost empty, so...

We should not assume that the Marathon clerk the Doctor spoke with lives far from Madeira or Indian Hill. Without doubt, numerous citizens from this afflu-

ent area wear Metallica T-shirts that haven't seen a washing machine for an indeterminate period. When asked about the glaring price anomaly, the clerk's eyes rolled. "I get this s*** all the time." Considering how often he gets this s***, one might expect that at some point he would have sought an answer to this s***, but it is possible that he finds a benefit in the exercise that eye-rolling provides. And really, the selection of pop is awesome.

You once wrote about *The Andy Griffith Show's* wall map of Mayberry—that it was really a map of Cincinnati. But you also stated, incorrectly, that the characters never looked at the map. Weren't you swamped with angry messages from people who have memorized every episode?

—CHANNELING BARNEY

→ DEAR CHANNELING:

Readers of this magazine apparently do not include the sub-species known as *Griffithus savantus*. At the Doctor's inbox, no servers were harmed. But in the interests of transparency and of protecting our brand from being labeled "lying media," let us now Return To Mayberry. At the same time, we shall also drop a bombshell.

Our column of December 2014 confirmed that during most seasons of *The Andy Griffith Show*, the map hanging behind Andy's desk was a modified 1951 Cincinnati map. But we erred in claiming that no character ever directly addressed the map. Indeed, in Season 4, Episode 7, both Andy and Barney stare at it intently; they're checking the route of a gold-filled armored truck that will soon pass through town.

Andy first points to an edge where the truck will enter their North Carolina county. (He's really in Hollywood staring at a map of Cincinnati, but hey, that's showbiz.) Then he points to Mayberry specifically. Drum roll, please: Mayberry is Burnet Woods! That's precisely where Andy's finger lands. Feel free to organize a scavenger hunt in Burnet Woods for the discarded shell of Barney's bullet. ☺

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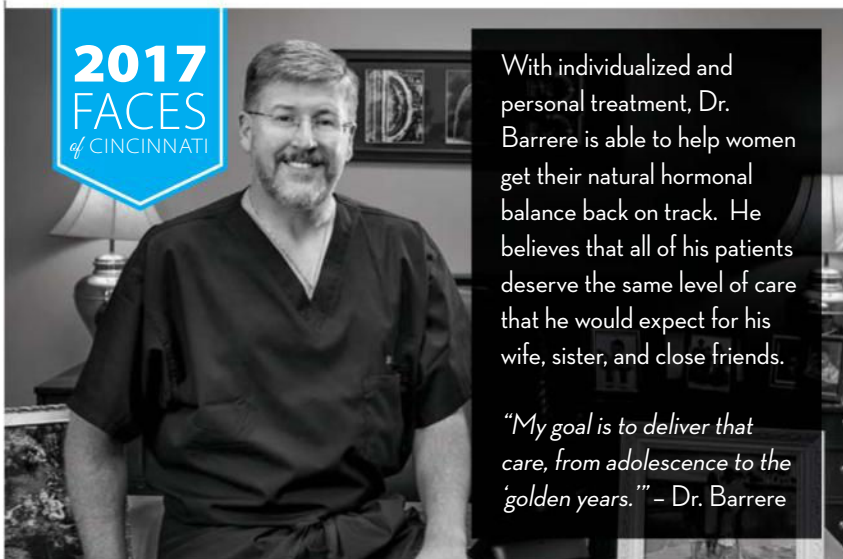


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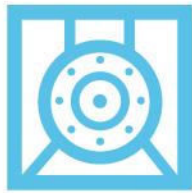
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A man in a plaid shirt and shorts stands on a wooden dock, fishing with a rod. The dock extends into a calm body of water that reflects the vibrant sunset sky, filled with orange and pink clouds. A dense line of trees forms the background.

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ROADAIR

STICK TO YOUR ROOTS P. 40 ● 19TH-CENTURY GLENDALE



COOL DOWN

Folding fans have a long history in Japanese culture, dating back as many as 1,500 years. According to Japanese legend, they were inspired by the sight of a bat's wing. This vintage model is hand-painted and made of paper. Vintage Japanese folding fan, \$12, HiBred, hibred.life

**FULL WINDSOR**

6 Ties shouldn't just be a fallback Father's Day gift. This silk tie was handprinted in England, with designs taken from the country's famed Killerton costume collection. Vintage National Trust silk necktie, \$30, HiBred, hibred.life

**SPRITZ IN STYLE**

5 Pour that perfume that's been sitting in your medicine cabinet since Christmas (thanks, Aunt Maggie) into this vintage porcelain vessel for a decidedly classy spray. Vintage porcelain perfume bottle, \$50, House of Dumas, houseofdumas.com

PUMPED UP KICKS

1 These high-top Vans, complete with suede uppers, seem to have more in common with Jordans than half-pipes. But they will make you reimagine how skate shoes are supposed to look. Vans SK8-Hi Desert Aloha. \$70, Unheard Of, unheardofbrand.com

PETAL TO THE METAL

PREP FOR SPRING BY PLANTING FLORAL PATTERNS INSIDE THE HOUSE.

TIME TO GOGH

2 While the 18-karat gold case and buckle may be standard, the design is anything but. It's based on an 1890 oil painting by Vincent van Gogh called *Irises*. Check the time and be mesmerized. Van Gogh *Irises* watch, \$60, Cincinnati Art Museum, cincinnatiartmuseum.com

**CIRCLE OF LIFE**

5 The glass mosaic tiles on top of the copper wire base of this end table form a mandala design. Loosely translated from Sanskrit, *mandala* means circle and symbolizes wholeness. Mosaic Top Table, \$250, Ten Thousand Villages, tenthousandvillages.com/cincinnati

**PILLOW TALK**

4 Peonies won't start to bloom for at least another month, but you can get a head start on the growing season with this silk pillow featuring the pink perennial. Designers Guild throw pillow, \$170, Dwellings on Madison, dwellingsonmadison.com





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Michael Vinegar

OCCUPATION: Chef, Gabriel's Place

HIS STYLE: Street Smart

What thought process goes into your style?

I'm not ready to give up the street side of me. That's very important to me, that's who I am. That's just as important as the professional side. They teach you don't judge a book by its cover. I was forcefully requiring the world to see me and judge me without the cover. You're not just going to one-line me and tell me "you've got to do this," like [one place] told me. They offered me a job, then they said I had to get my hair cut. I just left there, like *Nah, I'm not on that*.

How do you maintain your dreads?

Once a month you have to get them twisted. When I get them to retwist it, I'll wash them. Then I'll just shape up, taper the sides myself.

You're currently decked out in all blue. Do you fall in love with different colors at different times?

It depends. These shoes? They just require you to wear some blue. I do want to be stylish. You know, suave but edgy. Not preppy at all. I just try to represent myself, man, and be original.

Where do you find your clothes?

It's just like how I cook. What I got, I do something with it and try to make it look good. I haven't been shopping personally in years because I've got kids and I've got a wife. I'd rather have them look good.

Has being a dad affected your appearance?

Yes. I don't want to look like a kid no more. I already look young enough. That judge the book by its cover thing, I can't be so anal about that. I've got to understand that it's part of life. The world judges you all the time. I still wear a little street clothes, but I don't look like I'll rob you today. —ADAM FLANGO





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Japan, *Battle of Sekigahara* (detail), 19th century,
ink and color on paper, folding book, Gift of
Henrietta Haller, 1905.314

Japan, *Suit of Armor* (detail), 16th century and
18th century, metal, leather, Museum Purchase,
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NAME GAME

THIS 1854 GLENDALE HOME IS CALLED *ASHLEA*, BUT NO ONE KNOWS WHY. —LISA MURTHA

ARGUABLY THE MOST FAMOUS NAMED HOME EVER IS *Tara*, from Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With The Wind*. One past owner of this Glendale home thought it special enough to be named, too; a bronze plaque on the back porch says it's called *Ashlea*.

The name's significance, or even when it was bestowed, are both mysteries (don't think we haven't considered Scarlett O'Hara's love interest as inspiration), but the nearly 4,600-square-foot home itself has more transparent beginnings. It was constructed in 1854 by George Crawford, the man who'd become Glendale's first mayor in 1855. Crawford built the home for a banker, H. W. Hughes, who was also an elder at the First Presbyterian Church of Glendale.

The nearly two-acre property sits directly across from a railroad line; this was likely a plus in Hughes's day, when businessmen often commuted to work by train, notes Cincinnati Preservation Association's Margo Warminski. Inside, 12-foot ceilings, door-

sized windows, and original white marble fireplace surrounds offer a peek into the Hughes family's late 1800s domestic life.

Per that same plaque by the back door, a couple named Frank and Ruth Miller later owned the place for over five decades. Whoever buys it next will be only the fifth owner in the home's 162 years. In addition to updates like a gourmet kitchen and adjacent family room, the home has undergone at least two major changes since its construction: at some point the original front porch, which spanned the entire width of the main structure, was replaced with a smaller port-cochere-style entry; and in 1999 a pool was installed out back. Most future exterior renovations will need approval by the CPA, which has held a preservation easement on the property since 1977 —right around the time, says Warminski, that Glendale was designated a National Historic Landmark district.

BLOCK PARTY

MORE GLENDALE HOUSES FOR SALE



55 FOUNTAIN AVE.
\$1,499,000

1 The master suite in this 1908 Tudor mansion has a spiral staircase leading up to a third level bonus room. All told, there are five bedrooms, five full baths, and two half baths.



11 ALBION LANE
\$600,000

2 Take the curved drive to the dramatic entry of this ranch, and you'll step into a three-bedroom, three-bath gem. There are hardwood floors throughout, an updated kitchen, and a pool.



1 MATTHEWS COURT
\$390,000

3 You can't beat a wrap-around porch, especially when the house it's attached to sits on a double lot. The updated kitchen sports a skylight, making the space especially sunny.



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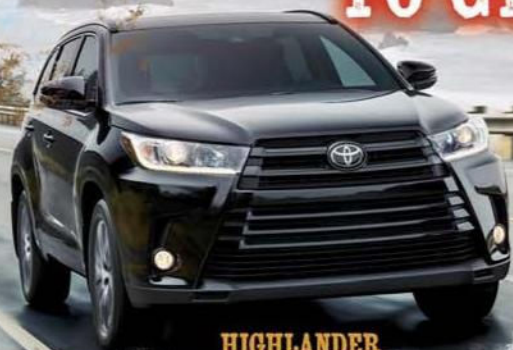


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—ALYSSA BRANDT



→ Warning, Francophiles: Once you step inside The French Rendezvous, you may never want to leave. Owners Sylvain and Ann Acher have filled this *petit* house on Madison Road with a personally curated selection of French home goods, including antiques, Provençal style fabrics, and graphic tea towels.

Originally from Paris, Sylvain moved to the United States 30 years ago to be with Ann (who is American) and settled in Cincinnati. His pre-retail life is as surprising as his store. A musician and jazz guitarist, Sylvain quickly found himself busy composing music for television commercials, corporate films, local newscasts, and even soap operas (*Another World* fans of a certain age may remember the theme he created for the villainous character Carl Hutchins). “Channel 9 called me out of the blue,” recalls Sylvain, inside a sunny room lined with tablecloths in cheery prints. “The CEO called me directly and said he wanted me to write the music for [the five o’clock news].”

Music, it turns out, was an integral part of creating the shop. After volunteering to stage a series of music, art, and food events called Sensory Sundays for the city of Montgomery, Sylvain opened The French Rendezvous in downtown Montgomery in 2000. The store specialized in antiques, gradually adding linens and other French goods as customers asked for them, all the while



ensuring the shop hews closely to his own point of view. “These are exactly the same as when I was a child,” says Sylvain, pointing to a package of LU brand strawberry filled biscuits. When the building in Montgomery was sold in 2011, he found a nearly 140-year-old Madisonville house in foreclosure and bought it on the spot. “It just felt right,” says Sylvain, who spent several months renovating the space.

Inside, you’ll find blocks of original Savon de Marseille olive oil soap, Panier des Sens hand cream, and Carte Noire coffee, as well as Sylvain’s own original paintings and wire sculptures. He recently brought in glassware from La Rochere, the



iconic French glassware company (known for its bee symbol) that has been in operation since 1475. Over the years, ceramic cicadas, a symbol of welcome, relaxation, and enjoyment in Provence, have become a surprisingly popular item. “Most people here are freaked out by cicadas,” says Sylvain. “In the south of France, [their sound] is part of the vacation. It’s soothing, like good wine and good food.” Sylvain aims for the same at his shop, no passport required.

THE FRENCH RENDEZVOUS,
6124 MADISON RD., MADISONVILLE, (513) 561-0272,
FRENCHRENDEZVOUS.COM



GOOD TO KNOW

The French Rendezvous also has fresh brewed coffee and tea, as well as croissants and baguettes baked on site daily. Enjoy them *en plein aire* in the shop’s charming backyard garden.

Catch Up with Friends



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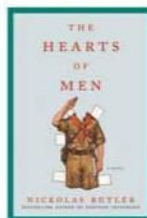
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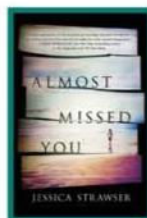
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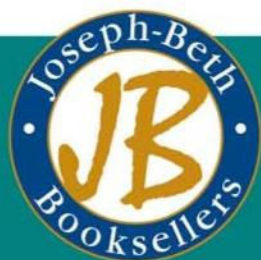
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AUSTIN, TEXAS

A CONFLUENCE OF OLD AND NEW WORLDS IN THE LONE STAR STATE CAPITAL. —ADAM FLANGO

→ If you're reading this, expecting to make your way down to Austin for South by Southwest this year, you're too late. The annual festival—featuring the latest in music, tech, film, and comedy—engulfs the city for 10 days in March, making booking a room an exercise in futility. Luckily, Austin's appeal extends far beyond the SXSW horde.

Home to the University of Texas, Austin has long held a reputation as something of a liberal, free-thinking outlier in a gun-totin', red-blooded state. The saying "Keep Austin Weird" harkens back to a time when dem-

onstrators marched on the state capitol to protest the Vietnam War and musicians cranked out tunes in a cloud of (ahem) smoke. As surrounding towns maintained a conservative identity, the seat of Travis County held true to its own sensibility. To paraphrase favorite son Matthew McConaughey's character in the Austin-set film *Dazed and Confused*, Texas kept getting older, but Austin stayed the same age. That mindset has begun to shift in the past two decades, but when I visited, it seemed that both old and new Austin have found a way to peacefully coexist.

That weird spirit that longtime residents hold dear still hovers over the city, as evidenced by the music festival—there always seems to be one—I stumbled upon where I spotted a grown man wearing a tutu at an armadillo petting pen. The old country saloons outsiders envision when they think of a Texas watering hole still exist as well. To understand that vibe, visit the Broken Spoke, a lively honky tonk that's been around for more than 50 years and hosted a panoply of country greats—George Strait, Roy Acuff, George Jones, Dolly Parton, and of course, Willie Nelson.

But Austin has experienced an influx of youth and cash brought on by the rise of tech industries, adding a hip, modern feel to the funky city. A walk down South Congress Avenue shows the melding of the two worlds. Penniless guitar players croon outside of taco trucks, Italian cafés, and local staple Amy's Ice Creams, while stylish twentysomethings bounce between boutiques and used bookstores. And everyone is wearing cowboy boots. If you want to fit in, stop by Allens Boots, even if you can't afford the \$1,000 Luccheses.

Where hipsters go, artisanal, hand-crafted restaurants, food trucks, and brunch spots follow, with menus ranging from Tex-Mex to modern Japanese. Once you dip into the barbecue vortex, though, it's hard to escape. Texas has a rich history of smoking meat and a handful of well-established pits still hold up, but the next generation of smokers has perfected the form. Whether



← **HOOK 'EM**
1. The Colorado River runs through Austin; 2. Cowboy up at Allens Boots; 3. Try everything at Franklin Barbecue.

you find yourself salivating over the femur-sized beef rib and lemon-infused coleslaw at Micklethwait Craft Meats, the smoked sausage and pulled pork at La Barbecue, or the brisket at Freedmen's, it's all part of a meat-sweat-and-food-coma-inducing wonderland.

The crown jewel, though, is Franklin Barbecue. The lines are notoriously long, so my girlfriend and I came prepared with a blanket, empty travel mugs, and bottles of champagne and orange juice, then set up shop alongside dozens of our fellow carnivores in the parking lot at 10 a.m. on a Tuesday for a restaurant that doesn't start serving until 11 a.m. We made it inside by noon, where its bare bones, old-school feel

belies the fact that it's only five years young. At 12:30, we reached the counter, where we dropped close to \$100 on some of everything. Despite anticipating the best brisket in the world, that fatty slab and everything else piled on our cerulean trays somehow exceeded all expectations. Like many new Austin establishments, Franklin improved on something that many places did well, while paying respect to Texas's history.

- 📍 [Broken Spoke](#)
brokenspokeaustintx.net
- 📍 [Allens Boots](#)
allensboots.com
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TRAVEL TIP

LYFT OFF

Navigating life without ride share apps. —ADAM FLANGO

GETTING TO AUSTIN IS THE EASY PART. ALLEGiant OFFERS ROUNDTRIP FLIGHTS FOR LESS THAN \$300 that depart on Thursdays and Sundays, making long weekend planning a cinch. Once you arrive, finding your way around town is a bit more complicated. Ride sharing apps Uber and Lyft, while ubiquitous in most major cities, no longer operate in Austin. Voters nixed a measure that would have kept the apps in service in May, so staying downtown, where taxis still run, albeit not as conveniently, will make your trip more manageable. The good news is that the city is more walkable than you'd expect, and frequent Red Bike users in Cincy can use Austin's identical service—it's called B-cycle—to ride bike paths weaving in and out of the city.





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15 MINUTES



TOP DOCTORS RECEPTION

Cincinnati Magazine and the Sharonville Convention Center welcomed the 2017 class of Top Doctors to the Center's Northern Lights Ballroom. Event sponsors included Apex Eye and Westrock Coffee. And Voltage created an eye-catching "waiting room" for guests.

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF **PAULA NORTON**

PICTURED: **1** Dr. Louis B. Louis, IV and Amanda Louis **2** Drs. Jilda and Brian Adams **3** SPECTRA Food Services and Hospitality catered the reception **4** Apex Eye's Wendy Shoger and Angela Yocum **5** *Cincinnati Magazine*'s Ashley Hinzman, Matt Reis and Publisher Ivy Bayer **6** Dr. Shalini Gupta, January cover doctor Dr. Manish Bhandari and Milan Bhandari **7** Apex Eye's Jill Niehaus, Dr. Karen Klugo and Melissa Wood **8** Dr. Matthew Hensler and Dr. Shyam Allamaneni **9** Amy Andrews, Dr. Holly Gunn and Stephen Gunn **10** Furniture vignette from Voltage **11** Dr. Shaimaa Garaween and Dr. Mohamed Dahman

15 MINUTES



8TH ANNUAL SWEET VICTORY

300 guests ate their way through Sweet Victory, sampling chocolate bread pudding and brownie sundaes to chocolate-covered blueberries and coconut cupcakes. The event was held at the Cooper Creek Event Center. In the cake decorating competition, 3 Sweet Girls Cakery continued their winning streak and took home the Top Tier prize. Gigi's Cupcakes won Top Taste and Vonderhaar's was awarded Top Design.

Sweet Victory sponsors: Betty Crocker Dessert Decorating Products, Cool Whip/Jell-O Simply Good/Philadelphia Cream Cheese, Cooper Creek, Duncan Hines, Essential Goodness/King Arthur Flour, FigLeaf Brewing Company, Ghirardelli, Harry and David, Kitchen Basics, MALK, Nestle, Pillsbury/Smucker's, Thai Kitchen, UDF Homemade Brand Ice Cream and Westrock Coffee.

Dessert and beverage stations hosted by: 3 Sweet Girls Cakery, Betty Crocker Dessert Decorating Products, Cool Whip/Jell-O Simply Good/Philadelphia Cream Cheese, Cooper Creek, Duncan Hines, Essential Goodness/King Arthur Flour, FigLeaf Brewing Company, Gigi's Cupcakes, Ghirardelli, Harry and David, Holtman's Donuts, Kitchen Basics, MALK, Marty's Waffles, Nanny Belle's, Nestle, Nothing Bundt Cakes, Pillsbury/Smucker's, Sunshine Caramels, Thai Kitchen, Tres Belle Cakes, Trix & Treats Sweets, UDF Homemade Brand Ice Cream, Westrock Coffee and Wyoming Pastry Shop.

PICTURED: 1 Sherri Lanter and Terri Goss 2 Cake decorating competition judges: Rachel McAtee, Melissa Paprocki, Leanna Creager, Kim Collins and Dawn Ritzu 3 Amber Ruehlman decorates her Top Design-winning cake 4 Treats from Nanny Belle's 5 Ashley Hinzman, Tammy Vilaboy and Andrew Allgeyer 6 Bundtins from Nothing Bundt Cakes 7 Andrew Legg, Dan Brigadoi and Brad Horn 8 Another happy Sweet Victory guest! 9 Cookies created with Betty Crocker Dessert Decorating products 10 The team from Gigi's Cupcakes 11 Jinjing Zhao and Angel Colon 12 Leanna Creager and the Top Tier winning team from 3 Sweet Girls Cakery

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF
LUANNE DEMEO AND PAULA NORTON



Crystal Visions

FOR 30 YEARS, TIM GOLDSMITH HAS EXHIBITED AN EYE FOR THE FINER THINGS.

ON A FRIDAY MORNING IN LATE NOVEMBER, TIM GOLDSMITH, CINCINNATI'S FOREMOST purveyor of fine china, is explaining to a woman who looks to be in her late twenties why a certain bowl might be a wise choice for her bridal registry. "You could do soup with it," he says, "or a risotto with wild mushrooms or a poached apple with crème fraîche . . . but probably not spaghetti and meatballs." Then, noting the gold etching around the bowl's rim, and holding up another that is plain, he shows how each looks with a plate she has already chosen, and observes: "With the gold, it's a better match. I don't know why the gold makes such a difference, but it does."

It's a good bet that Goldsmith knows exactly why the gold makes such a difference. His

business, ostensibly the sale of exquisite, high-end household accessories, is really the transfer of taste: his to his customers. Everything in his shop reflects his sharply honed eye—the place settings, the flat silver, the crystal, candlesticks, wine carafes, serving dishes, salad bowls, casseroles in rattan baskets, lacquered trays, ice buckets, vases, Herend figurines. They say: *You, too, can live like this if only you can summon the will—the courage—to insist on not settling for less.* "For people to acquire these things," he suggests, "there are two requirements. One, you can afford it. And two, you come to a point in your life where you care about it." In Goldsmith's view, there is scant difference between buying a 7 series BMW and a \$20,000 set of china. "Many people treat themselves to the car. Yet many of those same persons would see the place settings

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BACKSTORY

as utter extravagance. They cannot get comfortable with investing their emotions in what they put on the dinner table. It's not something they care about."

The bride Goldsmith is dealing with this morning cares. She has browsed the store's website, and she has a good sense of what design patterns might work for her. Early on she says she likes blue. Goldsmith responds, "Why don't I orient you to the store and see where your eye lands?" His voice, one of his defining characteristics, is soft, steady, and reassuring. With every syllable articulated, his delivery is perfectly calibrated to move a listener to a conclusion she didn't know she was ready to reach.

Now, he sets before her a couple of blue and white plates. "They have very different feels," he says. "In this one, they've left the brush strokes visible; it's slightly more contemporary. We've got other blues, but I want to show you a blue that I believe will work for you." He pulls out another plate, then immediately undercuts its appeal by

saying it would be better as a charger (a large plate cradling the actual dinner plate in a formal setting). "Now that I've downplayed it," he says, "you'll be embarrassed to say it's your first choice." And finally: "Here's the darker version. They are popular, but it isn't something I'd encourage."

In a Crate & Barrel world, Goldsmith Cardel, which recently relocated to Hyde Park Square, is an anomaly. It sells only beautiful things, and personalizes the process to an extent nearly extinct in contemporary retail culture. "I'll give you a little sales pitch," Goldsmith says to a customer, "but you need to look. You need to mix and match." He giftwraps, he delivers (personally), and he dresses as thoughtfully as he edits his inventory. Typical: a dark cashmere blazer over a blue striped shirt (with cufflinks), a dark paisley tie, charcoal flannel pants with cuffs just touching buttery black leather shoes. Goldsmith, who is tall and dinner-plate thin, has large eyes in a face of mostly small fea-

tures, with pale skin and close-cropped hair. He explains his sartorial choices: "I don't want to intimidate a younger person, but still, there's something nice about separating yourself from your customer."

→ **FULL DISCLOSURE: GOLDSMITH, WHO IS 64 and about seven years younger than I, is my step-cousin. For much of our lives, we saw nothing of one another. I did not know, for example, that he had obtained both undergraduate and graduate training at a combination of Boston University, Parsons School of Design, and DAAP at the University of Cincinnati, from which he was graduated in 1976.**

Since returning to Cincinnati myself, I have caught up with him, and in doing so, come to understand that the way Tim presents is not only unique, it is a civic asset. Example: He strides across the store and retrieves a smallish white dish with scalloped edges and pale yellow trim; its sides are a subtle basket weave and across its sur-



face are finely etched butterflies and leaves, all in yellow. "It's just a dumb little dish," he says, "and yet, it's exuberant, lively, beautifully shaped. Can't you see it for serving candy or nuts? I get them from Europe—I don't sell a lot—but these are life's little treats, and they can go by the wayside very quickly." Listening to him, I am seduced. Suddenly, I *want* this dish! It would have no place in our home, my wife would think I'd lost my mind, but still... I see its merit. I want it!

Many customers are no different. Polly Culp, a Hyde Park resident who has shopped at Goldsmith's since her children and their friends started getting married, has her own take. "Have you ever read *The Spoils of Poynton* by Henry James?" she asks. "Tim reminds me of Owen Gereth, the lead character, whose mother's appreciation of the fine things she has collected is so vividly drawn. What's so wonderful about Tim is he knows the artists who create the things he sells. His imagination is such that then,

in talking with you, he conjures the lovely table settings or beautiful things as they might look in your house. It is such a gift."

Betsy Everingham, another of his longtime customers, puts it only slightly differently: "He is such a pleasure to talk to. He has such a passion, and he is so knowledgeable about his merchandise. He has great taste, and he carries unique things. Plus, they're always wrapped beautifully. You're excited when you get a box from Goldsmith Cardel. You know it will be something good."

→ **FROM HIS EARLIEST DAYS, GOLDSMITH** was drawn to beautiful things. At age 16, he bought a pair of saltcellars from Sam Aronoff's antique store in Hyde Park, and for many years they were among his most prized possessions. (Although less prized now, they remain with him.) His first meaningful job was at Bloomingdale's, in New York, in the late 1970s, designing jewelry, then working as a sales clerk, and finally a floor manager in china, crystal,

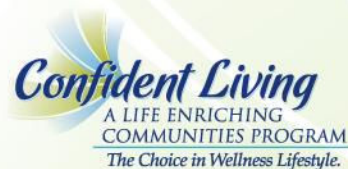
and silver. While he enjoyed it, the work took a toll. "Everyone was furious," he recalls. "They came to me because they had a gripe." Either an order had been delivered late—as much as a year late—or the stem on a crystal wine glass had snapped, or it was something else. "It was a small percent of the clientele, but it didn't feel small when you got the feedback. I learned what not to do."

After 10 years in the Big Apple, Goldsmith found himself wanting to return to Cincinnati, and he thought that fine china and silver might be his ticket. Seeking advice from peers in the trade, notably Harry Cardel, who owned a Madison Avenue store similar to the one he envisioned, he gradually met others—representatives of Wedgwood, Herend, Limoges, and Baccarat—who could help put him on the map. Deciding to give Harry Cardel honorary billing, he launched Goldsmith Cardel in 1987, in Hyde Park, fortuitously in the same space wherein he had once purchased those



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BACKSTORY

saltcellars. “I started with mostly formal things, fine china and crystal, but gradually branched out to everyday china also,” Goldsmith says. “I wanted to do what department stores weren’t doing, but then found I had to carry some of what the big boxes have or risk my clients going to Macy’s.” Which prompts a rueful confession: “It’s always a little blow to your ego when someone registers at Macy’s, but not here.”

Today, bridal business accounts for more than half of the store’s total volume. Accordingly, place setting registries are prominently featured, and if you run across a name you may know from living here, or a friend, it can be fun to see what the young and privileged choose as they enter this new phase of their lives. Not surprisingly, Goldsmith has perspective on this. “There’s a sliver of the population that thinks this is the time to do something you don’t ordinarily do. This is the moment to go for it—and they get excited,” he says. “I can’t swear to you that they use it, but let’s say... when you move, it’s a useful way to let people know who you are. It’s one of the nicest ways to use possessions. And for those who are oblivious, it doesn’t matter. People use clothing in the same way. For persons who are curious, [the possessions one owns] tells them something.”

Still, the process of acquisition is not easy for most. Goldsmith has known grooms who “panic and say, ‘Please don’t deliver another thing; we have more china and crystal than we’ll ever use in our lives.’” He has had brides ask him to deliver certain gifts to their mothers’ houses, and when he does, the mother says, “Oh, she doesn’t want those.” Contrarily, he has seen a mother watch her daughter return something, prompting the mother to say, “Oh, she should keep that.” When he heard another mother tell her daughter to return some soup bowls on the presumption that “you’ll never serve soup,” he was indignant (although he kept it to himself). “How do you know when you’re 28 what you’ll do when you’re 58?” he asks. Some women get bogged down in the ardors of selection and give up. Some fiancés grow argumentative and refuse to participate.

Nor is the process easy for the seemingly unflappable shopkeeper, who wants only to set his customers on the right course. Goldsmith is that rare individual who can walk into a house he has never seen and know instantly that: a) the furniture is out of scale; b) it displays 1880s decor when the architecture calls for 1780s; c) whatever is featured in the center of the dining room table “is clever, but not clever enough to be in the center of the table.” People who have such highly refined responses to their environments are ever vulnerable to disappointment. Frustrated brides and mothers of brides, in Goldsmith’s case, just go with the territory.

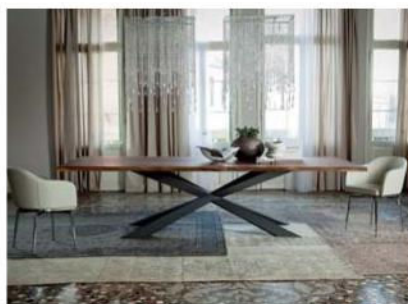
In his off-hours, Goldsmith relaxes with a combination of travel, reading—mostly history—and exercising, much of it in league with his charming and accomplished wife, physician Mindy Hastie. Together, in recent years, they have run marathons and climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro; they practice both yoga and Pilates intermittently.

What drives Goldsmith, however, is his work. His passion, manifested in a connoisseur’s expertise, fuels his days. On the morning I spent with Tim and the bridal couple, he was compelled, at one point, to explain the difference between two dinner plates of slightly different sizes. “The 10-and-a-half inch plate,” he said, “implies that you’ll have a salad plate and a mug, et cetera. The 11-inch plate, maybe, gives you a little more leeway to skitter by. If you have blanched asparagus on top of Bibb lettuce, you’ll really need the bigger plate. But I’ll be on your side, whichever you choose.”

As he talked, it became clear that so much more than closing a sale was at stake. This was about preserving a way of life. “It’s a fragile little bit of our world that could be obliterated in the blink of an eye,” he said afterward. “It wouldn’t be hard for an entire population never to use these things. With great traumas, like war, or an earthquake, or a financial crisis, something always dies off. The market for fine things contracts.” Tim Goldsmith has made it his career to secure that market’s ongoing success. ☺

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What Does the Fox Say?

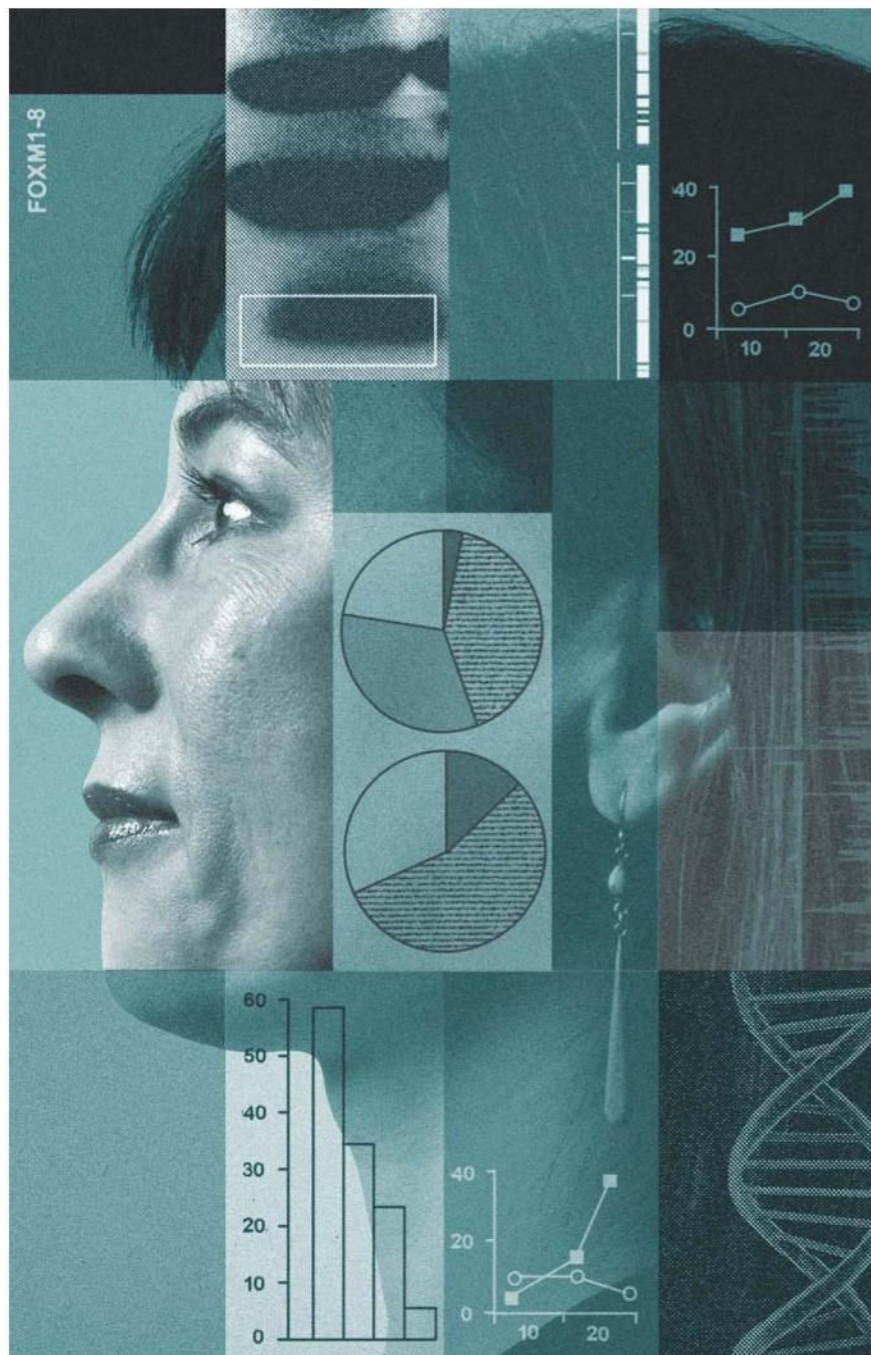
RESEARCHERS AT CHILDREN'S ARE STUDYING HOW CANCER SPREADS, AND MAYBE HOW IT STOPS.

A DOZEN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES ECHO around the entrance to the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center (CCHMC) as patients and doctors, parents and nurses, relatives and technicians bustle through the sunlit atrium. Tanya V. Kalin leads the way—the long way—out of the public space to her laboratory. “I try to walk 10,000 steps a day,” she says. “Children’s encourages us to walk and it’s good. Yesterday, I did not walk that many, but the day before I did.”

Just a few paces through a key-carded double door, the lobby chatter fades as the wide public thoroughfares narrow. Vibrant splashes of color perk up the white walls. At first glance they appear to be abstract prints. On closer inspection, they’re dramatically colored photomicrographs—highly magnified biomedical specimens.

“These images are from laboratories in this building,” Kalin says. “They are from our research.” This is the research neighborhood of CCHMC, where biomedical technicians delve into the chemistry of diseases under treatment on the hospital’s clinical floors. Back here, tucked away from the public, Kalin and her team ponder a particular life-or-death protein. Understanding this protein and the gene that creates it could unlock treatment, even prevention, for some cancers and other diseases.

Metaphors fall apart when trying to





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describe genes and the DNA from which they are made. While it is common to compare our genetic code to a sort of blueprint, blueprints don't forge hammers or bake bricks while building houses. Your genes, on the other hand, generate proteins that both influence how your body is built and actually become parts of your body.

You are constructed from as many as 100,000 different proteins, each assembled from a unique combination of amino acids. Many of these proteins are created from a template encoded in your genes. Science has only begun to unravel the complicated interaction between your genes, your body, and your health. Kalin's work, focused primarily on one gene and its associated protein, provides insights into this complex and interconnected system.

→ **SPACE IS AT A PREMIUM IN THE CCHMC** research wing. Past some filing cabinets and desks, Kalin's compact office opens onto a short foyer leading to her laboratory. In-

side her office, a light blue lab coat hangs on a hook. Tissue-paper sculptures marked "Happy Mother's Day" decorate the shelves; a color print-out of a mother giraffe licking the head of her very young calf is taped to an overhead compartment. "Giraffes are my favorite animals," Kalin says. "They have such big eyes."

Her own dark brown eyes, framed by glasses, widen as she speaks, a touch of her native Ukraine still evident in her voice. Her desk is covered with documents, but not a sheet seems out of place. The small piles reflect paperwork in motion: purchase orders, invoices, grant applications. The research enterprise runs on paper. "We have to get the data for new grants to get funding and to publish papers," she says.

The paperwork includes requests for funding from the National Institutes of Health, the American Cancer Society, and other agencies and foundations whose generosity supports Kalin and her staff of six, including a post-doctoral fellow, a techni-

cian, and three students working toward doctoral degrees. A second post-doc has just joined the team.

Compared to Kalin's office, her laboratory is quite large, with tall ceilings and rows of lab benches topped by shelves stuffed with supplies and equipment. No one in this laboratory seems to sit. Everyone is moving, measuring, weighing, marking samples. The lab has the electric atmosphere of a start-up and the team works start-up hours, driven by the demands of the experiment in process on any given day.

Chinmayee Goda chats with Fenghua Bian, the new post-doc, updating her on current projects. Goda's earbuds lie silent on her shoulder, and there's an MP3 player in her pocket. "Sometimes I'll have to run a lot of specimens, the same thing over and over," Goda says. "Then I like my music. It's mostly pop. I like Simon & Garfunkel."

Two grad students working back-to-back under matching sterile fume hoods—vented work spaces—swiftly transfer a liq-



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NEWPORT
ON THE LEVEE

uid that looks like sparkling rosé into rows of plastic test tubes. It's actually fibrotic lung tissue on its way to analysis. They began collecting these samples at 4 a.m. and their day isn't over yet.

Students compete for positions in Kalin's lab. Word got around, even before she won the Children's Hospital Mentoring Achievement Award in 2014, that Kalin was an exceptional advisor who championed her students and post-docs. "I feel really lucky to be part of this lab," says Markaisa Black, on a break from transferring fibroblast samples. "The caliber of science is amazing and continues to advance."

→ **MUCH OF HER OWN SUCCESS KALIN ATTRIBUTES** to the scientist who mentored her, Rob Costa, a renowned cancer researcher at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Kalin arrived in Chicago as a post-doctoral fellow in 2000. She had already earned both an M.D. and a Ph.D. from academic institutions in Moscow. An interest in tumor im-

munology brought her to Costa's laboratory in the Department of Molecular Genetics. It was there that Costa introduced her to the protein known as FoxM1.

"I got interested in this unique protein when I was a post-doctoral fellow with Rob Costa," Kalin says. "He is the one who first cloned this transcription factor. He was the first one who thought that the knowledge of how this protein functions can be important for cancer."

Transcription factors like FoxM1 are proteins that act like automobile pedals for your genes: They can put the brakes on to slow down a genetic process, or hit the gas and speed things up.

Costa discovered the FoxM1 protein and studied the Fox family of genes and how they control genetic activity. While Costa's work focused on how these genes operate in the liver, Kalin has explored the role Fox proteins play in the prostate gland and in the lungs. Costa was not yet 50 when pancreatic cancer ended his life. It is apparent

that Kalin still feels the loss. "He was a very talented scientist," she says. "Several people from his lab decided that we had to keep his science alive. That is why we are working with FoxM1."

Despite the name, Fox genes and Fox proteins have nothing to do with foxes. "Fox" is a contraction of "fork-head box," which describes the shape of the proteins generated by these genes. The entire Fox family of genes is important as cells grow, multiply, and differentiate into various organs, and they may also play a role in cell longevity.

The irony of Fox gene expression—the mechanism by which a gene "turns on" and makes proteins—is that these genes and their associated proteins can be deadly, yet they are absolutely essential to human life. Mouse life, too. "Mice without FoxM1 are not born," Kalin says. "They die. They die very early, when the embryo is very little. If they did not express FoxM1, they could not develop even in uterus. It is very important."

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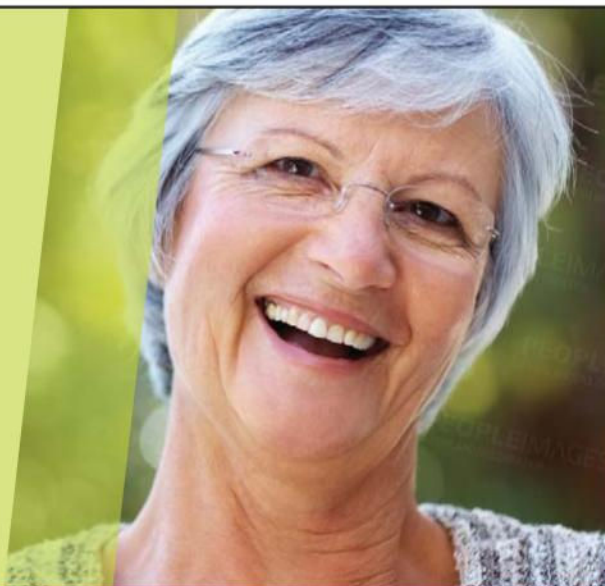
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embryo, the FoxM1 gene goes mostly inactive as the mouse, or the human, is born and matures. Since it is part of our genetic make-up, the gene never goes away, but lies inactive on chromosome 12 in humans. If your body is damaged in some way—by radiation, for example, or carcinogenic chemicals, or physical injury—FoxM1 reactivates, often with dire consequences.

“FoxM1 is important for lung cancer. Depending on the levels of this protein, the cancer can be very aggressive,” Kalin says. “FoxM1 is not expressed when the lung is normal. In the adult lung it is not expressed. But when something happens the levels go up.”

FoxM1 is not the only transcription factor involved in cancer, but it plays a critical role in making cancerous tumors more dangerous. Kalin’s team has proven that disabling FoxM1 or disrupting its ability to affect other genes can keep some cancers from

learned it wasn’t like that at all, and I work very closely with some remarkable clinicians now.”

Collaboration requires communication and communication requires talking in offices all over the CCHMC complex. “It leads to lots of additional steps on my Fitbit,” Kalin says.

Discussions with University of Cincinnati Health radiologists led Kalin’s team into research on a non-cancerous problem in the lungs, a condition called Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis. Pulmonary Fibrosis can be a cruel side effect of radiation treatment, but it can also occur for no clear reason, manifesting itself in some patients by filling their lungs with scar tissue that inhibits breathing. There is no known cure. In medicine, “idiopathic” is another way of saying “It’s a mystery.”

“This is what I want to do,” Kalin says. “I want to deal with important medical prob-

she showed that when FoxM1 was depleted, tumor activity dropped remarkably. “It is possible that FoxM1 is important for both cancer initiation and cancer progression,” Kalin says. “Our findings provide the foundation for the development of new therapeutic approaches based on inhibition of FoxM1.”

Kalin’s insights into the mechanism of cancer and pulmonary fibrosis are having an impact around the globe. She has been invited to speak at scientific gatherings in Versailles and Shanghai. She has also been invited to participate in review panels for major funding agencies like the National Institutes of Health. It’s a prestigious appointment, but sedentary.

“The worst part is, you have to sit for eight or 10 hours—per day,” Kalin says. “I don’t get my 10,000 steps those days.”

→ **KALIN WAS INITIATED INTO THE LABORATORY** culture in medical school. Although her initial tasks were menial, she got caught up in the esprit de corps all around her.

“My first job was to wash the laboratory glassware and to clean the floors. Eventually they gave me simple tasks like isolating some genetic material or staining a tissue sample,” she says. “They accepted me as a real person and they trusted me. There was such enthusiasm. The whole lab stayed until after midnight, talking about our work.”

Fond memories of her first laboratory inform Kalin’s management style today. She wants to inspire that level of camaraderie in her own lab. Sometimes inspiration begins at a 9 a.m. meeting in which the entire crew maps a research schedule for the year ahead. While most chemicals can be ordered and shipped overnight, transgenic mice, genetically modified to contain DNA from another organism, have to be specially bred. That takes time and scheduling.

Throughout Kalin’s laboratory, there are all the accoutrements of scientific inquiry: flasks and bottles, racks and frames, scales and centrifuges, lots of computers, liquids of various colors. And yet, the genetic processes studied here take place at the invisibly microscopic, molecular level inside the complex architecture of living creatures. How does Kalin know, for instance, when a protein like FoxM1 is active or not?

Using a chemical called Green Fluores-

THE GENETIC PROCESSES STUDIED HERE TAKE PLACE AT THE MOLECULAR LEVEL INSIDE LIVING CREATURES. HOW DOES KALIN KNOW WHEN A PROTEIN LIKE FOXM1 IS ACTIVE?

developing at all. FoxM1, Kalin has found, is part of an extended chain of chemical communication that begins with cell damage and results in a tumor. Breaking the chain of communication shows promise for identifying prevention, and maybe, cures.

→ **KALIN’S PATH TO CINCINNATI AND TO CCHMC** began in the Ukraine in the late ’80s. In the countries of the former Soviet Union, students graduate directly from high school into medical school and Kalin opted for a program that offered both a medical degree and a researcher’s Ph.D., so she could contribute to medical progress without seeing patients.

“I wanted to be a physician since I was quite young. That changed in high school,” she says. “I spent a lot of time in clinics. One day, as we were waiting, I listened to [patients] complaining that they couldn’t sleep, and over here, someone was complaining that all she did was sleep. I thought, *I’m not sure I could listen to this all day.* I later

lems that do not have answers.”

Kalin offered to explore this fibrosis, and discovered that FoxM1, the same transcription factor she studied in lung cancers, was involved. “We started to work to see if the patients who have the fibrosis, what are the levels of this transcription factor?” Kalin says. “It looks like high levels predisposed the patient for this complication because the FoxM1 keeps the cell in this activated and cycling state.”

Kalin proved that mice bred to generate much more of the FoxM1 protein than is normal developed severe fibrosis after radiation. Mice in which FoxM1 was deactivated did not.

As lead author or coauthor of more than 40 scientific papers in the past 20 years, Kalin has a reputation approaching rock-star status within the biomedical community. In 2013, in a paper published in *The Journal of Biological Chemistry*, she demonstrated how FoxM1 is essential in order for prostate cancer to develop in mice. Conversely,

cent Protein helps. This dye, derived from jellyfish, glows green under ultraviolet light. Kalin's team has found a way to attach this marker to FoxM1 proteins.

In tissues surrounding cancerous tumors, cell nuclei glow bright green when viewed under a microscope—a sign that FoxM1 is hard at work telling chromosomes to build support systems for a tumor. When FoxM1 is deactivated or deleted, the glow migrates out of the nucleus and into the cell's cytoplasm where the gene is inactive.

It is possible that a drug could be developed to deactivate FoxM1, and Kalin has been looking at chemical candidates that might become that drug. Her team found some likely molecules in a vast “library” of chemical compounds donated to science by Procter & Gamble 10 years ago. P&G provided Cincinnati's biomedical researchers with full access to more than 250,000 chemical compounds created in its corporate laboratories. Working with a chemist who serves as a sort of “librarian” to this collection, Kalin began by testing 50,000 compounds on biological samples arrayed in 96-well plates, which look like miniature high-tech ice-cube trays.

As tray after tray fed into the screening equipment, an automated process measured two important factors. First, did the compound force FoxM1 proteins out of the cell nucleus? Second, did the compound harm the cell? Kalin ended up with around 15 chemical compounds that deleted FoxM1 without appearing to cause harm and she is currently running the most promising candidates through a gauntlet of experimental tests.

“Right now, we are working with three compounds,” Kalin says. “We started with 15 and we tried them in cell cultures first and then in mouse models next and we are kind of zooming in on the most efficient.”

One day, one of those compounds might prove effective enough to move into development and clinical trials. For now, the research contributes to a better understanding of how our genes affect our sometimes fragile bodies.

“I want to solve these questions right away,” Kalin says. “But I can't. We take each step at a time. We're not sprinters. We're marathoners.”



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We compared heaps of chicken liver mousse, sipped more than our fair share of Sancerre, and ate enough cake to impress even Marie Antoinette. But that was easy. The hard part was winnowing the list of top-notch restaurants down to 10. Take a seat at the hottest tables in town.

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■ AS “FAST CASUAL” PANZERS OVER OUR DINING LANDSCAPE, Restaurant L is nothing short of radical. It’s a throwback that’s also ahead of the curve: at once a grande dame and an outlandish upstart, Hollywood regency glamour meets New York City kick-ass. In anyone else’s hands these contradictions could lead to cacophony. But L is helmed by dual maestros, Jean-Robert de Cavel and Richard Brown, both in full command of every minute detail of your experience. From the moment you enter the dining room’s luxurious, silvery cocoon, you want for nothing—even your handbag is provided its own tufted

perch—with the staff geared to anticipate your every desire. Unbidden, an amuse-bouche arrives, an inspired combination of saffrafras, fennel, and grapes that signals to your palate what your eyes have already registered: Somebody—no, *everybody*—here loves me. Sweet, succulent Jonah crab, tender squab with *beurre rouge* sauce, flaky snapper and silky foie gras are given seasonal treatment by de Cavel, who, despite having earned the right to rest on his laurels under an umbrella on the Cote d’Azur, remains in our midst, driving himself to perfection and taking us along on his glorious ride.

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5

FEAST YOUR EYES

Dining at L engages all the senses, not just your taste buds. Passing through the lounge during dinner service, you're accompanied by live music, thanks to a gleaming ebony Kawai grand piano (1). You might even be tempted to pull over right there and enjoy your meal at the bar, in the glow of a *chinoiserie* lamp (2), one of three Bernardaud Limoges vases that *maître d* Richard Brown had electrified at Palette Studios in East Walnut Hills. Through the dining room's double doors, artist Chris Daniel's striking silver tree (*opposite page*) branches out into the space. Standing 15 feet tall and made from 1,000 pounds of steel, the tree, which Brown festoons weekly with lanterns and fresh flowers, took Daniel a year to complete. Beneath the branches the entire room shimmers, from the velvet banquettes (7) with slightly higher backs than the Maisonette versions they're modeled on, to the tables covered in Thibaut tablecloths, which make elegant landing pads for Jean-Robert de Cavel's equally luxe foie gras dish (6). Ecume Platine chargers by Bernardaud Limoges welcome you at the table; the pattern also grandly supports L's signature caviar service (3). Whimsical touches can be found throughout, including Osborne & Little's Technicolor tropical wallpaper designed by Christian LaCroix (4) and original artwork by Hunt Slonem (5). —ALYSSA BRANDT



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■ ONE FANTASTIC RESTAURANT, TWO DISTINCT looks. Steal away for an early supper of blue marlin ceviche with fried plantains or a bowl of *caldo verde* (chorizo, kale, and potato stew) and marvel at the soaring ceiling while watching passersby through the floor length windows. By day, Mita's feels smart, sophisticated, and oh-so big city. But by night, she's something altogether different. Oversized Moorish lanterns fling dazzling shadows around the room,

illuminating the blue and white tiled columns with a sultry glow. Booths feel cozier, flavors earthier. Paper-thin slices of acorn-fed Iberico ham slowly melt on your tongue, as you struggle to decide between the boldly hued *pozole verde* or the *paella* for two—generous enough to feed an army of gourmet guerrillas. In the meantime, your dining companion is waxing effusive over a surprisingly simple salad of jicama, mango, and watercress with cilantro vinaigrette. While chef-owner Jose Salazar's sophomore effort has been a runaway success (and garnered plenty of James Beard award attention), what brings us back, time and again, are hyper-fresh flavors so pure that dinner feels simultaneously virtuous and decadent.

GREEN GIANT

If you've had *pozole à la Mexicana*, you know that yellow hominy, greasy pork broth, and garnishes of cilantro, avocado, and sliced radish are all pretty ubiquitous. Which is why we couldn't resist Mita's *verde* version. A bright green broth, redolent of poblano peppers, tomatillos, and cilantro surrounds tender cubes of red snapper, kinky squid tentacles, firm pink shrimp, and generous bites of lobster tail. When we called Jose Salazar to inquire after the recipe, he wasn't surprised. "It's definitely one of our most popular dishes," he said. Whip up a batch and see why. —JOANNE DRILLING

POZOLE VERDE

6-8 SERVINGS

- | | |
|---|---|
| 2 JALAPEÑO PEPPERS | 1 LB. RED SNAPPER, CUT INTO ONE-INCH CUBES |
| 4 POBLANO PEPPERS | ¾ LB. LOBSTER MEAT, CUT INTO ONE-INCH CUBES |
| 8 TOMATILLOS | 2 CUPS COOKED YELLOW HOMINY |
| 5 CLOVES OF GARLIC, PEELED | 1 LB. SQUID RINGS AND TENTACLES |
| 2 SHALLOTS, PEELED | JUICE OF 4 LIMES |
| 2 CUPS CILANTRO LEAVES, TIGHTLY PACKED, PLUS MORE FOR GARNISH | SALT |
| 1 CUP PARSLEY LEAVES, TIGHTLY PACKED | ½ HEAD NAPA CABBAGE, SHREDDED |
| 1 CUP SPINACH LEAVES, TIGHTLY PACKED | 3 AVOCADOS, SLICED |
| 3 QUARTS VEGETABLE BROTH | 1 CUP SHAVED RADISHES |
| 1 LB. MEDIUM-SIZED SHRIMP | |

1. Roast the jalapeños, poblanos, and tomatillos over an open flame. Roast the garlic and shallots in a dry cast iron pan. When cool enough to touch, remove the skin and seeds from the peppers. Remove the tomatillo husks.
2. Bring a pot of salted water to a rolling boil. Prepare an ice bath for shocking. Blanch the cilantro, parsley, and spinach until just tender. Remove to the ice bath to cool. Drain the leaves and set aside.
3. In a blender, combine the roasted peppers, garlic, and shallots. Puree until smooth, seasoning lightly with salt. Remove from the blender and set aside. Without rinsing, puree the blanched cilantro, parsley, and spinach until smooth, seasoning lightly. There should now be two separate green purees.
4. Bring the vegetable broth to a simmer in a wide pot or Dutch oven. Add the pepper puree and adjust the seasoning with salt. Add the shrimp, red snapper, lobster meat, and hominy.
5. Once the seafood is half-way cooked (about 3 minutes), turn the heat to high, add the squid, followed by the green puree and lime juice. Keep the soup on heat only until it is heated through, about 3-5 minutes. (Continued heating will cause the bright green color to turn dark and murky.) Remove from heat.
6. Serve the soup in deep bowls and garnish with cabbage, avocado, radish, and cilantro. Serve with fried corn tortillas seasoned with salt and cumin.

★ Jose Salazar in the kitchen at Mita's (opposite page); his pozole verde (below)





THE BIRD IS THE WORD

For a lot of chefs, chicken is the equivalent of a culinary cop-out. It's an amateur order, for sure, but no menu would be complete without it, right? "Well, we always like to have some kind of poultry on the menu," admits Sotto's chef de cuisine, Danny Combs. "But we know that people also want to eat things they don't get at home, so we try to find a balance between intriguing our guests but keeping it familiar. Not a lot of people get quail at home, so they really enjoy it." Combs orders his quail from Manchester Farm in South Carolina, where all birds are butchered by hand. They arrive to his kitchen with leg and thigh bones intact, but a boned-out breast cavity. "We grill the birds evenly on both sides so that the bottom half isn't overdone. It also has to rest properly. The flame has to be under control too. In fact, the flame is almost an ingredient of its own in this dish, it's that important." Combs explains that finding the ideal cooking method and time can be challenging when trying out a new dish. "We've definitely eaten our fair share of mistakes at the end of the night." —JOANNE DRILLING

GRILLED QUAIL À LA COMBS

1. Remove from packing and carefully release the wire that holds the bird in shape.
2. Rinse and pat the bird dry.
3. Make a quick marinade with olive oil, minced garlic, orange zest, chopped fennel fronds, and a little fennel pollen. Toss the quail with the marinade,
4. salt, and pepper, and marinate in the fridge for 2-3 hours. Allow the mixture to come to room temperature before grilling.
4. Grill for two and a half minutes on each side, making sure that legs get plenty of direct heat. Remove from the grill and let the quail rest for about five minutes before serving.



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(513) 977-6886,
sottocincinnati.com



■ HELLO, LITTLE SISTER! AFTER YEARS OF LIVING—LITERALLY—in the shadow of its glitzier, glossier big sister Boca, Sotto has come into its own. Some credit the decadent ricotta doughnuts that have been a pastry menu mainstay since they opened back in 2013, but those in the know pay homage to the quiet and careful determination of longtime chef de cuisine Danny Combs and his humble commitment to stellar interpretations of honest trattoria standards. Rustic textures and approachable presentations are juxtaposed with sublime flavors in dishes like the *tartare di fassone* (beef tartar with lemon and bread crumbs) and their house-made blood sausage with squash and mustard greens. For hearty appetites, there's always the one kilo Bistecca Fiorentina, a massive porterhouse that arrives on a sizzling platter accompanied by sides like grilled asparagus with pearl onions and ricotta salata, but we recommend sticking with a bunch of small plates. Try sampling their ethereally smooth chicken liver mousse, the grilled quail with seasonal vegetable (we loved the earthy roasted butternut squash with wilted greens last fall), and the perennial stunner, the short rib cappellacci with thyme and browned butter. Only the most strict teetotalers will want to miss the wines on offer here. Grab a glass of Gavi or split a bottle of Vajra barolo with someone special. Honestly, there isn't a better date night destination in town.

ILLUSTRATION BY MAITÉ FRANCHI

Clockwise from left:
Vitello Tonnato with
veal, frisée, egg, and
pickled Fresno pep-
pers; short rib cap-
pellacci with thyme
and brown butter;
Chef de Cuisine
Danny Combs



NO.



★
Clockwise from above:
Crispy skin redfish in
spiced tomato broth;
Angus hanger steak;
Salazar's dining room

SALAZAR

1401 Republic St., Over-the-Rhine,
(513) 621-7000,
salazarcincinnati.com



■ DESPITE THE EXISTENCE OF THE LARGER (AND EXCEED-
ingly wonderful) Mita's, Chef Jose Salazar's debut
restaurant should in no way be considered an after-
thought. While Mita's innovates within the tradition
of Spanish and Latin American cuisine, Salazar is a
freewheeling tour through Korean, Moroccan, Ital-
ian, and French flavors—and that's just on the cur-
rent menu. Tucked a bit off the beaten track in OTR,
it brings to mind the kind of charming little bistro
you stumble upon after getting lost in the Left Bank.
Under the watchful eye of chef de cuisine Andy Hiner,
Salazar has continued to evolve, turning out fresh,
well-balanced dishes dotted with seasonal surprises:
the cauliflower steak special (yes, really, a Moroccan
spiced, seared wedge of the cruciferous vegetable
complemented by a strong hit of lemon), the chicken
liver mousse (so good it deserves its own trophy),
and the succulent chicken Milanese (with its musky,
sweet-and-sour notes of ground cherry). With its
bustling bar and cheek-by-jowl tables, Salazar hums
with energy at every meal. If you manage to snag a seat
(there are only 40 including the bar), you're in for an
exceptional evening.



SMOOTH OPERATOR

Like most great dishes, Salazar's chicken liver mousse achieves a perfect balance of traditional technique, chance ingredients, and seemingly divine inspiration. The tradition is French: soaking livers in milk to remove traces of blood and to mellow the liver's metallic taste; searing the livers in butter; blending it all together; and finally cooking it in a water bath. Next comes those chance ingredients—fresh Concord grapes. After putting up a batch of grape preserves, chef de cuisine Andy Hiner remembered Salazar's original chicken liver mousse dish, since retired from the menu. Why not revive it—but with a twist? The Concord grape preserves would add brightness, and cocoa nibs (also in the old version) would add textural variety and a hint of bitterness to balance the creamy, herbal notes. Finally, inspiration: Hiner thought to pass the cooked mixture through a fine sieve for a super silky texture. He then piped the light and airy mousse into a jar; layered on the preserves, nibs, and salt; and served it with freshly grilled bread. The result? A dozen or so rich, perfect bites that are the ideal foil to a glass of pinot noir, or perhaps a cocktail, like the one we tried: a Prince's Potion, made of huckleberry shrub and gin. (That was a one-off special, but your bartender will be happy to recommend something.) Wary of tucking into a jar of liver? Fear not. This smooth spread is poised to become your best new drinking buddy. —AKSHAY AHUJA





PREMIER CRU CREW

In the last 10 years, women have taken the wine world by storm—and Cincinnati is no exception. We managed to wrangle a handful of our region's brightest sommelier stars together for a convivial chat. (Naturally, libations were involved.) And despite various levels of experience and certifications, there was overwhelming consensus on everything from Champagne (good with popcorn, oysters, *and* fried chicken), the importance of constantly tasting new wines, and maintaining a humble attitude while staying committed to enjoying oneself in the process. That's an outlook we can raise a glass to. —JOANNE DRILLING

ABBREVIATION KEY: CSW (CERTIFIED SPECIALIST OF WINE) • CSS (CERTIFIED SPECIALIST OF SPIRITS) • CMS (COURT OF MASTER SOMMELIERS) • CSP (CERTIFIED SAKE PROFESSIONAL)

Laura Landoll,
Advanced Sommelier - CMS, CSW

■ **POSITION:** Sales/portfolio manager at Grand Cru Wine Company and Vintage Wine Distributor, adjunct instructor at Cincinnati State ■ **NUMBER OF YEARS IN THE BUSINESS:** 15 ■ **FAVORITE WINE REGION:** "Portugal was amazing!" ■ **WINE PHILOSOPHY:** "Life is too short to drink the same wine all the time."

Jordan Patton,
Certified Sommelier - CMS

■ **POSITION:** General Manager at Salazar ■ **NUMBER OF YEARS IN THE BUSINESS:** 6 ■ **FAVORITE FOOD AND WINE PAIRING:** Oysters and Champagne ■ **HOW HAS THE INDUSTRY CHANGED:** "There is more curiosity from the guests and wine consumers but also more trust in the wine suppliers to help in the decision making."

Joanna Argus Kirkendall

■ **POSITION:** Owner of 1215 Wine Bar & Coffee Lab, co-owner of Pleasantry ■ **YEARS IN THE BUSINESS:** 5 ■ **LAST BOTTLE OF WINE "OFF THE CLOCK":** a bottle of Julien Braud Muscadet ■ **FAVORITE FOOD AND WINE PAIRING:** "I'd pick pizza and a super dry Lambrusco, but I don't push the idea that there's a perfect wine for every food. I think if a wine is well made and it makes you happy, drink it."

Mary Horn,
Advanced Sommelier - CMS, CSW, CSP, CSS

■ **POSITION:** Vice President of Fine Wine Sales & Education, Heidelberg Distributing Family of Companies ■ **YEARS IN THE BUSINESS:** 25+ ■ **FAVORITE WINE REGION:** Champagne ■ **ADVICE:** "Have thick skin, don't take things too personally, and most of all remember to enjoy and have fun."

Shannon Depenbrock Hembree, Certified Sommelier - CMS

■ **POSITION:** Wine buyer at DEP's Fine Wine and Spirits ■ **YEARS IN THE BUSINESS:** 10 ■ **WINE MORE PEOPLE SHOULD TRY:** German Riesling ■ **ADVICE:** "Taste as often as possible to hone your palate and invest time in your wine education. Knowledge is power!"

Denise Sullivan,
CSW

■ **POSITION:** Wine sales at Vintage Wine Distributor ■ **YEARS IN THE BUSINESS:** 26 ■ **FAVORITE FOOD AND WINE PAIRING:** Champagne and popcorn ■ **ADVICE:** "Don't burn bridges and always maintain an attitude of learning."

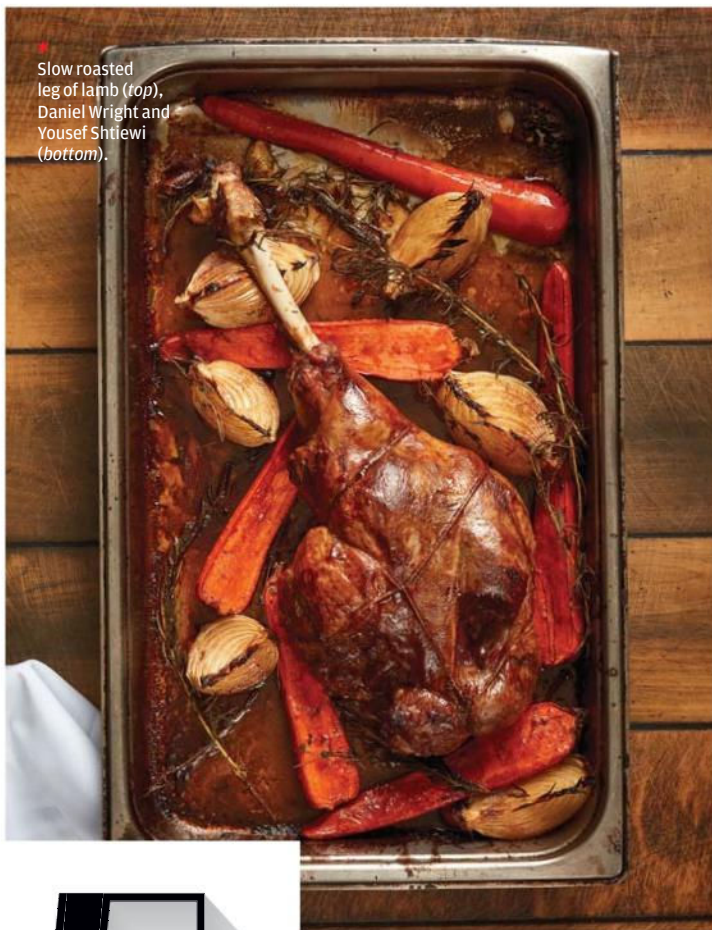
Evelyn Ignatow,
Certified Sommelier - CMS

■ **POSITION:** Owner of Hyde Park Gourmet Food and Wine ■ **YEARS IN THE BUSINESS:** 21 ■ **HOW THE WINE WORLD HAS CHANGED:** "Consumption is up and there's greater consumer interest in general. More women are working in the business as both winemakers and owners." ■ **WISHES MORE PEOPLE WOULD DRINK:** Loire Chenin Blanc and Cru Beaujolais

Lindsay Furia,
Certified Sommelier - CMS

■ **POSITION:** Sommelier and wine educator at Boca ■ **YEARS IN THE BUSINESS:** 8 ■ **FAVORITE WINE REGION:** Jura, France ■ **HOW HAS THE INDUSTRY CHANGED:** "I love the shift towards sustainable, biodynamic, and natural wine."





Slow roasted leg of lamb (top), Daniel Wright and Yousef Shtiewi (bottom).

NO. 5

ABIGAIL STREET

1214 Vine St., Over-the-Rhine, (513) 421-4040, abigailstreet.com



■ FEW RESTAURANTS ARE AS EXCEPTIONAL AS Abigail Street while making zero fuss about it. From the saffron-infused bouillabaisse to the grilled octopus with merguez sausage, the dishes share strong Middle Eastern roots while remaining entirely individual. As the small dishes fill the table, a fascinating flavor conversation quickly develops. The restaurant has not missed a step since chef-owner Daniel Wright handed over the reins to his longtime chef de cuisine (and brother-in-law) Yousef Shtiewi several months ago. The duo appear to work as one seamless culinary mind, constantly finding time and energy for improvisation. To wit, try the housemade ricotta with thyme, honey, and bread—homey, simple, and yet so deeply satisfying that it's hard to believe it's not on every table in town. With brisk and knowledgeable service, consistently excellent wine (try the Paul Dolan sauvignon blanc!), and reasonable prices, this is the place to take out-of-town friends who remain dubious about the city's restaurant scene.



GUEST STAR

Delivering good service, like cooking, requires a period of apprenticeship. Perry Streby, general manager of Abigail Street, began as a busser at Senate in 2011 while putting himself through school. He worked his way up to server, became Assistant GM of Pontiac BBQ, and finally took over the front of the house at Abigail Street. After mastering the art of studying in 30-minute chunks, he now spends his days trying not to waste anyone else's time. —AKSHAY AHUJA

What's training like for servers? I prefer to hire ambitious, educated people—whether they're in college now or have done things to further their education. It shows you want to learn, and that you are absorbing information. We train our servers' assistants and hostesses as if they're serving. They know every ingredient for every dish. They taste all the wines. When they show me that they want to step up and do more, then hell yeah, they can grow with us.

Any changes since you've taken over? Our wine list. We started with an eight-page leather binder of Old World and New World wines broken up by varietal. I wanted to mimic what the kitchen does—introducing people to different flavors—in the wine. So we color-coordinated all the wines, starting with bright, red acidic wines, working into the earthier notes, and then down to dark, purple, jammy notes. The whites are a little more abstract, but we also put them on a flavor spectrum.

How do people interact with this list differently? If you only drink chardonnay, you're not going to tell your friends that

you had an awesome chardonnay at Abigail Street. You're going to tell them that I introduced you to sémillon. Or even the same grape, just from a different region. *I thought I liked chardonnay, but they turned me on to sémillon, this beautiful white wine that has the same body but more complex flavors.* I take pride in that. I want people to discover new things.

What are the pillars of good service? When I dine out, I want to be greeted right away. And when I'm ready to pay, I want to be able to pay. The worst is when you're finished and your credit card is on the table and you're waiting. When I want to leave, I want to leave.

What do you look for when you eat out? I'm a service snob. When I dine out, I'm going to go casual carryout, like a deli counter, or I'm going to go somewhere really high end. I can't justify spending good money on food if the service isn't impeccable. I want people to know you're going to get really good service when you come here. Because it's too cutthroat right now. You have too many options.



A VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY

Chef Jono Fries knows his way around a kitchen—as well as computer design programs, eBay, flea markets, salvage yards, and if necessary, his own workbench. As a vice president with the Boca Restaurant Group, Fries is tasked with creating spaces that are as sumptuous as the food. We talked to him about creating the experience of dining at Boca. —ALYSSA BRANDT

How did you approach the design for Boca? We wanted to integrate the raw bones and the physical nature of the space. We looked at it from every angle. It's really "experiential design." This is what we wanted our guests to feel: warmth, wonder, and discovery. We were inspired by the Café Momus scene in *La Bohème*. It's a grand scene of celebration and joy.

You managed to completely transform a space formerly occupied by the storied Maisonette. What were the challenges? Maisonette was a statement: the glory of fine dining. There was a weightiness to respect the past but forge forward and reinvent as well. We wanted people on the second floor to connect to the energy center on the first floor. We came to the conclusion that we needed to cut a hole in the floor. So then it was a question of what are we putting in the hole? David said, "Let's put in a chandelier." I must have looked at a thousand chandeliers [before] I found this one on eBay.

Downstairs at Sotto there's a completely different atmosphere. We fell in love with basement spaces in New York City. Sotto felt like it needed to be a trattoria and recall a time when things were handmade. It seemed the perfect analogy to soulful Italian cuisine. We wanted the chairs to be rowdy and casual. The bar is made of old Globe Wernicke law bookshelves I got when Rendigs, Fry, Kiely, and Dennis moved offices. All the lights in the bar were old copper heaters that I drilled out.

Nada also has its own look. How do you replicate that across locations in Columbus, Indianapolis and soon, Nashville? When you walk in, we want you to feel like its Nada, but we want to design it to the location and the city. It's subtle, just a tweaking of the dials.

Where do you look for ideas? We travel a lot. We just got back from New York last week. We were probably in 30 different restaurants, always on the hunt for little details.

NO. 6

BOCA

114 E. Sixth St.,
downtown, (513)
542-2022, boca
cincinnati.com

■ FEW RESTAURANTS HIT YOU WITH THE OPERATIC DRAMA of Boca. Owner David Falk may not be helming the kitchen—which has been expertly commanded by executive chef Jeremy Lieb since Boca took over Maisonette's former digs in 2013—but his impresario spirit is everywhere: the breathtaking vista of the dining room, the sweeping glass staircase, the baskets of Blue Oven's salty, seeded, Bad Boy bread on the tables, and the orchestrated precision of the waistcoated waitstaff as they deliver plated arias for our enjoyment. Nickel-thin double-fried pommes soufflés and a glass of Txakolina rosé or a frothy Estate Sale cocktail are a perfect overture while savoring Boca's seasonal menu. *Cacio e pepe risotto*, a twist on Rome's classic pasta dish, is full of savory pecorino and black pepper heat, but restrained enough to let notes of mint and sweet pea ring through. Plank-cooked sea bass arrives tender and flaky beneath its perfectly crisp skin. *Bavette con bottarga*, ribbons of pasta topped with salty dried fish roe, hits the umami button with robust flavor and subtle spice. While the food and service remain in the spotlight year after year, Boca's setting makes you, dear diner, feel like the star of the show.



Four views
of Boca

A selection of Metropole's charcuterie; seared verlasso salmon (bottom)



THE GUY WHO CONVINCED US CHARRED JALAPEÑOS ARE QUAFFABLE

What's Metropole's secret ingredient when it comes to their bespoke cocktails? Beverage manager Chris Brown. One of Metropole's original bartenders when the restaurant opened in 2012, Brown is largely responsible for conceptualizing the drinks menu and working with his team to turn unique ingredients (charred jalapeños anyone?) into liquid joy. With warmer weather nearly upon us, Brown is ready to alchemize anew. "We work closely with the kitchen to see what can be sustained throughout the season," he says. "There are a couple of flavors I definitely want to mess with when spring hits." Brown stresses that it's a collaborative effort. He and his team start with a brainstorming session, and he'll give them his wish list of potential flavor combinations. A week or two later they start their initial tasting of new drinks. This season's roster will likely include a surprising ingredient: Yogurt. Brown, whose mother is Korean, traveled to South Korea last year on his honeymoon and fell hard for a popular yogurt drink. "They're like yogurt sodas. Not a lot of people know about them here," he says. He's playing around with flavors like Concord grape and Szechuan peppercorn as he concocts his own version of the Korean standard. "The yogurt lends acid but also creaminess," says Brown. "If I see something, I nerd out and go for it."

—ALYSSA BRANDT

METROPOLE

609 Walnut St., downtown,
(513) 578-6660,
metropoleonwalnut.com

■ DINING AT METROPOLE IS A TRIP BACK TO THE FUTURE, NO DeLorean required. You have the building's original mosaic tile floor at your feet, a rotating display of cutting edge contemporary art adorning the walls, and Executive Chef Jared Bennett's modern spin on regional ingredients on the plate. We've crushed on Metropole's signatures before: the roasted half chicken with Aleppo pepper; the Wagyu steak tartare; and the charcuterie board with selections like kantwurst, coppa, and rich, oozy-warm ricotta. Also tops in our book: the Metropole burger, a multi-layered flavor fest thanks to sweet red onion marmalade and savory smoked blue cheese. Bennett & Co. have earned their rep as masters of levitation by raising humble vegetables to new heights with the satisfying burnt carrot salad, creamy cauliflower soup, and spaghetti squash pancake. But Metropole also boasts one of the most creative beverage programs in town. A quartino of Cote Mas Blanc? Yes, please. Or make that a Sunsets in Sicily cocktail with vodka and housemade blood orange shrub. Perhaps a pour of one of Metropole's array of bourbon choices. Can't decide? We feel you. It's why we keep returning again and again.



★
Chef Masashi Nishi-
zume at Miyoshi;
chirashi and sake
(opposite page)



NO.



MIYOSHI JAPANESE RESTAURANT

8660 Bankers St.,
Florence, (859) 525-
6564, [miyoshi-
restaurant.com](http://miyoshi-restaurant.com)

■ IN FLORENCE, KENTUCKY, IN THE SHADOW OF A FIFTH THIRD BANK TOWER, on (appropriately enough) Bankers Street, you'll find the region's richest deposit of authentic Japanese cuisine: Miyoshi. Don't let its chain eatery neighbors fool you: Miyoshi offers a unique dining experience. The uncluttered dining room is spare but not sterile, and the private tatami room and small sand garden add a shot of Zen to the atmosphere. On the sushi front, Miyoshi more than delivers with exquisitely fresh, melt-in-your-mouth fish atop chewy, seasoned rice, and there are plenty of udon and soba iterations to choose from.

But the menu is also full of rare traditional Japanese delights that have escaped notice thanks to the mediocre half-price sushi obsession gripping the region. Fortunately, servers are eager to help you navigate these gems. The delicately seasoned *ochazuke* soups are pure comfort in a bowl: steamed rice studded with small strips of *nori* (seaweed) and tiny *bubu arare* (rice crackers) is submerged in a green tea broth then topped with little extras like roe, octopus, or our favorite, *umeboshi* (pickled plum). One bowl, paired with an order of airy pork *shumai* (dumplings) laced with wasabi or the *agedashi* tofu (lightly fried tofu cubes topped with grated ginger, scallions, and bonito shavings), makes for a light, but deeply satisfying meal.

ILLUSTRATION BY MAITÉ FRANCHI



THEORY OF EVOLUTION

Our annual top 10 list regularly includes the best multicultural dining this city has to offer. *Dosas*, *pozole*, and *unagi* have all graced these pages, their presence a great barometer of a vibrant, evolving dining scene. But the soothing bowls of *ochazuke* we went gaga for at Miyoshi are just the tip of the iceberg. Be it savory gyros, hand-pulled Chinese noodles, tender beef tongue tacos, or spicy pig's ear, authenticity is the new watchword. "There are more ethnic restaurants and more locals that want ethnic food served like it's served in the mother country, not Americanized ethnic food," says Wassim Matar, owner of Phoenician Taverna in Mason. The key, Matar points out, is to never underestimate your guests. "Assuming locals don't know is not a healthy attitude. Being honest to the cuisine itself is a key factor in the success of the business." Junko and Masashi Nishizume have cemented Miyoshi's reputation as the spot for some of the area's best Japanese cuisine by approaching Western diners as they do their own countrymen: with the freshest fish (like *sanma*, a mackerel pike found in northern Japan that Nishizume has flown in when it becomes available at the advent of autumn), half days simmered pork bones for ramen stock, and house made *tamagoyaki*, a rolled egg omelette. "We don't do any short cuts," says Nishizume. "We try to serve [everything] like they do in Japan." —ALYSSA BRANDT

CELEBRITY APPRENTICE

In the rush to become the next Jamie Oliver, young line cooks are focusing less on fundamentals and jumping ship with more frequency. It's enough to make a head chef cry for help.

by BURKE MORTON
illustration by BRETT RYDER



N O! DONKEY! YOU HAVE to cook wild boar the same as pork! It is pork! Why do you think it is different? I can tell you are thinking it is different, but you must think of it the

same way as pork! Do another."

I thought that first boar chop looked great, but Jean-Robert de Cavel disagreed. He didn't even touch it. He could tell just by looking at it that it wasn't right. Not everyone who works in a restaurant has that kind of eye for detail, but even I could see that when the second boar chop went out into the dining room, it was ever so slightly plumper and the caramelized color was that much more robust.

Anyone who has spent time in a professional kitchen helmed by de Cavel is familiar with this scenario, as well as the decibels involved. My second week as sommelier at the now-defunct Jean-Robert at Pigall's marked the first time I heard the Frenchman raise his voice; it certainly wasn't the last, though it didn't happen often. In fact, I imagine that the only other people who re-

member this little episode are the cook and maybe de Cavel. Which is as it should be, because this sort of exchange is nothing if not standard operating procedure for passing on rigorous discipline and in-depth knowledge to the next generation of would-be chefs.

Despite the American public's ever-flourishing fascination with food television and celebrity chef culture, the number of actual cooks who are willing to invest the time necessary to access the narrow window of excellence required to manage a pro kitchen is not growing in proportion. Indeed, finding motivated, not to mention qualified, cooks is increasingly difficult. Daniel Wright, chef-owner of Senate, Abigail Street, and Pontiac BBQ, estimates this deficit "has been going on for at least three years." And yet, in those three years,

the number of restaurants in Cincinnati has mushroomed. "I think there's more people now in culinary than there were 10 years ago when I first opened—there are more people with skills in the business," notes Julie Francis, chef-owner of Nectar in Mt. Lookout. "But I think that here in Cincinnati, there aren't enough of them to support the number of restaurants."

Cincinnati has been packing on the restaurants lately and Over-the-Rhine is ground zero. In early 2007, only two restaurants served dinner in the neighborhood, Nicola's and Venice on Vine (which closes relatively early). Lavomatic (which has since closed) and Senate were early Gateway Quarter pioneers in 2008, but it took two more years for things to really heat up. There are

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 130



PHOENICIAN TAVERNA

7944 S. Mason-Montgomery Rd., Mason, (513) 770-0027, phoenician-taverna.com

tiny pine nut and lamb stuffed sausages called *maanek*, everything is reliably excellent. And with freshly made pita bread reappearing at the table like a magical maternal encouragement to eat just a *little* more, it will be hard to stop. The chef, Hassib Alouie, is originally from Lebanon, but apparently had to be lured from Washington, D.C., to work at the restaurant. Matar was adamant. The reason? The way he cooks, Matar says, is “so similar to my mother.” If you don’t happen to have a tireless and generous Lebanese mama at home, be very grateful for Phoenician Taverna.

■ IT’S IMPOSSIBLE TO GUESS FROM THE outside that Mason’s Phoenician Taverna is a special place. Once inside, though, there is a sense of being enveloped—by the open kitchen and by the warm hospitality of the owner, Wassim Matar, who will likely make an appearance at your table. To eat like a native, get lots of little plates and share. The baba ghanoush, smoky and creamy, is astoundingly good. Those who choose less familiar spreads like the *muhammara*, made from walnuts, red peppers, and pomegranate molasses, will also be richly rewarded. Whether you’re partial to standbys like falafel or tabbouleh, or willing to venture out a bit (go ahead, try the

*
Clockwise from top: baba ghanoush, fattoush, kibbeh, manakish bel za’atar



BREAD WINNER



Wassim Matar admits that there is nothing complicated about making fresh pita bread. All it takes is four ingredients—flour, water, yeast, and a touch of sugar—plus a little time and heat. Yet almost no other restaurant bothers to do it. From blending their own harissa to reducing a fresh batch of pomegranate reduction, Phoenician Taverna does details right, and the pita bread is at the heart of their operation. In the kitchen, two pita ovens are stacked on top of each other (if one broke and there was no backup, Matar says, “the whole restaurant would shut down.”) A giant Hobart mixer is used to make the dough, and another machine portions it into balls. After a brief rest in the refrigerator, the dough rises for an hour or so, and each soon-to-be-pita is rolled into an oval. The bread is then placed in a second chamber to proof. “There are no timers,” Matar says, “it’s all done by eye.” The ovals are dusted with coarse semolina flour, then placed on the oven’s conveyor belt. The pita emerges crispy, and steams briefly to achieve the softness that makes them very dangerous to one’s sense of restraint. Servers have a keen second sense of when you might be considering another one—which in my case is basically all the time. —AKSHAY AHUJA

★
Housemade Valençay-style cheese with honey (below); Chef Todd Kelly and Pastry Chef Megan Ketover (opposite page)

NO.

10



**BLESSED
ARE THE
CHEESE-
MAKERS**

Cheesemaking requires a level of care that might intimidate the most natural obsessives, i.e., chefs. There are, as Todd Kelly says, “so many variables” in the process, and he can describe every step in the learning curve—such as the increasingly OCD levels of sanitation needed or the seasonally evolving flavor of goat’s milk or the proper procedure for ash brining. The result, though, after experiments that ranged from an inedible blue-green mess to not quite right, is one of Orchids’ singular achievements: a French Valençay-style cheese made in-house and served with a piece of golden honeycomb from the hotel’s rooftop hives. Yes, the milk is lightly pasteurized (*Sacre bleu!*), but if you do not regularly fly to the Loire Valley or milk your own goats, you’re going to be blown away by this cheese. With its classic top-lopped-off pyramid shape, its delicate ash-and-white-bloom rind (the restaurant makes its own ash out of burnt leek tops), and a creamy-nutty flavor that with a bit o’ honey becomes something akin to dairy-induced perfection, it is a fitting end to a meal at Orchids, where everything is a tribute to Old World elegance, classic technique, and—yes—a little obsessiveness. —AKSHAY AHUJA

ORCHIDS AT PALM COURT

35 W. Fifth St., downtown, (513) 421-9100,
orchidsatpalmcourt.com

■ THERE IS ALWAYS A DANGER, WHEN DISCUSSING Orchids, for the surroundings to overwhelm the food. You can't help noticing the beauty of the space, from the soaring Art Deco ceilings to the tall, scalloped banquettes that make each table feel like its own semi-private nautical chamber. Luckily, the food lives up to its environs, matching it in elegance, craftsmanship, and (this is meant as a compliment) a kind of delightful gaudiness. Chef Todd Kelly, too, enjoys showing off what he can do, whether that involves his take on snapper "En Papillote" (wrapped not in parchment, but in elegant, edible folds of a crispy wonton-like wrapper) or delicately stuffed squash blossoms. But he also knows when to let fresh ingredients speak for themselves. Case in point: the velvety corn soup with black truffle. Dessert is extraordinary, with dreamy standouts like pastry chef Megan Ketover's Basque tart with roasted strawberry, rhubarb, and elderflower, and the house-made Valençay-style goat cheese, served with honey from the hotel's rooftop hives. Everything at Orchids shows a commitment to quality and seasonality, and like the hotel itself, a respect for tradition. If you want to feel—and dine—like Jay Gatsby for an evening, this is the place.



FORTUNE NOODLE PHOTOGRAPH BY DUSTIN POWELL SPARKS

NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK



It was only three years ago that we had enough additions to the dining scene to fill the entire "Where to Eat Now" package with new restaurants. Plenty more have since joined the fray, but this year, two spots were especially worth noting. **Fortune Noodle House** took over prime Clifton corner real estate in early 2016, offering hand-pulled (Watch through the window!) *la mian* noodles in giant bowls with plenty of savory broth. The less adventurous can stick to classic shredded pork or sliced beef with bok choy, but those willing to take some risks will be richly rewarded. Don't miss the shredded pig's ear appetizer, fragrant with garlic and cilantro. *Suan cai* is pickled napa cabbage, and it lends briny depth to Fortune Noodle's sour vegetable soup. We added beef, but there are vegetarian options (like the "Asian mushroom lover") as well. And while Fortune Noodle still doesn't have a liquor license, OTR's newest knockout, **Pleasantr**y, is all about the bottle. Joanna Argus Kirkendall and Daniel Souder have one goal and that's to widen your wine drinking horizons. Never had orange wine? Sample a bottle made from trebbiano, malvasia, and grechetto grapes fermented with their skins still on. Or perhaps you'd prefer to work your way through their fairly esoteric by-the-glass list. Either way, you're going to need snacks. Chef Evan Hartman has an unfussy way with seasonal vegetables and deploys bold hits of flavor. We're still dreaming about his sambal roasted cauliflower, brown butter potatoes with bottarga (cured fish roe), and chocolate cake with brie. Don't be fooled by Pleasantr'y's lo-fi neighborhood vibe. This is cutting edge cuisine, affordably priced. —JOANNE DRILLING



Cooks, Illustrated

Middle-aged librarian **Holbrook Sample** tied on an apron, rolled up his sleeves, and set about doing a six-month, unpaid stage at **Salazar**. He burnt a lot of bread, whipped up chocolate cakes on the fly, burnt his finger, ate a pig testicle (and liked it!), and almost forgot about his day job in the process.



Mise-en-place, a general name given to those elementary preparations which are constantly resorted to during the various stages of most culinary operations.

—from **AUGUSTE ESCOFFIER'S**
GUIDE TO MODERN COOKERY, 1907

Saturday, April 23, 5:55 p.m., Salazar Restaurant

“*Stage* looks like a puppy lost behind a Walmart,” chef de cuisine Andy Hiner mutters to the three other line cooks. I can’t help but hear him. It’s a tiny kitchen and personal space is always at a premium.

“Don’t let him burn the bread!” Hiner barks seconds later.

Too late. I’ve already charred it past any edible state.

How did I end up, slightly lost and burning toast, in one of OTR’s hippest restaurant kitchens? Technically, I am completing my six-month apprenticeship, or *stage* as the French call it, at Salazar with a full shift cooking “on the line.” It’s a Saturday night, the busiest night of the week, and I’m shoulder to shoulder with Neal, Erin, and sous chef John Fox. Hiner stands at the expediting window calling orders: “Gnocchi! Polenta! Pork belly! Fire any time! XB right now! How long on the steak, Erin? Where’s my bread, *stage*?”

Jose Salazar, who opened his eponymous first restaurant at the end of 2013, took a significant financial risk. According to the research firm NPD Group, there are 19,000 fewer independent restaurants today than in 2012. In the same time period, chain restaurants have added 17,000 spots. And yet Salazar was undeterred.

“I don’t want to do anything else. I really don’t know *how* to do anything else,” he admits. “If it sails financially I have the satisfaction of cooking my own food.” However, he notes, for a restaurant like his and others without the protection of a chain’s purchasing power or the backing of a larger financial group, “a bad quarter probably means you’re out of business.”

My wife Carla and I eat at Salazar regularly. So much so that Chef Salazar used to jokingly invite me to come try my hand in the kitchen. When he shifted his attention to an even more ambitious undertaking, his downtown restaurant Mita’s, Hiner took over the litany of invitations.

“You could start right now if you wanted,” Hiner would offer. Followed by, “I’ve added more to my list for you. You’ve got some catching up to do.” He saw free labor. I saw the opportunity to learn more about great food. I saw talented people who interested me. Truth be told, I saw escapism impervious to even the sharpest work e-mail. I dove in.

Beyond a general familiarity with knives and hot surfaces, though, I knew nothing. I was as prepared to work in a professional kitchen as my blind cattle dog, Enid. Now after six months working 8 to 12 hours a week, mostly in the basement prep area of the restaurant after my day job as a librarian, I am operating in close proximity to a hot stove on a Saturday night. I’d only expected to “sort of” work the line tonight. For effect. For this article. But in an unusual move, Tall Patrick, fourth cook on the line, called in sick.

When I arrived at noon, Fox broke the news: Training was over. “We need you to actually *work* the line,” he informed me. “Don’t eff this up.”

Mise en place is the defining concept for every restaurant, from the temples of high gastronomy to a basic barbecue trailer. Essentially, it involves putting everything a cook will need “in place.” In the kitchen at Salazar, each cook’s station has a precise array of small containers packed tightly above a 16-inch allotment of white plastic cutting board. Tonight, everything I’ll need to assemble burrata plates, duck rillettes, rhubarb stuffed fritters, fried oyster sandwiches, and green salads is well within reach. There are locally grown fresh lettuces, pickled ramps, sprouts, and cubed apples in vinaigrette to keep them from oxidizing. There are small plastic squeeze bottles of truffle oil, sambal sauce, and aioli. There are pipe-able pouches of marrow butter for the bread appetizer and foie gras mousse to accompany truffle gastrique, strawberries, and challah croutons. Underneath the counter in the compact refrigerator are back-ups of just about everything.

On the hot side sits a small two-basket fryer (to cook oysters), as well as a compact grill and the sheet of gas-fired steel called a *plancha*. I rarely use the *plancha* and absolutely never use the big gas stove next to it. Those are the primary domain of sous chefs Fox and Isaiah. Every pan, every ingredient, every plate, every bowl, and every body is “*mise-d* out,” as the guys like to say. There is not an item or a cook out of place at the beginning of service. If there is one thing that I have learned during this *stage*, it is that line cooks are completely wedded to their fastidious preparation. No contingency has been left to chance. Professional cooking is no place for slapdash improvisational spontaneity.

My first day as a *stage* I cleaned hot peppers for jelly. Fox met me at the employee entrance—technically, one parking meter from the main entrance where I’d entered as a diner many times yet another world away. As sous chef, he is second to Hiner in the kitchen hierarchy. With his full-arm tattoo sleeves and intense gaze, Fox is pretty much *mise en place* personified. I’d seen his aprons on other cooks around town; constructed of heavy gauge denim, they have little pockets and loops to hold everything a cook might need. Fox walked the talk.

He led me downstairs to a bushel box of jalapeño peppers waiting on a stainless steel work table, passed me two latex gloves for each hand, and proceeded to show me how to split the peppers and scoop out the seeds. “This shouldn’t take you more than an hour,” he said.

The small whitewashed basement area is broken into three main sections by walls and blind doorways. There are work tables, a walk-in refrigerator, a bathroom, storage shelving tucked into every available cranny, and a dish washing station. Like drivers honking as they navigate switchbacks, staff yell “Corner!” or “Coming up!” as they maneuver through, carrying knives or a hot pan. It’s important to make your presence known.

A line cook’s life is fraught with occupational hazards. In the few months that I was there, I went home with several cuts and burns. Every kitchen member has their own set of scars or missing fingertips; physical harm is a well-accepted fact, almost a badge of honor. It’s not unusual for a cook to finish a shift with a wound superglued closed or electrical-taped together.

What is not in the nature of this occupation is health insurance. Chef Salazar, who worked for years in prestigious New York restaurants before coming to Cincinnati, went for long stretches of his early career without health insurance. In an effort to correct the working conditions he experienced, Chef Salazar offers a subsidy for health insurance to his staff. As the market to attract competent cooks tightens, more independent restaurants are doing the same, though it remains beyond the financial reach of many in the industry who do not have access through

their parents or a spouse. “I’ve been lucky to get on my wife’s insurance,” he told me.

Fox returned to the pepper project when my hands were completely cramped from cutting and scooping. I had hardly made a dent in the box. Magnanimously, he admitted that it took him and three other cooks over an hour to clean the same sized box.

“But Fox, you said it should only take an hour!”

“Oh, yeah,” he said. “Well, I always tell the stage stuff like that. Makes you work harder.”

I contemplated working harder and becoming more efficient but it’s difficult to imagine how anyone else in the kitchen could. It takes hours to prepare for a dinner shift, and on top of that cooks must think ahead by days and even weeks because there are so many regular menu items that require time to brine or pickle. A typical line cook’s week is about 50 hours long. For the sous chefs and chef de cuisine Hiner, the hours per week stretch into the 70s and even top 80 on occasion. With the margins between success and failure razor thin, cooks and chefs are not operating in a lucrative field.

Data from Ohio’s Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that high-end cooks with several years of experience make less than the starting salary of library assistants and about the same as funeral attendants and chauffeurs. Sous chefs might make a little more. With years of school, intense experience in the business, working days that are commonly 12 hours long all year round, Hiner probably makes about as much as a starting teacher. Any teaching gig is hard,

don’t get me wrong. But in the three years I’ve known him, Hiner has taken just one vacation. I’m not going to even guess at how many hours a week Chef Salazar works.

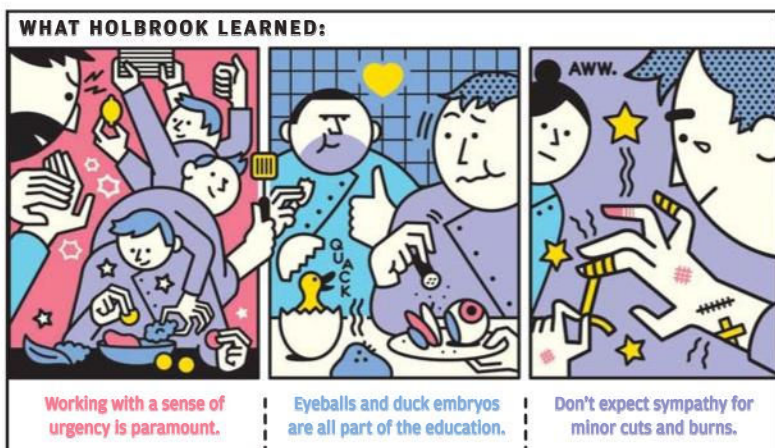
In addition to my ever-increasing dexterity (try cleaning a case of pearl onions, you’ll see), I have picked up a smattering of culinary French, the likes of which I’ll probably never need while watching a Truffaut film. Right away Hiner introduced me to the all-important *pâte à choux*. “Spell that,” I demanded. Hiner is patient with my spelling needs. “P-a-t-e...”

Pâte à choux is water, butter, flour, salt, and eggs. At Salazar *choux* is often made into dumpling-like Parisian gnocchi. The cooks cut the dough into inch-long lengths as they pipe it from a pastry bag into boiling water. The cooked dumplings are then lightly browned in butter just before being served. It’s one of my favorites. Hiner emphasizes the versatility of *choux*—it’s also the base for éclairs and beignets. “There’s no rising agent,” he explained while cutting into a blanched dumpling to test it for doneness. “You can put the dough in the oven and they puff up because of the steam in them.” To demonstrate Hiner piped a few mounds onto a tray and put it in the hot oven. A few minutes later out came light-as-heck puff pastries just waiting to be filled with something creamy or savory.

I have discovered that I heartily dislike English measurements. Hiner wanted 2.5 quarts of vinegar and water with coriander seed, fennel seed, a few knobs of fresh ginger, and a balance of salt and sugar to pickle spring green onions. But how does one get two parts water to one part vinegar if the total needs to be 2.5 quarts? My little notebook is filled with these calculations. Two-thirds of a quart plus 1.3 cups vinegar, maybe? But how much water? I curse all the kings and queens back through to when the Romans beat up on the Isles. If Hiner ever tells me to measure out drams (60 drops) or a pony (4 drams) I’ll tell him to go drown in a kilderkin (2 firkins).

It pained Hiner that a professional adult who had spent some months in his kitchen couldn’t easily move between quarts, cups, and pints.

“TWO • CONTINUED ON PAGE 133



Cincinnati Kid: Justin Delann

by
JASON COHEN

It's a bit tougher for him to follow March Madness nowadays, but time difference aside, the former Xavier Musketeer star is right at home (and still stuffing the stat sheet) at one of Europe's top basketball clubs.

illustration by
CHRIS NURSE



many college basketball players, hoop dreams exist beyond the confines of North America. Xavier University has sent its share of standouts to the NBA over the years—guys like Tyrone Hill, Brian Grant, James Posey, and David West—but a growing number have ventured overseas to play internationally as well, including Romain Sato, Lionel Chalmers, Will Caudle, and the man European fans call “Captain America”: Justin Doellman. The 6-foot-9 forward starred under both Thad Matta and Sean Miller for the Musketeers from 2003 to 2007 and is currently playing in the top tier of European basketball for FC Barcelona Lassa, which shares its ownership, fan base, and signature blue-and-red colors with the storied *futbol* club that’s home to Lionel Messi.

A Union native and son of former Northern Kentucky star Dan Doellman, Justin played his high school ball for Ryle and crossed the river for AAU action under Oak Hills coach Mike Price. Injured during the NBA draft combines—following a First-Team All-Atlantic 10 senior season—Doellman opted for the guaranteed playing time and money of Europe. He bounced around a few teams in France and Spain before joining Barcelona, where he’s spent the past three seasons flashing the same scoring versatility (and deadly three-point stroke) that made him a star for the Muskies. We caught up with Doellman after a mid-season road trip to talk about his days at Xavier, his international nickname, and which American foods he craves while he’s away.

Your father played for Northern Kentucky, which was Division II when you were in college. Was there ever a chance you’d follow him there?

There was always a chance, but as it got later into high school, serious Division I teams started coming. I played some open gyms at Oak Hills, where college coaches would come watch. Sean Miller [then a Xavier assistant] picked me out of a crowd, and then Thad came to watch me, and that’s kind of how that all started.

So it was always Xavier? I looked at a couple of other schools that were a little farther away. I liked Notre Dame. I liked Florida. But Xavier ended up being a good fit. It was close to home. I had an opportunity to come in as a freshman and play. And we had a great run that year [2004]. Went to the Elite Eight.

And almost made it to the Final Four before losing to Duke in a classic. Is that still a career highlight?

It was one of the greatest moments. To be honest, that year was kind of up and down. I think we started out 10–9 going into the Crosstown Shootout, and then everything kind of changed when Lionel Chalmers hit that shot [an 18-foot go-ahead fadeaway jumper with less than 30 seconds left]. That was our trampoline, and we ended up winning... I want to say it was 16 or 17 in a row. Beating [then top-ranked and undefeated] St. Joe’s in the A10

tournament, we just kept on going, and unfortunately we came up a little short against Duke. We gave them a run for their money.

What do you think makes Xavier such a consistent program? They get guys who kind of carry a chip on their shoulder, that have some things to prove. Guys that fly under the radar, [who] are hard-nosed and want to play and want to win.

There are quite a few of you playing overseas. It’s pretty cool to play against guys that I played with in college. Derrick Brown, we play against each other quite a bit. And Romaine Sato, we played together in college my freshman year, and then 10 years later we ended up as teammates in Valencia. That was really neat.

Your first three seasons were in France. Do you remember any particular culture shock?

It was going to be an adventure, and luckily I had Meredith, my wife, to go with me and help me get through some of the rough times. Other than the language, everything was just different. Stores and restaurants close early. In that little city [Doellman’s first team was in Cholet, a town of 50,000] I think I landed on a Sunday, and everything was closed. Luckily I packed peanut butter and some granola bars and we were able to get through that Sunday evening and get to

the store on Monday morning. But it was definitely a shell shocker.

On the other hand, we are having this conversation at 10 p.m. your time, which I just realized isn’t late in Spain. It’s not that late at all. We just finished up our team meal here at 9:30.

What’s the difference between the fans? In Spain, the basketball following is much more intense. Here in the Liga Andesa there’s a pretty big following, because you have Barcelona, and Madrid, some of the top teams in all of Europe.

Is there a small subculture of people who are just into basketball, or does soccer always come first? It’s definitely soccer first. The entire city shuts down when there’s a soccer game going on. It’s pretty cool to see. They live and breathe Barcelona here. I’d say a lot of the soccer fans are basketball fans. We have a pretty good showing every night. In Europe, it’s the cream of the crop. There’s only a handful of teams that are at this level.

How did you get the “Captain America” nickname? That started out in Manresa, my fifth year, and second in Spain. It was around the time that the first movie came out, and one of my teammates was giving me a hard time calling me Captain America. And then

he's like, *You know, after you dunk, you've got to salute the crowd.* And I ended up doing it one game, and the fans loved it. It's stuck with me ever since.

Is there a language barrier on the court? I use, basically, Spanglish. It kind of depends who I'm talking to.

Barcelona is the heart of Catalonia. How different is the Catalan language from Spanish? It's very different. It sounds like a couple languages intertwined. I'd say the closest thing, or the best example, would be French and Spanish combined. It's pretty hard.

For most people is it enough that you can speak some Spanish? Yes. They appreciate that. My Spanish is good enough to get around. I can't have a conversation or anything like that but I have my phrases, and I can understand almost everything they say.

So what is the travel like compared to college or the NBA? Here in Barcelona we travel very similar. We fly charter flights, and we're back directly after the game that night, which is nice. Especially having a family—I can wake up the following morning and be with the kids. Our longest flight this year was to Moscow. That's about five, five-and-a-half hours. Previously, with some teams, it was long bus rides, which is taxing on the body, but you do it. It's your job.

You became a citizen of Kosovo this year, for the country's first-ever appearance in the EuroBasket tournament. Do you have some ancestry there, or was that purely a paper move? It was a basketball move. It gave me the opportunity to play some international competition going into the season. I played five games and came into Barcelona in shape. It was a lot of fun playing against some guys I play professionally.

It was interesting to read that you still don't count as a "European player" in the Liga, because Spain still hasn't formally recognized Kosovan independence. Yeah, hopefully that changes, but I have no way of knowing. It's a political thing and I'm just kind of waiting, seeing how it all goes. I knew that it might not happen. It was just a basketball decision for me.

Were people constantly asking you about politics and the American election this year? Well, me and my teammates would always talk about the politics because that was the only thing in the news lately. They were always like, *Who are you voting for? What's going on? How are these the only two candidates you have?*

How do your kids like living there? Well to be honest, they don't know any different. Both my kids were born in Spain. This is the only lifestyle they know, so they're pretty comfortable with it.

Have you ever thought about giving the NBA another go, or do you think you'll finish your career overseas? There have been opportunities, but we can never finalize an agreement that gets to the terms I wanted. Who knows? Maybe a door will open or an opportunity will arise, but I'll take it one year at a time.

Do you still follow American college basketball? Heck yeah! You better believe it. The time zone is a little rough, because I usually can't watch the games live. But I'm watching March Madness every year. I get up, check the scores, I get on ESPN and try to follow what's going on. Unfortunately Xavier lost the Crosstown Shootout [this year]. That was disappointing. But I definitely follow Xavier and keep in touch with those guys.

How often are you back in Northern Kentucky? We're back for the summers. We travel to and from Cincinnati and Columbus, where my wife's from, so we're back and forth quite a bit.

You run triathlons in the off-season. Does that keep your competitive juices going? It does. On race day it's definitely exciting, just because you've got pros and amateurs competing on the same course at the same time. What I like is you're competing against yourself just as much as the guy next to you. You've got to get through the hurdles and the humps yourself. There's no teammates cheering you on that will pull you through the hard times. It's a good mental preparation for the season.

This is a question I ask everyone: What's the first thing you eat when you get back home? Chipotle. Straight to Chipotle. Get a steak and chicken burrito and put it down. It's the best.

That's not an answer anyone still in the States has given! Anything else you miss when you're in Europe? A good breakfast restaurant. Like, pancakes and bacon and eggs. They have a couple places, but it's just not the same.

What are you fond of over there? Paella is a real big one for me. And *jamon iberico*—the cured ham. And you've got to throw in the *siesta*. They do it right, taking a nap in the middle of the day. It's awesome. ☺

THE X FACTOR

Doellman finished his Xavier career with more than 1,400 points, a skill that followed him to Barcelona, where he was second on the team in scoring last season.



MOTHER ART

✕ **Monster-maker, advocate for artists, force of nature—artist Patricia Renick's greatest creation might have been herself.**

BY CEDRIC ROSE / PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAURA CHAPMAN



FLIGHT OF FANCY
Pat Renick takes a break in her studio circa 1975, while the art contemplates its maker.



IN LANGSAM LIBRARY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI THERE STANDS A LIFE-SIZE GLOSSY GREEN FIBERGLASS TRICERATOPS.

Constructed around the body of a helicopter that flew over Vietnam, it now squats like a samurai, menacing behind three horns. Its rotors fill the room. The creature's name is *Triceracopter*, and it holds the space like a monster from the collective unconscious, a hybrid of primeval fight-or-flight impulse and present-day killing machine. It gives you a visceral glimmer of terror, but puzzles too, like you're lost in some labyrinth with a minotaur.

Meanwhile, the sculpture's creator sits nearby, in a fiberglass self-portrait titled *She Became What She Beheld*. She has given herself the head of a triceratops, and holds in her hand the model used to create *Triceracopter*. The artist's name is Patricia Renick, and she taught at the University of Cincinnati's College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning (DAAP) from 1970 until 2001.

I met Renick once, briefly, in the mid-1990s. My roommate Ryan was a student in her Issues in Contemporary Art class. He knew that I wanted a cat and she needed someone to adopt a kitten. One day Renick swept from a car wearing a camel coat and one of the flamboyant, broad-brimmed boaters for which she was known, handed me a kitten and some cat accoutrement,

said, "Have fun," and disappeared. It was only much later, in 2014, seven years after her death, that I really felt like I got to know her. I was given a library school project to digitize papers and slides related to *Triceracopter's* creation that are held at UC's Archives and Rare Books Library. Renick and her companion, Laura Chapman, had meticulously documented its creation over three years in the '70s. (The exhibit at Langsam includes photos of the artist at work.) As I fed slides into a scanner, I was drawn to these images of a small, tough-looking woman in overalls, molding a dinosaur from clay. It's the look of sheer determination written on her face. And then the weird pull of the work itself.

Triceracopter isn't the only dinosaur sculpture Renick made. In 1974, in response to the oil crisis, she formed a silver stegosaurus around the body of a '63 VW Beetle. *Stegowagenvolkssaurus* is on display in NKU's Steely library. It's not as dark as *Triceracopter*, but it's also overtly political, speaking out on Big Issues that are still stalking the American landscape today. They warn. And they play to the kid in us, these works, these giant toys that are the stuff of nightmares, sci-fi time travelers nesting amid the

Brutalist modern campus architecture. We're fragile beings in a room with monsters, they seem to say. And they have the power to show us the monsters we harbor inside.

Just as Cincinnati art history had its Duveneck Era, we had a Renick Era, says Owen Findsen, "when monumental art was important." Findsen was an art critic and reporter for the *Cincinnati Enquirer* for 39 years. In 1979 he wrote that beside the painter Paul Chidlaw, Renick was one of the two most important Cincinnati artists of the '70s, and probably the first in history to exhibit at all three of our art museums. Not only was she a woman in a male-dominated field, Findsen tells me, but *Stegowagenvolkssaurus* and *Triceracopter* went very much against the grain in that she was doing figurative work when other artists were exploring formal issues and conceptualism. "Pat Renick, Claes Oldenberg, who else was doing art that's *about* something?" he asks. "She was going the opposite direction within the context of something that is very hard to do." Findsen says Renick organized people: She established the first sculpture conference for women here in Cincinnati at a time when people were beginning to protest the under-representation of female artists in museums and galleries. Her work, mentorship of numerous artists, and tireless advocacy all earned her the nickname "Mother Art."

As man-made fossils, the art draws us back to the time of its creation. She once said to Findsen, "I'd like to find a cave and put both works in it and seal them up for some future generation to find." But then time is its own cave. Perhaps the moment has arrived for a new generation to rediscover them, and the woman who cast herself in the room with her greatest work.

PATRICIA A. RENICK WAS BORN IN LAKE LAND, Florida, in 1932. Her family soon moved to Temple Terrace, outside of Tampa. Her mother owned a needlecraft studio and yarn shop. She divorced Renick's father, who worked as a bursar for a shipping company, spent most of his time in Costa Rica, and in 1957 died and was buried at sea. It was a middle class upbringing, says Chapman, who is also from Tampa. She attended the same high school as Renick, who was an outstanding student and graduated in 1950.

Both Chapman and Renick went on to Florida State University,

where Renick showed an early penchant for working big, creating multi-story flights of fancy for the Homecoming dorm decoration contest. She won first place two years running with giant sculptures like the Rube Goldbergesque *Hattercol*, an assemblage that had moving parts and electric lights, depicting FSU's then-mascot, Sammy the Seminole, forcing the Mad Hatter into a still while the Cheshire Cat sips liquor. The school paper noted Renick's uncle was a professional cartoonist, and that "she could well follow in his footsteps, but instead she wants to be an art

teacher in a high school." Renick graduated with honors in 1954. Along with a degree in art education, she'd learned to weld, work with wood, solder, and slump glass. In short order she found a job teaching art and sculpture to 10th through 12th graders.

In the late '50s, however, Renick's life took a sudden, dark turn. One night she came home from the high school to the house where she lived with several other teachers. She'd been having trouble sleeping, and suddenly it felt like a spike had been driven into her head. Everything began to unravel. She thought the sound of a television was the voice of God. All night, her mind on fire, she wrote furiously, only to wake in the morning surrounded by pages of unintelligible scribbling. Her roommates called an ambulance, and she was taken to a private psychiatric hospital in Tarpon Springs, where, over the course of 13 months, she received a regimen of electroshock treatments. These were administered without muscle relaxants. She was given a shot of sodium pentothal and restrained, then the current was applied, sending her into a grand mal seizure. All of this comes from an account Renick wrote of the experience,

among her papers at UC. The treatments left her "awake, exhausted, limp," with a splitting headache. "My memory seemed to be erased. Thoughts would appear for a fleeting moment but become lost when I would try to speak . . . as if my mind would keep falling over a cliff." Against doctors' advice, she checked herself out. They told her that leaving meant almost certain suicide or life in a sanatorium. And certainly, teaching was out of the question.

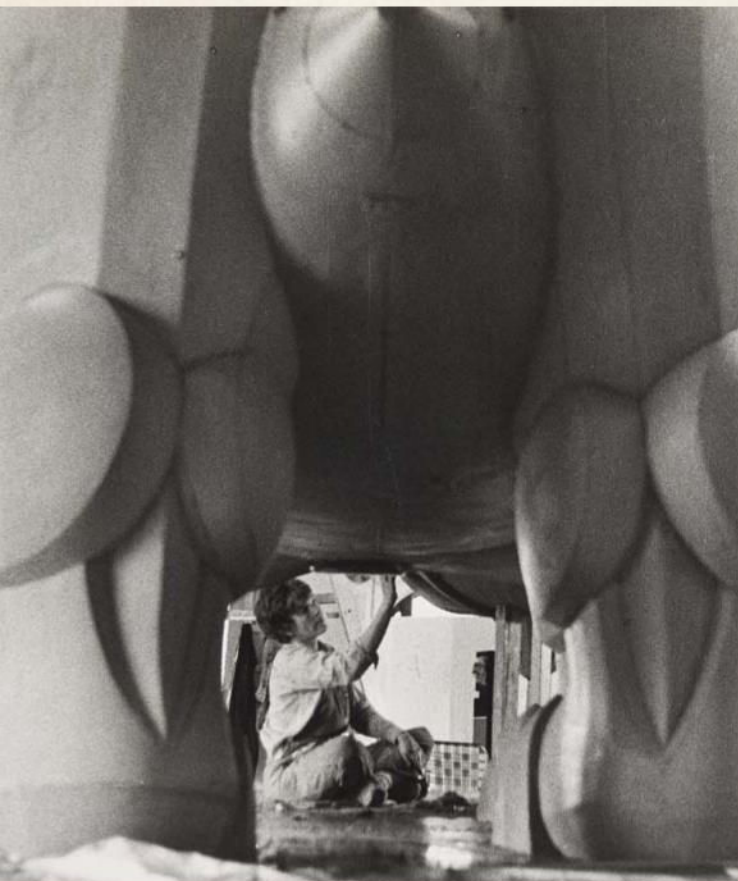
Renick hid out in her mother's house in Tampa, the drapes drawn tight, unable to recall many of the things we take for granted. "Like how to dial a phone, write a check, and what light to cross the street on," she wrote.



"I wanted to prove to myself that I could do another large work," Renick said of *Triceracopter*. "I didn't want to be one of those rocking chair people on the front porch of the future, saddened by what might have been."



BIG ISSUES Smoothing dinosaur skin around a helicopter (opposite page). Whether working as a sculptor or an advocate for fellow artists, Renick had her own style.



Slowly she gained the self-confidence to go back into the world. She moved to Miami, where she socialized with artists, including the painter Margaret Lefranc Schoonover, who introduced her at a party in Coconut Grove to a young woman, a French medical student, Claude Perpère, who was visiting on a Fulbright Scholarship, and studying to become a plastic surgeon.

Renick's recent hospitalization puzzled Perpère because she didn't appear to have a history of mental illness. One day they went to the beach together and the conversation turned to the recent disturbing episode in Renick's life. Had she been taking anything, Perpère asked, prior to hospitalization? Renick said that her family physician had given her pills for weight loss. The French medical student told her she suspected that her schizophrenia-like symptoms had been caused by the drug. A call to Renick's doctor confirmed the suspicion. Renick had been given an unlimited prescription of dextroamphetamine sulfate, or speed, and had doubled her dosage over time. (She was hardly alone. By the early 1960s, the U.S. was at the height of an amphetamine abuse epidemic. Amphetamine psychosis had been noted since the '30s, but it was misdiagnosed as evidence of schizophrenia.)

Renick was incredulous. She had been led to believe that she was sick, doomed to relapse, or worse. Perpère had set her free.

In 1963, an importer-exporter friend invited her to travel around the world with him. With money from her mother, she visited Germany, Austria, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Egypt, India, and Thailand. In her passport photo she's thin, tan, beaming. She set off on her own, visiting Perpère in France and friends at a military base, then took a job in Vitry-le-François teaching the children of U.S. servicemen. After two years abroad she returned to the U.S., teaching shop to African-American boys at a segregated junior high for a time before applying to Ohio State University's MFA sculpture program. Admission, she was chagrined to learn, required a year in their undergraduate program. So Renick found a work-around.

"There was a print maker there, a wonderful, eccentric character, and he said, 'Honey, you just come over and be an MFA student in my print-making program. Then you can do whatever you want,'" recalls Chapman. Renick worked in the print studio creating what she called "graphic sculpture" by applying printed silks to three-dimensional forms. At her master's thesis show in 1969, after two years at OSU, she exhibited farcical figures, some round-bottomed like Weebles, others balanced comically on classical columns, with etchings or stretched silk prints for faces. Her work explored politics, sociology, and current events,

including campus suicides. Some of the pieces, like *Triceracopter* and *Stegowagenvolkssaurus* later, mixed the biological with the mechanical. "I am particularly fascinated with relationships," her artist statement read. "Relationships between the past and the present, our inner feelings and outer appearances, and the thin line between having control and being controlled."

"Pat was a real feminist, so the idea of the classical wouldn't have appealed to her even if she had gone through *atelier* training," says Maureen Bloomfield, editor of *The Artist's Magazine*. Chapman, however, doesn't think Renick regarded herself as a feminist so much as "an advocate for artists and the equitable treatment of artists." Either way, art and academia in the late '60s and 1970s were still male-dominated fields; the sexual revolution was in full swing; and Renick was a gay woman making sculpture at a time

when the field was viewed as the near-exclusive province of men. Women weren't seen as physical or strong enough.

Renick got a job teaching at DAAP, but was soon hanging out at downtown galleries. She managed to show her work to the owner of one of the chicest, Closson's, overseen by Phyllis Weston, on Fourth Street. "And [the owner] went crazy about her work," Chapman says. "He really liked it, which of course swiveled Phyllis's head." With favorable reviews and support from Weston, as well as UC president Warren Bennis (who Renick nicknamed "The Silver Fox"), her local reputation grew rapidly. She showed at the Taft. And then came an invitation from the Cincinnati Art Museum. For this, she wanted to create something big.



SELF PORTRAIT (Opposite page) Renick building *Triceracopter*—a vision of fight and flight—in her studio in the Strietmann Biscuit Building. (Above) *She Became What She Beheld* was Renick's companion to *Triceracopter*. Both are in the Langsam Library at UC today.

STEGOWAGENVOLKSSAU-
rus came to Renick, "at a toy counter in a dime store, [while] looking at model kits," she told *Cincinnati Magazine* in 1978. She bought two kits, a dinosaur and a car, and fit them into a single form, creating the maquette, or scale model from which a sculptor works. She took an unpaid leave of absence beginning in the spring of 1973 to complete the piece, soliciting donations of a VW Beetle, fiberglass, and modeling clay. She molded the form for its fiberglass body by carrying thousands of pounds of hot clay from her kitchen in roasting pans to a tent attached to the garage at her house on Probasco in Clifton. By fall she was working under heaters with kitchen utensils. A Detroit automotive modeler named Ron Martin heard her lecture in Michigan, became curious about her project, and offered to teach her automotive modeling techniques. By the time she was ready to bring in professionals to help with the fiberglass molds, it had started to snow, forcing her to move the project to a fabrication shop. At the 11th hour, museum staff real- • CONTINUED ON PAGE 136

YMCA OF GREATER CINCINNATI

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Registration**
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SUMMER CAMP PLANNER 2017



From nature hikes to nifty science experiments, keep the kids happy this summer with our list of local camp fun.

ACADEMIC

Create Your Summer Program

**The Seven Hills School,
Madisonville/Kennedy Heights**

Dates: Weekly sessions, June 19–August 11

Age/Grade: Ages 7–12

Cost: Fees vary.

Contact: (513) 728-2380, jill.romerill@7hills.org, 7hills.org/summerprogram

Seven Hills offers a variety of weekly enrichment program options, including Breakout Mysteries, Movie Making Basics, Our Great Parks, STEM Challenge, Brad Redford Basketball Camp, Magic Performance Camp, Water Adventures, Kids Chefs, Bowling, and many more. Classes are hands-on, adventurous, energetic, creative, and fun. Programs are led by Seven Hills faculty or professionals from the Seven Hills community. Early care, after care, and extended care are available. Programs are open to the entire community.

Day Camps

The Summit Country Day School, Hyde Park

Dates: June 12–August 18

Age/Grade: Age 3–Grade 8

Cost: Fees vary.

Contact: (513) 871-4700, nicholson_l@summitcds.org, summitcds.org

Explore an exciting, fun-filled, educational theme-based day camp for children. Themes for preschool through kindergarten include: arts, cooking, Multicultural Week, sports, Wet & Wild Week, and more. Grades 1 through 8 have a menu of choices: robotics, forensics, fashion design and sewing, soccer, basketball, Laffalot, survivor skills, and more. Half- and full-day camps are offered. See schedule for a full array of academic, sports, and enrichment classes.

Honeybee Summer Program

**The Seven Hills School,
Madisonville/Kennedy Heights**

Dates: Weekly sessions, June 19–August 4

Age/Grade: Ages 3–4

Cost: Fees vary.

Contact: (513) 728-2380, jill.romerill@7hills.org, 7hills.org/summerprogram

The Honeybee program is designed for prekindergarteners. Weekly themes are specifically intended to offer a fun, relaxing summer, while still implementing academics into the framework. This program aims to support a child's social, emotional, and academic growth. Early care, after care, and extended care are available. Programs are open to the entire community.

SAT Ultimate

Cincinnati Country Day School, Indian Hill

Dates: July 10–27

Age/Grade: Grades 10–12

Cost: \$749 with promo code CCDSummer250

Contact: (513) 979-0229, summer@countryday.net, countryday.net/go/summer

SUMMER CAMP PLANNER 2017

Comprehensive prep offers proven test-taking strategies and personalized online tools to help students get a better score, guaranteed. Includes 25 hours of in-person, instructor-led prep; four proctored practice tests; study tools; admissions and financial aid advice to help you research schools, organize applications, and maximize financial aid awards. More details at princetonreview.com/guarantee.aspx and princetonreview.com/product/offers/332107.

Stingerbees Summer Program

**The Seven Hills School,
Madisonville/Kennedy Heights**

Dates: Weekly sessions, June 19–August 11

Age/Grade: Ages 5–7

Cost: Fees vary.

Contact: (513) 728-2380, jill.romerill@7hills.org, 7hills.org/summerprogram

The Stingerbees program provides eight weeks of exciting learning opportunities. Campers expand their imaginations and knowledge through a variety of enriching, academic-based, hands-on activities. The focus of the weekly themes is having fun in a relaxed summertime atmosphere. Early care, after care, and extended care are available. Programs are open to the entire community.

ARTS**Cincinnati Circus Camp**

Golf Manor

Dates: June 5–9, June 12–16, July 10–14, August 7–11

Age/Grade: Ages 6–16

Cost: Full day, \$225; half day, \$175; return campers and sibling discounts available.

Contact: (513) 921-5454, cincinnati.circus@gmail.com, cincinnati.circus.com

Cincinnati Circus Camp is packed full of fun things to do: Fly on a trapeze, play on inflatables, and learn fun circus skills such as juggling, aerial acrobatics, balloon twisting, and more.

Camp Art Academy

**Art Academy of Cincinnati, Over-the-Rhine,
camp held at Clifton Cultural Art Center**

Dates: June 12–July 28; no camp July 3–7

Age/Grade: Ages 5–12

Cost: \$160 per week for half-day enrollment; \$255 per week for full day enrollment

Contact: (513) 562-8748, artacademy.edu/com-ed/summer-art-camp/summer-art-camp.php

Camp Art Academy is an award-winning, memorable art experience for your camper. Balancing technical instruction with freedom of self-expression, the curriculum includes fundamental visual art skill building activities, two- and three-dimensional hands-on experiences, top-notch guest artists, and creative problem-solving with lots of fun.

Kids Dance Camp

Cincinnati Ballet Center, downtown

Dates: June 5–9, July 24–28, July 31–August 4

Age/Grade: Ages 4–8

Cost: Check website for details.

Contact: (513) 562-1111, cbacademy@cballet.org, cballet.org/academy

Students embark on weeklong safaris to explore animal kingdoms near and far! Each day, students will be dancing their way through these wildlife adventures while introducing students to the steps they'll need to explore the terrain. Through age-appropriate ballet classes and activities led by professional faculty, students build creativity, coordination, flexibility, and strength, as well as artistic expression as they work toward a culminating performance. No dance experience required.

Harry Potter Summer Art Camp

Wyoming Fine Arts Center, Wyoming

Dates: July 17–21

Age/Grade: Ages 9–13

Cost: \$149

Contact: (513) 948-1900, registrar@musicartdance.org, musicartdance.org

Each summer, campers go to a new artistic adventure creating works inspired by the timeless characters of Harry Potter. Morning and afternoon camps can be combined with pre- and post-camp childcare, available for an extra fee.

Musical Theater Summer Camp

Wyoming Fine Arts Center, Wyoming

Dates: July 17–21

Age/Grade: Ages 8 and up

Cost: \$225

Contact: (513) 948-1900, registrar@musicartdance.org, musicartdance.org

Ready for *Lion King Jr.*? Join Nancy Huey and Steve Irwin in putting on a classic Disney musical—junior version. Morning and afternoon camps can be combined with pre- and post-camp childcare, available for an extra fee.

Shakespeare Summer Camp

**Gallagher Student Center Theater,
Xavier University**

Dates: Weekly sessions, June 5–30

Age/Grade: Grades 4–12

Cost: \$275

Contact: (513) 381-2273, ext. 3202, jeanna.vella@cincyshakes.com, cincyshakes.com/summercamp Learn the art of theater from the professional members of the Cincinnati Shakespeare Company Resident Ensemble. This three-tiered program allows budding actors of all experience levels to improve their acting, stage combat, movement, and text-analysis skills.

Songwriting and Recording Camp

School of Rock, Mason

Dates: July 17–28

Age/Grade: Ages 12–18

Cost: \$900

Contact: (513) 770-1257, mason@schoolofrock.com, mason.schoolofrock.com

Campers work out original material during the first

week. In the second week, they go into the studio to record their work and produce a CD. For intermediate to advanced musicians. Check website for other available camp options.

Summer Camp

Cincinnati Art Museum, Eden Park

Dates: Weekly, June 12–August 11; no camp week of July 4.

Age/Grade: Ages 6–12

Cost: Members \$175, nonmembers \$225

Before and after care, \$35

Contact: (513) 721-ARTS, summercamp@cincyart.org, cincinnatiartmuseum.org/summercamp

Jump into art with eight weeks of exciting art projects, gallery games, and more. Explore a different theme each week with activities taught by skilled educators and museum staff. Register for multiple weeks to enjoy all the Cincinnati Art Museum has to offer.

Summer Theatre Day Camp and Performance Academy

**Playhouse in the Park, Mt. Adams;
Middletown Arts Center; and
Run Jump-n-Play, Mason**

Dates: Check website for latest info.

Age/Grade: Grades 1–12

Cost: Check website for latest info.

Contact: (513) 421-3888, cincyplay.com

One-week day camps offer courses in acting, improv, scenic design, playwriting, and more. Day camps are designed for students entering grades 1–10. Three-week, process-based performance academy programs teach the complete production of plays from the beginning, including *Beauty and the Beast Jr.* and *Sleeping Beauty, Kids!*

Youth Summer Intensive

Cincinnati Ballet Center, downtown

Dates: Division I: July 24–28, July 31–August 4; check website for additional dates.

Age/Grade: Ages 8 and up

Cost: Check website for details.

Contact: (513) 562-1111, cbacademy@cballet.org, cballet.org/academy

Cincinnati Ballet's Youth Summer Intensive is a catalyst for serious young dance students in reaching the next level of their technical and artistic ability. With unique levels for students in varying phases of their training, the Youth Summer Intensive is designed to provide individual attention and custom instruction.

GENERAL DAY CAMP**Camp at the J**

Mayerson JCC, Amberley Village

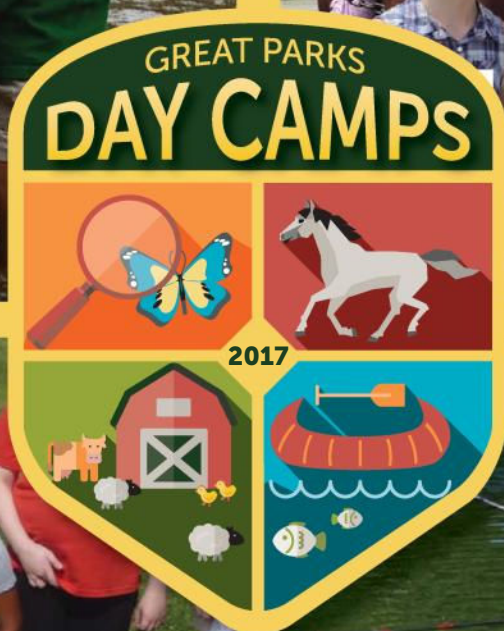
Dates: Multiple sessions, specialty camps, June 12–August 11

Age/Grade: Age 4–Grade 10

Cost: Varies

Contact: (513) 761-7500, mayersonjcc.org

From American Red Cross swim lessons and

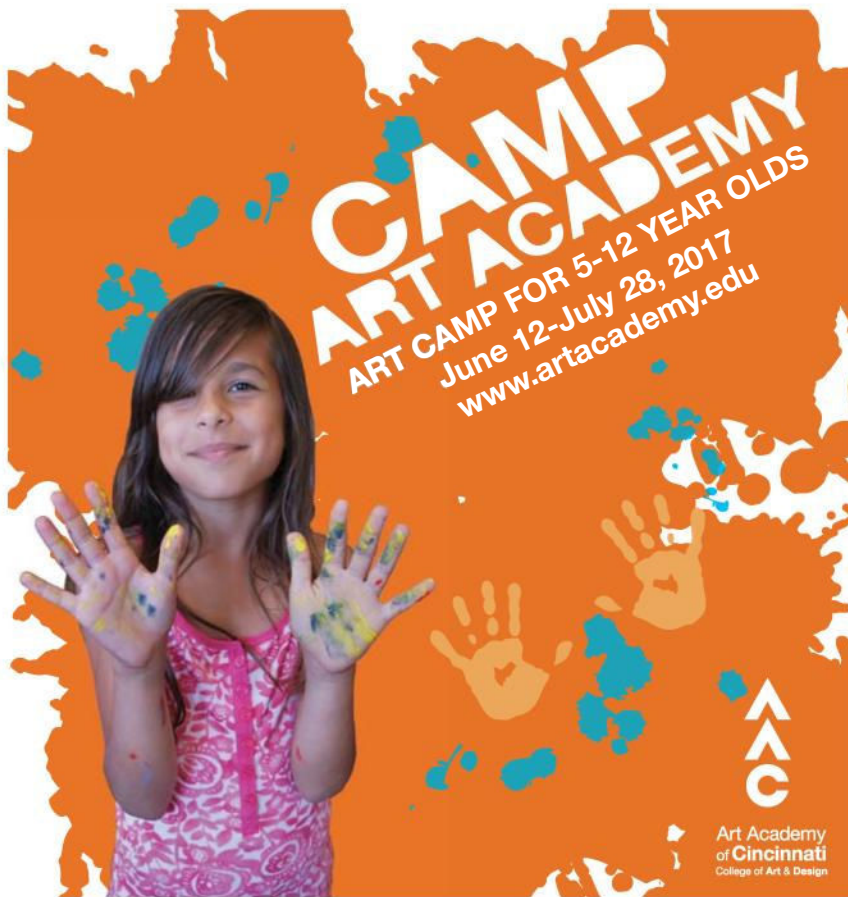


greatparks.org

Great Parks 2017 Summer Day Camps

Sign up for nature, adventure, farm, fishing
and horse camps at greatparks.org/daycamps.
Early bird pricing ends March 31.





**CAMP
ART ACADEMY**
ART CAMP FOR 5-12 YEAR OLDS
June 12-July 28, 2017
www.artacademy.edu

Art Academy
of Cincinnati
College of Art & Design

SUMMER CAMP PLANNER 2017

archery to arts and crafts, Camp at the J provides great social, educational, and cultural opportunities that foster friendships and feature all the good old-fashioned fun that has made camp a summertime staple for kids. In addition to traditional activities such as weekly theme days, sports, and field trips, Camp at the J also incorporates value-based learning and offers enrichment programs such as drama, science, social action projects, and more.

Camp Creekwood

Blue Ash YMCA, Blue Ash

Dates: May 30-August 18

Age/Grade: Ages 6-15; entering grade 1 or higher.

Cost: Check website for details.

Contact: (513) 791-5000, myY.org

Offers themes for each week. Pre- and post-camps, preschool camp, specialty programs, teen camps, and LIT (Leaders in Training) camps available. All provide opportunities to learn, make friends, and have fun. All YMCA of Greater Cincinnati camps have earned accreditation by the American Camping Association.

Camp Little Creek

Clippard Family YMCA, Colerain Twp.

Dates: Weekly, May 30-August 18

Age/Grade: Ages 5-15; must have completed kindergarten.

Cost: Check website for details.

Contact: (513) 923-4466, myY.org

Weekly camp themes include Wild Wild West, Holiday Happening, Community Clean Up, and Sports. All YMCA of Greater Cincinnati camps have earned accreditation by the American Camping Association.

Camp Outback

R.C. Durr YMCA, Burlington

Dates: Weekly, May 30-August 11

Age/Grade: Ages 5-15; must have completed kindergarten.

Cost: Check website for details.

Contact: (859) 534-5700, myY.org

Weekly camp themes include Blast From the Past, We Are Family, Down on the Farm, and more. All YMCA of Greater Cincinnati camps have earned accreditation by the American Camping Association.

Camp Tecumseh

Richard E. Lindner YMCA, Norwood

Dates: Weekly, May 30-August 18

Age/Grade: Ages 5-12; must have completed kindergarten.

Cost: Check website for details.

Contact: (513) 731-0115, myY.org

Weekly camp themes include Wild Wild West, Olympics, Gross Me Out, and more. All YMCA of Greater Cincinnati camps have earned ac-



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cincymuseum.org/programs

SUMMER CAMP
PLANNER 2017

creditation by the American Camping Association.

Camp Thunder Rock

Gamble-Nippert YMCA, Western Hills

Dates: Weekly, May 30–August 11

Age/Grade: Ages 5–12; must have completed kindergarten.

Cost: Check website for details.

Contact: (513) 661-1105, myY.org

Weekly camp themes include Splish Splash, Back in Time, We Are the Champions, and more. All YMCA of Greater Cincinnati camps have earned accreditation by the American Camping Association.

Camp Timber Trails

Clermont Family YMCA, Batavia

Dates: Weekly, May 30–August 11

Age/Grade: Ages 5–17; must have completed kindergarten.

Cost: Check website for details.

Contact: (513) 724-9622, myY.org

Weekly camp themes include Master Chef Camper Edition, Treasure Hunters, Minecraft Mania, and more. All YMCA of Greater Cincinnati camps have earned accreditation by the American Camping Association.

Camp Winding Trail

Powel Crosley, Jr. YMCA, Springfield Twp.

Dates: Weekly, May 30–August 11

Age/Grade: Ages 5–12; must have completed kindergarten.

Cost: Check website for details.

Contact: (513) 521-7112, myY.org

Weekly camp themes include Blast From the Past, We Are Family, Down on the Farm, and more. All YMCA of Greater Cincinnati camps have earned accreditation by the American Camping Association.

Greenacres Summer Camp

The Greenacres Foundation, Indian Hill

Dates: June 12–August 4

Age/Grade: Ages 6–13

Cost: Fees vary.

Contact: (513) 891-4227, mail@green-acres.org
green-acres.org/index.php/summer-camps-2
Arts, aquatic adventures, environment, equine, food, or garden—various themes mean there is a camp for almost every child. Greenacres offers hands-on, small group camps led by a caring professional staff.

Kids Camps at Mercy HealthPlex

Mercy HealthPlex locations in Anderson, Fairfield, and Western Hills (Queen City)

Dates: June 5–August 25

Age/Grade: Ages 3–12

Cost: Check website for details.

Contact: (513) 942-7539, healthplexinfo@mercy.com, mercyhealthplex.com

Mercy HealthPlex offers a wide variety of

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SCHOOL

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Campus, just
two minutes off
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MAKE IT AN UNFORGETTABLE SUMMER

Weekly summer programs open to all Greater Cincinnati children, ages 3–16. Offered at our Hillsdale Campus:
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**For more information, visit 7hills.org/SummerTime
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Choose from over 100 programs for children ages 3–16

Half-day and full-day programs available • Register for one week or all eight • Early Bird and After Care available



7hills.org/SummerTime

SUMMER CAMP PLANNER 2017

programs and activities for children this summer. Full- and half-day camps offer adventures ranging from gymnastics, basketball, and swimming to art, music, science, and more.

Summer Adventure Club Primrose School of Symmes

Dates: May 30–August 17 (single camps and multiple weeks)

Age/Grade: Ages 6–12; must have completed kindergarten.

Cost: \$240 per week

Contact: (513) 697-6970, primrosesymmes.com
Themed weeks are sure to challenge young explorers with guest speakers, multiple field trips each week, and incredible activities. Cost includes all field trips, two snacks, lunch, and before and after camp care.

Summer Day Camp!

Anderson Township Park District, Beech Acres Park RecPlex

Dates: June 5–August 18

Age/Grade: Ages 5–12; must have completed kindergarten.

Cost: Residents \$155, nonresidents \$165 (per weekly session)

Contact: (513) 388-4515, atpdreg@andersonparks.com, andersonparks.com

Fun times are ahead! Campers enjoy the great outdoors, arts and crafts, field trips, and swim time at Coney Island's Sunlite Pool. Find more camp details online.

Summer Day Camps

Great Parks of Hamilton County

Dates: June–August

Age/Grade: Ages 2–17

Cost: Check website for details.

Contact: (513) 521-7275,

greatparks.org/Discovery/children/summer-day-camps

Kids explore nature through hands-on activities, hikes, games, crafts, and more with full- and half-day camps. Find two-day to weeklong nature, adventure, farm, fishing, and horse day camps with trained and certified staff.

Summer Museum Camps

Cincinnati Museum Center, Queensgate and other locations

Dates: Weekly, May 10–August 11

Age/Grade: Grades K–8

Cost: Fees vary; most are \$255/week; member discounts apply.

Contact: (513) 287-7001, cincymuseum.org/programs/camps

Kids get their hands dirty and their minds racing as they spend each day learning and creating something new in camps with themes ranging from Harry Potter and LEGO to messy science and paleontology. Before care and after care are available.

University of Cincinnati REC Kids Camp

University of Cincinnati Campus, Clifton

Dates: 10 one-week sessions, June 6–August 11

Age/Grade: Grades 1–8

Cost: \$170, members; \$200, nonmembers

Contact: (513) 556-0604, reckids@uc.edu, uc.edu/RECKids

Sports, arts and crafts, indoor climbing, indoor swimming, and other activities are coordinated with each week's theme including Super Soakin', REC Kids Olympics, Game Show Blitz, and much more.

NATURE

Camp Ernst

YMCA Camp Ernst, Burlington

Dates: Weeklong sessions, June 11–August 5

Age/Grade: Ages 6–15

Cost: \$520, members; \$610, nonmembers (per week)

Contact: (859) 586-6181, ce@myycamp.org, myYcamp.org

Steeped in tradition and built on positive values, Camp Ernst hosts campers who are guided by top-notch counselors and who make friends doing a wide variety of activities, including zipline, archery, kayaking, banana boat, mountain biking, and much more. Specialty horse camp weeks are available for girls ages 10–15 who want to spend the whole week on horseback. For campers ages 5–9 who are not ready to jump into a full week of summer camping, introduction to overnight and half-week camping options are available.

Camp WAVE

Newport Aquarium, Newport

Dates: Weekly sessions: April 3–14, June 5–30, July 6–7, July 7–August 11, December 27–29

Age/Grade: Fall 2016 enrollment in grades 1–8;

Career Camp: Grades 6–12

Cost: Annual passholder, \$200 per weekly session; non-passholder, \$220 per weekly session

Contact: (859) 815-1467, wgosnell@wavefoundation.org, wavefoundation.org

Each action-packed week will include adventures, activities, river exploration, behind-the-scenes glimpses, and of course, up-close animal encounters all geared around an exciting theme. Opportunities include Aquatic Superheroes, SAFE (Saving Animals From Extinction), NCIS (Nautical Creature Investigative Service), Shark Week, Career Camp, Pokémon & Penguins, and Aquarium Olympic Adventures.

Cincinnati Parks Summer

Nature Day Camps

Location: Hosted by various Cincinnati Parks throughout the city.

Dates: Weekly camps, June 12–August 4; dates vary by camp location.

Age/Grade: Ages 3–14; teens can volunteer to help at camps.

Cost: \$50–\$80 per week

Contact: (513) 321-6208, ext. 11, Ruthann.spears@cincinnati-oh.gov, cincinnatiparks.com

Nature- and science-themed day camps engage children in the great outdoors. Hikes, active games,

arts and crafts, and live animal encounters fill their days with hands-on fun. Cincinnati Parks is a 2010 Cincinnati Magazine Best of the City winner.

New camps this year: Star Wars: Going Rogue!, Pokémon, and Narnia, plus a new location at Mt. Airy Forest.

CincyNature Camps

Cincinnati Nature Center, two sites: Rowe Woods and Long Branch Farms & Trails

Dates: June–August

Age/Grade: Ages 3–13

Cost: Check website for details.

Contact: (513) 831-1711 ext. 127, esmallwood@cincynature.org, cincynature.org/events-and-programs/cincynature-camp-11/

CincyNature Camps are a fun way for kids to actively challenge their minds and bodies and use their creativity and imaginations in a natural setting. Each camp offers unique, age-appropriate activities that expose children to new and exciting outdoor adventures in a safe, friendly environment. Twenty-one different camp themes range from Stories & Trails to Reptile Roundup.

Family Camp

YMCA Camp Ernst, Burlington, Kentucky

Dates: May 27–29; September 2–4

Age/Grade: All ages

Cost: \$380 for a cabin of four people, Saturday–Monday. Add more family/friends to your cabin for an additional fee.

Contact: (859) 586-6181, ce@myycamp.org, myYcamp.org

Parents often say, "I want to go to camp!" Well, here's your chance! Enjoy a weekend at camp with your family and friends. Each family is assigned to their own cabin, eats meals in the dining hall, and gets to do the classic Camp Ernst activities together, including the zipline, banana boat, and horseback riding.

Farm Camp

Gorman Heritage Farm, Evendale

Dates: Weekly sessions, June–August

Age/Grade: Ages 4–15

Cost: Members \$70–\$235, nonmembers \$100–\$275

Contact: (513) 563-6663, camp@gormanfarm.org, gormanfarm.org

Camp activities include interacting with barnyard animals, exploring the woods, garden fun, games, hiking, and more. Check out themed camp options for children with an interest in wilderness, art, veterinary science, cooking, and science. Counselor-in-training opportunities are also available for children ages 13–15.

Zoo Camps

Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden, Avondale

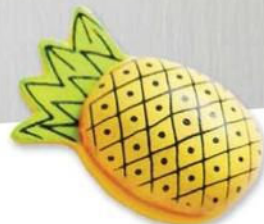
Dates: May 22–week of August 11; half- and full-day sessions available.

Age/Grade: Age 4–grade 8

Cost: Members \$110 (half), \$225 (full), and \$235 (full, grades 6–8); nonmembers \$125 (half), \$240 (full), and



4th Annual KID'S KUISINE



A Tasty Fundraiser for the
YMCA of Greater Cincinnati!

Saturday, February 25 • 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Anderson Pavilion

8 West Mehring Way, Cincinnati, OH 45202

Guests will enjoy food & drink, "play with your food" stations and kid-friendly cooking demos.

Children's & Adult Tickets are \$10 per guest/\$15 per guest at the door.
Ticket price includes all food & drink plus (1) token for Carol Ann's Carousel.
All ticket proceeds support the YMCA of Greater Cincinnati.

Purchase tickets at cincinnati.cincinnati.com/cmevents or call Chris Ohmer at 513.562.2777.



SUMMER CAMP PLANNER 2017

\$250 (full, grades 6-8)

Contact: registrars@cincinnatizoo.org,
(513) 559-7767, cincinnatizoo.org

Camps are organized by grade level and topic, and include games, hikes, animal encounters, crafts, animal feedings and shows, keeper talks, and more.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, & CAREER EXPLORATION

Classroom Antics Tech Camps

Sessions held in Anderson, Blue Ash, Cheviot-Bridgetown, Fairfield, Florence, Liberty Twp.-West Chester, Loveland, Madeira, Mason, Newtown-Mariemont, Springboro, Wyoming

Dates: Weekly sessions, June 5-August 4

Age/Grade: Ages 7-14

Cost: \$235

Contact: (800) 595-3776, tara.foote@classroomantics.com, classroomantics.com

Kids learn what they love by creating video games, producing stop-motion animation movies, coding computer programs, modding in Minecraft, or engineering LEGO robots in a Classroom Antics Tech Camp. Join other kids ages 7-14 attending weeklong tech camps. Limited space available, so register early. Use coupon code CINM10 to save \$10 per camp (expires 4/30/17).

Rosie's Girls Construction Careers:

Exploration Summer Camp

Sponsored by YWCA of Greater Cincinnati, Holmes High School, Covington

Dates: July 10-28

Age/Grade: Girls, ages 11-13

Cost: \$500; full scholarships available.

Contact: (513) 503-0056 or (513) 361-2186, rlindonhammon@ywcacin.org, ywcacincinnati.org
Rosie's Girls Program is a unique summer program for girls, ages 11-13, designed to build self-esteem, physical confidence, interpersonal cooperation, and leadership skills through learning and applying basic skills in carpentry and other technical trades.

In the Blue Space Camp

Cincinnati Country Day School, Indian Hill

Dates: July 10-14

Age/Grade: Ages 3-6

Cost: \$200

Contact: (513) 979-0229, summer@countryday.net, countryday.net/go/summer

As space explorers, campers will learn about outer space and use this knowledge and their imaginations to create a command center in a faraway galaxy. From the atmosphere to the surface this journey will incorporate science, art, and tasty treats. Walking on the moon, making a "universe in a jar," and creating constellations will begin a hyper-drive journey to the brightest spot in the galaxy.

STEAMing It Up!

Cincinnati Museum Center, with camp held at Thomas More College

Dates: July 24-28

Age/Grade: Grades K-1, 2-6

Cost: Members \$230, nonmembers \$255

Contact: (513) 287-7001, cincymuseum.org/programs/camps

Explore science, technology, engineering, art, and math each day at Thomas More College. See how they all connect. Kids will create works of art through explosive science, build drawing robots, and more!

STEM Camp

Cincinnati Country Day School, Indian Hill

Dates: Weekly sessions, June 12-August 4

Age/Grade: K-grade 4

Cost: \$100/week

Contact: (513) 979-0229, summer@countryday.net, countryday.net/go/summer

Campers will participate in daily lessons related to STEM—science, technology, engineering, or mathematics. This course is fun, interactive, and engaging for eager minds!

SPECIAL NEEDS

Camp Flame Catcher

Epilepsy Foundation of Greater Cincinnati, Camp Kern in Warren County

Dates: April 7-9, July 9-13, September 22-24

Age/Grade: Ages 8 and older

Cost: \$175-\$375

Contact: (513) 721-2905, mfindley@epilepsy-ohio.org, epilepsy-ohio.org

Campers learn valuable coping skills in dealing with their seizures, while also meeting other children who share similar challenges. Friendships developed at camp help them see they are not alone. Activities include swimming, horseback riding, canoeing, crafts, and more. Financial assistance available.

Camp Joyful Hearts

Cincinnati Children's - Heart Institute, Joy Outdoor Education Center, Clarksville, Ohio

Dates: June 25-June 30v

Age/Grade: Ages 8-18

Cost: Free for eligible campers

Contact: (513) 803-1841, heartcamp@cchmc.org, cincinnatichildrens.org/service/h/heart-institute/patients/camp-joyful

Camp Joyful Hearts is a camp for kids and teens with congenital or acquired heart disease that encourages participation in a variety of activities to help the camper develop skills and a sense of accomplishment. Eligible campers are cardiac patients actively being followed by a cardiologist at the Heart Institute or another medical center.

Camp Stepping Stones

Two camp locations: Indian Hill (Given Road), Batavia (Camp Allyn)

Dates: Day camp, June 5-August 4; overnight camp, June 4-August 4

Age/Grade: Day camp, ages 5-22; overnight camp, ages 12 and up

Cost: Day camp \$48 per day, overnight camp \$325-\$1,500

Contact: (513) 965-5108, jeannie.ludwig@steppingstonesohio.org, steppingstonesohio.org/stepping-stones-summer

At Camp Stepping Stones, people with disabilities have fun and make friends in a supportive and structured environment. Participants will catch fish, explore nature, play a variety of sports, and create art projects with new friends. Each week boasts a different theme, from music to sea creatures to sensory experiences and holiday fun.

SPORTS

Basketball Skills

Cincinnati Country Day School, Indian Hill

Dates: June 26-30

Age/Grade: Grades 1-4

Cost: \$150

Contact: (513) 979-0229, summer@countryday.net, countryday.net/go/summer

This skills camp will teach players the fundamentals needed to play the game of basketball. Players will work on their passing, dribbling, and shooting skills through fun drills and games. Each player will leave camp with more confidence in their ability and skill set as they take to the court. Campers should come with a pair of proper athletic shoes and a water bottle.

British Soccer Full Day Camp

Cincinnati Country Day School, Indian Hill

Dates: June 26-30

Age/Grade: Ages 8-13

Cost: \$280

Contact: (513) 979-0229, summer@countryday.net, countryday.net/go/summer

Be part of nearly 120,000 players to participate in the largest, most popular soccer program in the USA and Canada. Professional British soccer coaches will deliver an innovative camp curriculum integrating core techniques, individual foot skills, small-sided games, tactics, cultural education, and fun. Lunch provided. Campers should come dressed wearing soccer cleats, shin guards, and sunscreen.

Full Throttle Indoor Karting

11725 Commons Dr., Springdale

Dates: Single day camps: June 15, July 13, August 10; weeklong camps: June 5-9; June 19-23; July 3-7; July 17-21 and July 31-August 4

Age/Grade: Ages 8-15

Cost: Single day camp \$75, weeklong camp \$300

Contact: (513) 341-5278, info@gofullthrottle.com, gofullthrottle.com

Single day- and weeklong go kart speed camps let drivers experience hands-on driving and racing skills. The single day camps serve as an introduction to racing, while the weeklong camps focus on fundamental racing skills with on-track and classroom sessions. All camps include lunch, snacks, and racing-themed entertainment. ■

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†\$50 Visa Gift Card with qualifying Fioptics bundles on one-year promotional price. \$100 Visa Gift Card with qualifying Fioptics bundles on two-year promotional price. Gift cards will be mailed after services are installed. See associate for details. *Speed claim is based on comparison of Fioptics Gigabit Internet service to Charter/Spectrum's highest advertised speeds as of 2/1/17. **Offer available to new residential customers only and not available in all areas and is dependent on service address. \$59.99 bundle price is a promotional rate for 12 months. The offer includes Fioptics Foundation TV, (1) \$6 genre pack and 100 Mbps Fioptics Internet. Fioptics MyTV package requires subscription to Foundation TV and at least one genre pack of channels. Monthly bundle price will increase \$25 after 12-month promotional period. Fioptics TV and access to HD and/or premium channels requires a set-top box per TV at an additional \$7.99/month per box. Internet subscription requires a modem lease fee of \$7.99/month. Subscription cancellation will result in equipment charge if not returned to Cincinnati Bell. Additional features, taxes, government fees and surcharges are additional to the package price. Other restrictions may apply. ‡Limit one eero system per household. Offer valid in Cincinnati Bell Retail Stores and expires March 31, 2017.

17CB0103



cincinnati HOME & GARDEN show®


Presented by the Cincinnati-Northern Kentucky Honda Dealers  **HONDA**



February 25-26 & March 1-5, 2017 • Duke Energy Convention Center

From the Publishers of
[Cincinnati Magazine]

Sponsored by
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Where else can you find 350-plus specialty companies, all under one roof, dedicated to giving you the home and garden of your dreams? Nowhere else but the Cincinnati Home & Garden Show® presented by the Cincinnati-Northern Kentucky Honda Dealers.

You'll find landscapers and design/build firms to create your own backyard oasis or recreational wonderland. You'll find specialists in kitchen and bath design. You'll find home improvement pros ready to install quality windows, sturdy roofing and energy-efficient heating and air conditioning. Get consultations on solar power, security and smart home systems, interior design, flooring, and so much more.

Need some additional inspiration? Take in one of the many home seminars to note the latest trends or browse through the Garden MarketSM for some new additions or tools for your landscape.

And when you're ready to hit pause, the Show has that covered, too. Sip and savor some refreshments in the Wine Garden, then get back into the mix for more Show fun.

For 48 years, the Cincinnati Home & Garden Show® has been helping area homeowners bring their ideas to life. So bring the family or your friends and check out what's new for 2017!

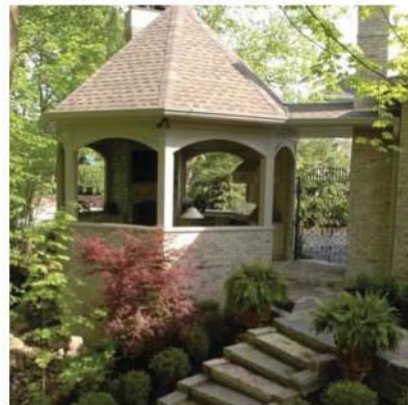
Looking forward to seeing you there!

Vicki Hart

Vicki Hart
CEO



AQUATIC & GARDEN DECOR



NEAL'S DESIGN - REMODEL



DECKORATORS

cincinnati **HOME & GARDEN** show

ADMISSION & DISCOUNTS:

ADULTS: \$13 at the door

\$11 online at cincinnatihomeandgardenshow.com

CHILDREN (12 & YOUNGER): FREE!

Save \$3 by purchasing your adult ticket at any area Kroger store.



SHOW DATES AND HOURS

Saturday, February 25	10:30 AM-8 PM
Sunday, February 26	10:30 AM-6 PM
Monday, February 27	Closed
Tuesday, February 28	Closed
Wednesday, March 1	Noon-8 PM
Thursday, March 2	Noon-8 PM
Friday, March 3	Noon-8 PM
Saturday, March 4	10:30 AM-8 PM
Sunday, March 5	10:30 AM-5 PM

SEMINARS

Saturday, February 25

12 PM	Transform One of Your Largest Rooms—Your Garage!
	Ideal Garage, Chuck Shoemaker
2 PM	Using Technology to Make Your Remodel Picture Perfect
	Biehl Brothers, Chase & Ryan Biehl
4 PM	Trending Now: Most Popular Kitchen & Bath Remodeling Designs
	Neal's Design - Remodel, Alan Hendy & Cyndi Kohler
6 PM	Roofing Systems: Know When to Repair or Replace
	Deer Park Roofing, Nick Sabino

Sunday, February 26

12 PM	Residential Solar: What Can Solar Do for My Home?
	Icon Solar, Dave Smith
1 PM	How to Qualify a Contractor
	Biehl Brothers, Chase & Ryan Biehl
3 PM	Hot Kitchen and Bath Design Transformations for 2017
	Neal's Design - Remodel, Neal Hendy & Connie Hampton
4 PM	Building a Dream Log Home
	Tri State Log & Timber Homes, Tim & Anita Dyer

Friday, March 3

4 PM	Imagine an Organized Garage and Home... Here's How
	Ideal Garage, Chuck Shoemaker
5 PM	Reviving Your Existing Cabinetry and Furniture with Paint Colors and Finishes: Why Buy New? Re-do!
	Silver Rabbit Studio, Martha Best

Friday, March 3 (continued)

6 PM	Solar Power: Past, Present and Future
	Icon Solar, Mark Carucci

Saturday, March 4

12 PM	Transform One of Your Largest Rooms—Your Garage!
	Ideal Garage, Chuck Shoemaker
1 PM	How to Choose the Correct Finish for Your Decorative Painting Projects
	Silver Rabbit Studio, Martha Best
2 PM	How to Use Technology to Make Your Remodel Picture Perfect
	Biehl Brothers, Chase & Ryan Biehl
3 PM	Building a Dream Log Home
	Tri State Log & Timber Homes, Tim & Anita Dyer
4 PM	Trending Now: Most Popular Kitchen & Bath Remodeling Designs
	Neal's Design - Remodel, Neal Hendy & Cyndi Kohler

Sunday, March 5

12 PM	How to Qualify a Contractor
	Biehl Brothers, Chase & Ryan Biehl
1 PM	Hot Kitchen and Bath Design Transformations for 2017
	Neal's Design - Remodel, Alan Hendy & Connie Hampton
2 PM	Signs of a Failing Roof System
	Deer Park Roofing, Nick Sabino

SEE IT AT THE SHOW

Don't miss these great products and services while visiting the Cincinnati Home & Garden Show®, presented by the Cincinnati-Northern Kentucky Honda Dealers! **H HONDA**

by Sarah M. Mullins



Bring Your Ideas to Life

Neal's Design - Remodel is a one-stop source for kitchens, baths, lower levels, outdoor living and additions. Stop by their booths or check out one of their seminars at the Show to begin planning your next remodeling project. **Booths 1212-1218**

Mid-Century Look and More

Watson's carries a wide selection of outdoor furnishings and home decor, including this Russel seating set, a Mid-Century Modern-inspired collection. Ready to add some style to your outdoor areas? See **Booths 843-1242**.





Attractive Outdoor Structures

For more than 10 years, **Cricket Valley Structures** has been building storage buildings, yard barns, storage sheds, garages and cabins. See what they can build for you. **Booth 1713**



Now On Deck

Stop by **Deckorators** to see the latest in decking products, including Heritage Riverhouse decking, a product with the look and feel of distressed wood flooring. **Booth 474**



Outdoor Fun

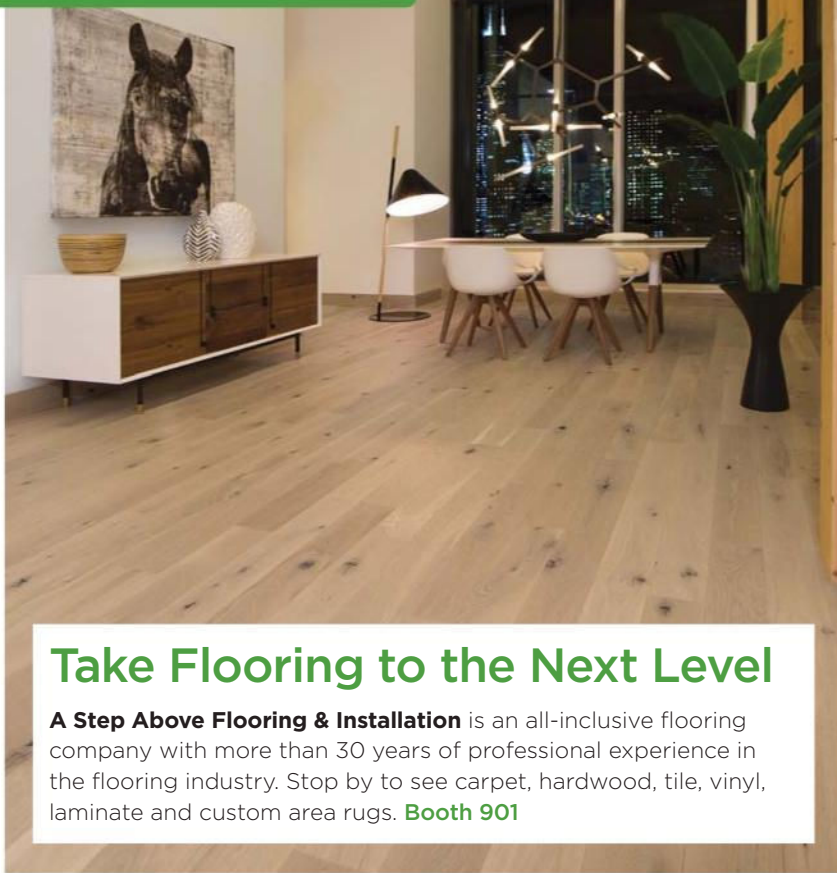
With everything from basketball hoops to wooden swing sets, **Recreations Outlet** has been "Ohio's Playground Headquarters" for more than 25 years. Stop by to see what's new. **Booth 1473**



Give Your Yard a Lift

Aquatic & Garden Decor offers a selection of unique and beautiful quality garden art, fountains, birdbaths, benches, planters, home and garden accents and more. Stop by to find a new addition for your garden. **Booth 1273**

SEE IT AT THE SHOW



Take Flooring to the Next Level

A Step Above Flooring & Installation is an all-inclusive flooring company with more than 30 years of professional experience in the flooring industry. Stop by to see carpet, hardwood, tile, vinyl, laminate and custom area rugs. **Booth 901**



Transform Your Space

Oberfields is a manufacturer of quality paver and retaining wall products with options that include concrete pavers, face-mix pavers, natural stone and more. Stop by their booth, where they will be showcasing face-mix pavers and products from their Rosetta collection. **Garden G-12**

ROOM TO DREAM

with Kathy Ireland®
Designer & Entrepreneur



Ready to take the next step in making your dream room a reality? Enter our Room to Dream Sweepstakes for a chance to win a visit from Kathy Ireland to help transform any room in your home! American Family Insurance has partnered with Ireland, former model and present-day CEO and chief designer of Kathy Ireland Worldwide, for the last four years as its brand ambassador.

"We aim to inspire people to pursue their dreams," says Alex Koeller, event specialist at American Family Insurance. "And Kathy is the perfect person to help us do that. By working hard to achieve her dream of becoming a successful entrepreneur, she's proved to be a great role model."

As part of this prize package, American Family Insurance will also provide a Ring Video Doorbell—a security system designed to allow users to answer the home doorbell remotely—to the eligible winner. More info on the Ring video doorbell can be found at amfam.com/ring.

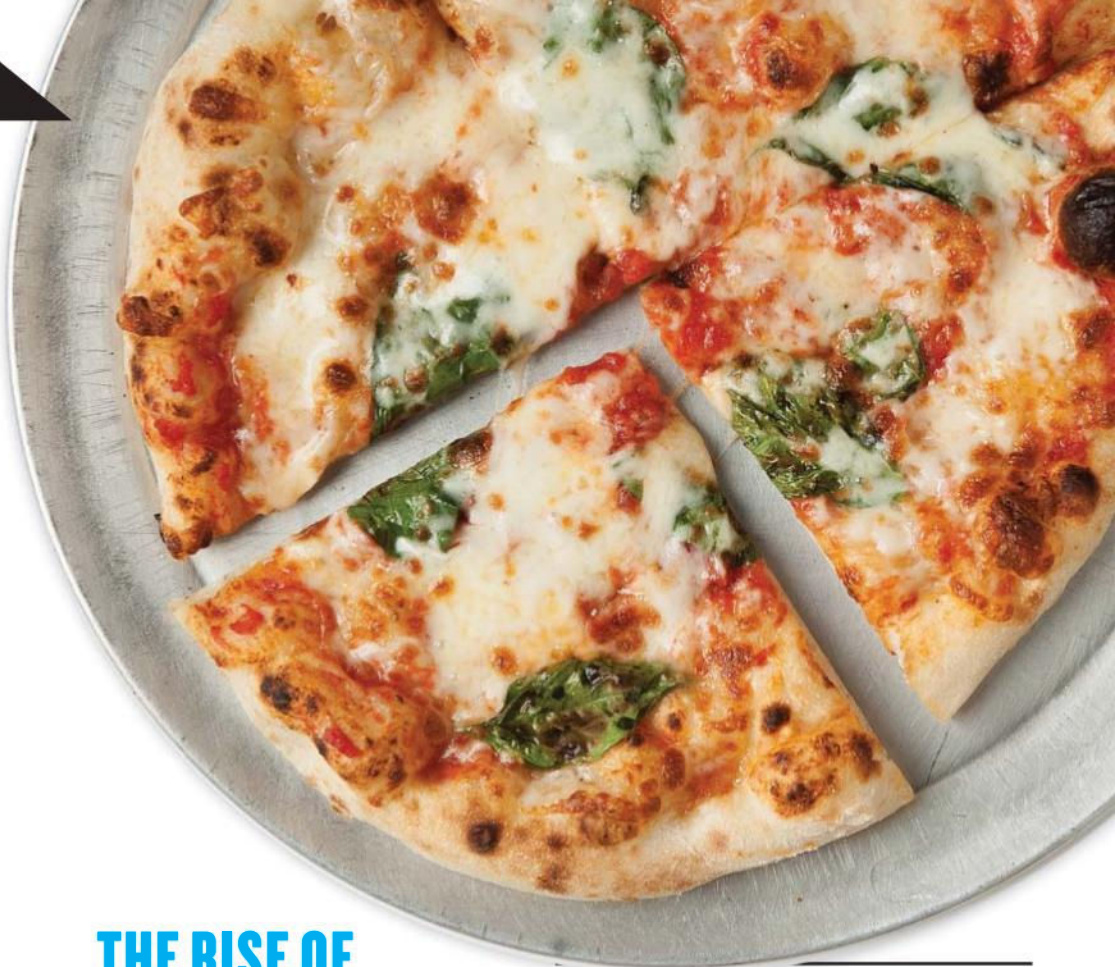
THE DETAILS

- **Sweep ends** March 26, 2017.
- **Sign up** for The Room to Dream Sweepstakes at the Cincinnati Home & Garden Show® or online at amfam.com/homeshows.
- **Prize Package:**
 - \$15,000 (retail value) worth of Kathy Ireland Worldwide products (furniture and accessories) and one scheduled visit by Kathy Ireland in your home (date and time to be approved by both winner and Kathy Ireland)
 - A complete Ring Video Doorbell package (two (2) Ring units and one (1) Chime unit to complement the Ring)
- **Eligibility:** 21 years or older

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THE RISE OF FAST-CASUAL FOOD

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1, 6 P.M.

A FOOD & WINE RECEPTION WILL FOLLOW

→ *Cincinnati Magazine* Dining Editor Joanne Drilling moderates a discussion about the growing fast-casual dining trend, a restaurant concept popularized by Chipotle and currently expanding in markets across the U.S.

Joining the conversation will be **Lachlan Mackinnon-Patterson**, winner of a James Beard Award, a former Iron Chef, and co-owner of Pizzeria Locale; and **Joe and John Lanni**, whose Thunderdome Restaurant Group owns Currito, The Eagle, and Maplewood Kitchen and Bar.



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MACKINNON-PATTERSON



JOHN LANNI



JOE LANNI



JOANNE DRILLING

Tickets are \$20 for Mercantile Library members; \$25 for non-members

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED: WWW.MERCANTILELIBRARY.COM OR 513-621-0717

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2017

**CINCINNATI
INTERNATIONAL**
Wine Festival

**TASTING
GUIDE**



www.winefestival.com

EVENT DETAILS



CINCINNATI INTERNATIONAL *Wine Festival*

WINERY DINNERS

Enjoy pairings of world-class food and wine as the area's finest restaurants team up with visiting winemakers.

Alfio's Buon Cibo, Pascual Toso

**Bouquet Restaurant,
The Burgundies of Boisset**

The Capital Grille, Beaulieu Vineyard

Carlo & Johnny, Heitz Cellars

**Coppin's at Hotel Covington,
Mundovino - Exploring the Iberian
Peninsula: Spain and Portugal**

**Daveed's Catering at Corkopolis,
Flora Springs Winery**

Harvest Bistro, Winebow - A Taste of Italy

**Jag's Steak and Seafood,
Chateau Bordeaux**

Lisse, Sulin Wines of Piedmont

**The Metropolitan Club,
Wente Family Vineyards**

**Morton's the Steakhouse,
Trinchero Family Vineyards**

Prism, Terlato Wines

Restaurant L, Darioush Winery

**Ruth's Chris Steak House,
Orin Swift/Talbot Vineyards**

Trio Bistro, Alpha Omega Winery

The Precinct, Robert Mondavi Winery

Thursday, March 2, 2017, 6:30 p.m.

Tickets: \$125-\$200 per person

Orchids at Palm Court

Hosted by 2017 Honorary Chair
Genevieve Janssens, Robert Mondavi Winery

Wednesday, March 1, 2017, 6:30 p.m.

Tickets: \$210 per person

THE GRAND TASTINGS

The cornerstone of the Wine Festival! Sample more than 700 wines from over 250 wineries and bid on silent auction lots all while enjoying delicious food with friends.

**Duke Energy Convention Center
Grand Ballroom, 3rd Floor**

Friday, March 3 and
Saturday, March 4, 2017,
6:30-9 p.m.

**Tickets: \$80 per person
\$85 per person at the door**

Saturday afternoon,
March 4, 2017,
2:30-4:30 p.m.

**Tickets: \$70 per person
\$75 per person at the door**

THE SPECIAL TASTING ROOM

A selection of high-end wines are poured in the Special Tasting Room for one hour only before each Grand Tasting.

**Duke Energy Convention Center
Junior Ballroom C & D, 3rd Floor**

Friday, March 3 and
Saturday, March 4, 2017,
5:30-6:30 p.m.

Saturday afternoon,
1:30-2:30 p.m.

**Tickets: \$40 per person plus
Grand Tasting admission
(includes seven tastes)
\$45 per person at the door**

EDUCATION SESSIONS

Join some of the most knowledgeable wine educators in Cincinnati for a one-hour education session prior to each Grand Tasting.

**Duke Energy Convention Center
Junior Ballroom A, 3rd Floor**

Friday, March 3 and
Saturday, March 4, 2017,
5:30-6:30 p.m.

Saturday afternoon,
1:30-2:30 p.m.

**Tickets: \$20 per person
plus Grand Tasting admission**

CHARITY AUCTION & LUNCHEON

Bid on a phenomenal catalog of limited-release bottlings, vertical vintages, rare wines coaxed from the cellars of notable Cincinnatians, dining opportunities at exclusive local homes, trips, and much more. Then enjoy a gourmet meal with carefully selected wine pairings presented by winemakers from around the world.

Hilton Netherland Plaza, Hall of Mirrors

Saturday, March 4, 2017
9:30 a.m. Wine Reception & Silent Auction

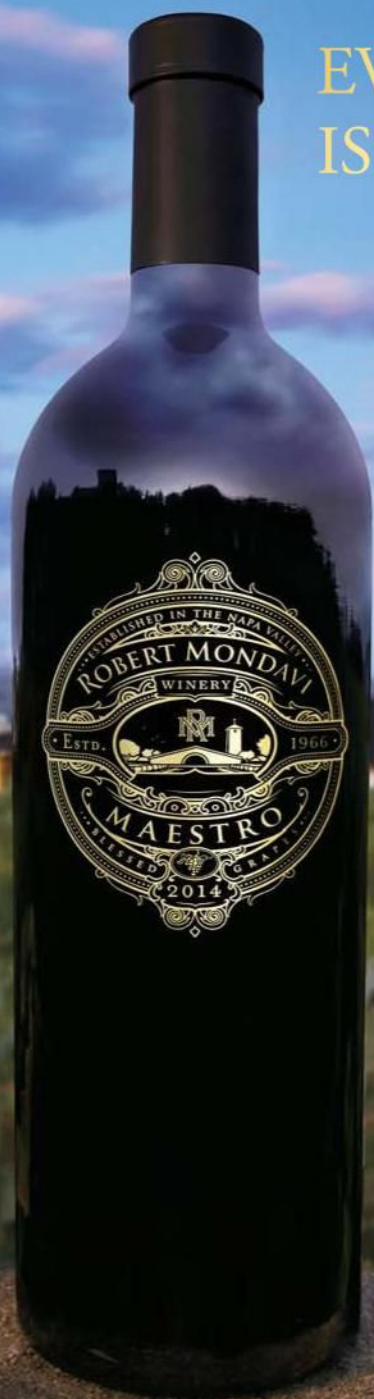
11 a.m. Live Auction followed by
a Winery Luncheon

Tickets: \$135 per person

PURCHASE ADVANCE TICKETS

Advance tickets for all events can be purchased online at www.winefestival.com or by calling 513-723-WINE (9463). Half of your ticket price is tax-deductible.

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IS INSPIRED.



Look for us at the Cincinnati International Wine Festival.
Discover the distinct personality of our wines with our Director of Winemaking
GENEVIÈVE JANSSENS, HONORARY FESTIVAL CHAIR.

Learn more at RobertMondaviWinery.com

Please enjoy our wines responsibly.
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Q&A:

Genevieve Janssens

BY KATHLEEN DOANE



This year's honorary chair, Genevieve Janssens, is the Director of Winemaking at Napa Valley's Robert Mondavi Winery, which celebrated its 50th anniversary last year. Janssens believes that great wine begins with a respect for nature and people, a philosophy she learned from Robert Mondavi himself.

When did your family start making wine in France? *My family is from Algeria with French heritage. We began making wine in Algeria in the 19th century. After the Algerian war [1954-1962], my father continued his wine business in Corsica.*

Did you always want to follow in his footsteps? *My father talked about wine and vineyards at every lunch and dinner when I was growing up. I grew to share his interests and passions. Though I studied geology in college, I chose to make a career shift when my dad said, "You know, you should go to school in Bordeaux and get your enology diploma, then come back to help me with*

my business." I concurred and the rest is history. I eventually opened my own enology lab in Provence.

How did you end up in California at the Mondavi Winery? *I was traveling in the U.S. in 1978 to learn more about winemaking, because the talk in Europe was that California was an innovative area trying new winemaking ideas. There I met [Robert] Mondavi. He was a superstar. I soon began working in the lab at Mondavi as an enologist.*

You have talked about Robert Mondavi's holistic approach to winemaking. What do you mean by that? *He was extremely respectful of nature, people, and wine. When Mr. Mondavi was growing his grapes, he was seeing nature. Employees were expected to balance vineyard management with the forest around it, along with the river, the streams, and the insects. At the winery, he wanted both the employees and the wine to be treated with respect. He carried that same comprehensive vision into the kitchen, then to the table. It gave me a total understanding of why we make wine and how to do it well.*

I know you love to cook. How do you go about pairing a wine with a new dish? *When I'm cooking, I first determine what will underscore the meal: Will it be a light fish, a heavy sauce, or a meat dish? I associate that driving force with what I know about wine. A chardonnay could support more sauce, for example. You also can't really go wrong with a pinot or cabernet. I interchange red and white with meat and fish, as long as they are harmonious. I consider a white and a red in accordance with each dish, and then ask my friends which they prefer.*


What advice would you give to festivalgoers? *Don't be intimidated, and don't listen to anybody. Taste, then decide whether you like it or not. You are learning about yourself, so come and explore! The Cincinnati International Wine Festival is the perfect place to try new wines and determine your unique, personal taste.*

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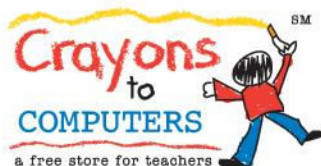
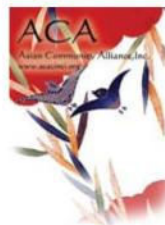
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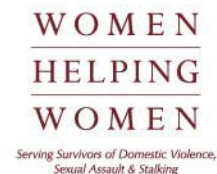
GIVING BACK ONE

The Cincinnati International Wine Festival is a charitable, nonprofit organization founded to raise funds for local charities supporting the arts, education, and health and human services, and to promote the wine industry.

Through these events and your participation, the Wine Festival has granted more than \$4.9 million to the Cincinnati community. To learn more about how your donation to the Wine Festival directly impacts these organizations, read their stories at winefestival.com/giving-back. **THANK YOU for giving back!**



GLASS AT A TIME



TURNING GRAPES INTO GOLD... AND SILVER AND BRONZE

INSIGHT INTO THE WINE FESTIVAL COMPETITION

Every year, all participating wineries are offered the opportunity to submit their wines to be judged. This competition is the Olympics of the wine industry—enter your best wines in hopes of achieving recognition for outstanding quality in the form of Gold, Silver, and Bronze medals.

Prior to the Grand Tastings, over 400 wines are swirled, sniffed, sipped, and evaluated by trained judges. These judges are wine educators, culinary professionals, restaurateurs, wine retailers, certified sommeliers, wine salespeople, and industry advocates. Our judges are committed to the integrity of the wine industry and Competition, and attend a training program prior to the Competition.

Each wine is tasted using a modified blind format, which means that the type of grape and where it's grown is revealed, but not the winery, wine name, or vintage. The judges use a 20-point grading scale to rate each wine on five major categories: Appearance, Aroma & Bouquet, Taste & Texture, Finish & Aftertaste, and Overall Impression.

The behind-the-scenes staff works diligently to ensure the wines are presented to the judges in the most professional manner. The Riedel glassware is washed and hand polished after each use. If any judge deems that a wine has "off" aromas, another bottle is opened without question. The scoring sheets are collected, tabulated, and double-checked by an independent third party. The results are returned to the Wine Festival, and the medals are awarded.

The Wine Festival Competition is recognized nationally and is considered one of the premier wine events in the country. These rules are established to ensure absolute credible results, and the Wine Festival board and staff are committed to enforcing the rules to maintain the highest professional standards for the Competition.



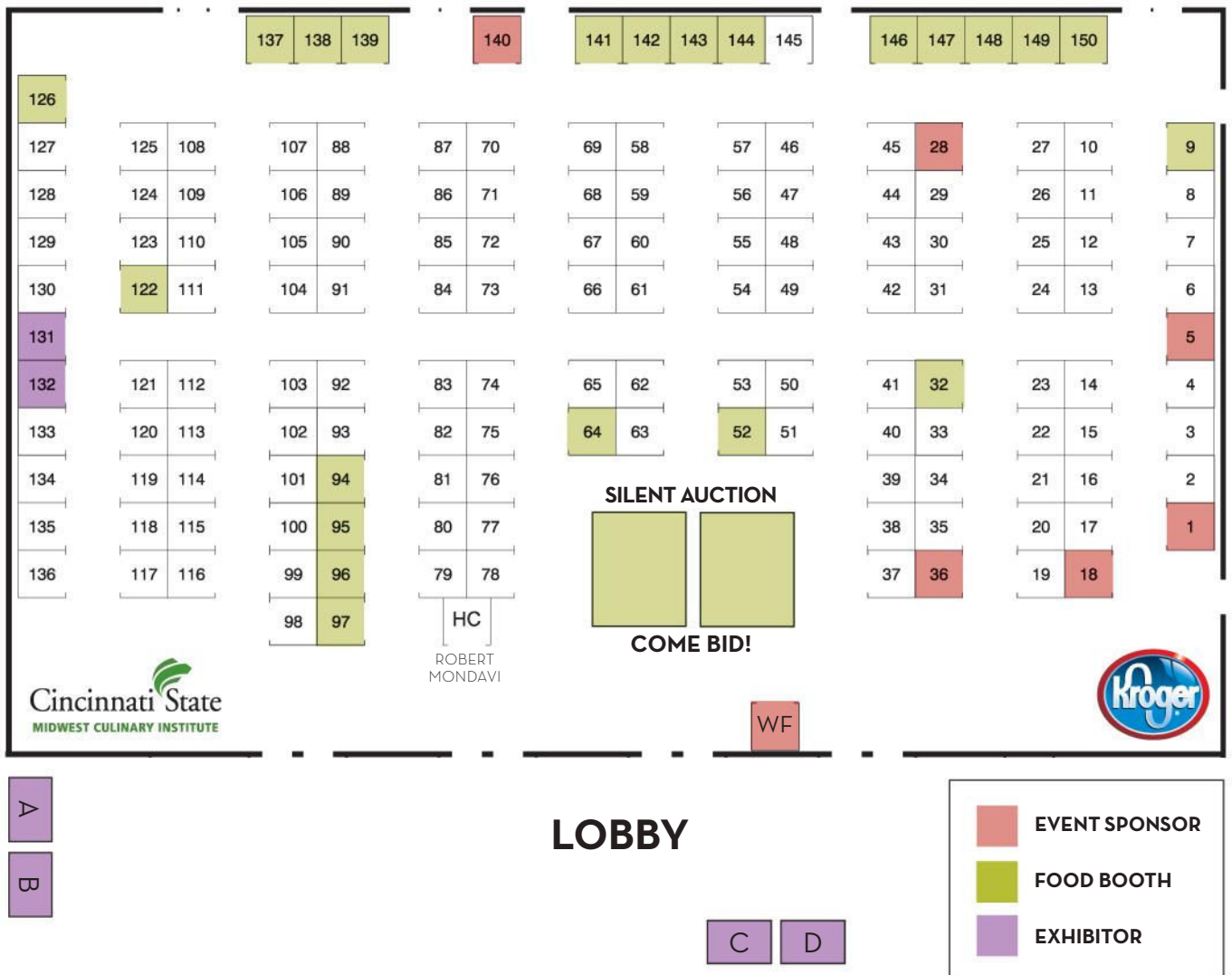
SPECIAL TASTING ROOM WINES

These high-end selections are featured for sampling in the Special Tasting Room, open one hour only prior to each Grand Tasting for an additional admission. **Cheers!**

2009 Anthonij Rupert Cabernet Franc <i>Western Cape South Africa</i>	2013 Cherry Pie "Stanely Ranch" Pinot Noir <i>Carneros Napa</i>	2015 GAJA Ca'Marcanda Vistamare <i>Toscana</i>	2013 Robert Mondavi Winery Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon <i>Napa Valley</i>
NV Barrone Pizzini 'Animate' Franciacorta DOCG <i>Lombardy</i>	2013 Chimney Rock Elevage Blanc <i>Napa</i>	2013 GAJA 'Sito Moresco' Langhe DOC <i>Piedmont</i>	2014 Robert Mondavi Winery Reserve Chardonnay <i>Napa Valley</i>
2008 Batasiolo Barolo Cerequio <i>Piedmont</i>	2013 Col Solare <i>Red Mountain/Columbia Valley Washington</i>	2010 Heitz 'Trailside Vineyard' Cabernet Sauvignon <i>Napa</i>	2014 Robert Mondavi Winery Reserve Fume Blanc <i>Oakville</i>
2012 Beringer Private Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon <i>Napa</i>	2010 Cyneth Red Blend <i>Sonoma</i>	2011 Maison Louis Latour "En Chevret" Volnay Premier Cru <i>Burgundy</i>	2013 Rombauer Diamond Selection Cabernet Sauvignon <i>Napa</i>
2013 Beringer Private Reserve Chardonnay <i>Napa</i>	2013 Darioush Signature Cabernet Franc <i>Napa</i>	1999 Maison Roche de Bellene Collection Bellenum Meursault <i>Burgundy</i>	2013 Round Pond Estate Cabernet Sauvignon <i>Rutherford</i>
NV Berlucchi Brut Rose Franciacorta DOCG <i>Lombardy</i>	2013 Darioush Signature Cabernet Sauvignon <i>Napa</i>	2012 Marchesi de Frescobaldi, Castello Nipozzano Montesodi <i>Toscana</i>	2012 Silverado 'GEO' Cabernet Sauvignon <i>Coombsville</i>
2013 Blackbird Vineyards 'Arise' Red <i>Napa Valley</i>	2014 Darioush Signature Pinot Noir <i>Napa</i>	2011 Masi Costasera Amarone della Valpolicella Classico DOCG <i>Veneto</i>	2012 Silverado 'SOLO' Cabernet Sauvignon <i>Stags Leap District</i>
2014 Cakebread Cellars Chardonnay <i>Napa</i>	2013 Darioush Signature Shiraz <i>Napa</i>	2012 Mayacamas Cabernet Sauvignon <i>Mt. Veeder</i>	2011 Silvio Nardi Brunello di Montalcino <i>Tuscany</i>
2012 Catena Alta Malbec Historic Rows <i>Mendoza</i>	2013 Domaine Antoine Jobard Meursault Les Tillets <i>Burgundy</i>	2014 Mayacamas Chardonnay <i>Mt. Veeder</i>	2013 Stags Leap Cabernet Sauvignon "The Leap" <i>Napa</i>
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2006 Champagne Besserat Bellefon Vintage Brut <i>Epernay</i>	2013 Domaine Tempier Bandol La Tourtine <i>Provence</i>	2013 Nickel & Nickel Cabernet Sauvignon Sullenger Vineyards <i>Oakville Napa</i>	2012 Trichero "Marios Vineyard" Cabernet Sauvignon St. Helena <i>Napa</i>
NV Champagne Canard Duchene Charles VII Brut Cuvee Blanc de Noir <i>Champagne</i>	2013 Dr. Loosen Riesling Auslese Ürziger Würzgarten <i>Mosel</i>	2014 Orin Swift Papillon <i>Napa</i>	2012 Vietti 'Castiglione' Barolo <i>Piedmont</i>
NV Champagne Piper-Heidsieck Brut <i>Reims</i>	2012 Ehlers Estate Cabernet Sauvignon <i>Napa</i>	2011 Prunotto Barolo DOCG <i>Piedmont</i>	2014 Vieux Telegraphe Chateauf-neuf-du-Pape Blanc <i>Rhone</i>
NV Champagne Veuve Fourny Brut Grand Reserve <i>Vertus</i>	2013 En Route Chardonnay <i>Russian River Valley</i>	2014 Raymond Chardonnay LVE John Legend Vineyard <i>Napa Valley</i>	2013 Vieux Telegraphe Chateauf-neuf-du-Pape <i>Rhone</i>
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	2013 Fuse Cabernet Sauvignon by Signarello <i>Napa Valley</i>	2013 Robert Mondavi Maestro <i>Napa Valley</i>	2014 Z-D Pinot Noir <i>Carneros</i>
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Agricola Sulin	125	Department 66/ Eberle Winery	19	Layer Cake Wines	89	Robert Mondavi Winery	HC
Alouette Cheese USA/ Stacy's Snacks	142	Dole	148	Loosen Bros USA	38	Rodney Strong Wine Estates	92
Alpha Omega Winery/ Eagle Canyon Wines	107	Duckhorn Vineyards	20	M Imports	39	Royal Caribbean	D
Arla Foods USA/ Lesley Stowe	144	Duplin Winery "The Winery of the South"	87	Martin Ray & Angeline Winery	40	Ruffino/Ravage/Rosatello	81
Babich/Batasiolo	3	Easley Winery	88	Matchbook Wine Company	41	Santa Margherita USA	74
Baker-Bird Winery	127	Elite Brands (House of Cards, Yao, Cinnabar)	21	McNab Ridge	134	Seaview Imports	130
Banfi Vintners	66	Empire Kroger Deli	94-97	Meier's Wine Cellars	91	Slo Down Wines/ Thomas Fogarty Winery	48
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now more than 30 restaurants, not counting fast-food chains, in OTR. Assuming five cooks can staff an average kitchen five days a week, that's around 150 new positions in the last six years, and that staffing pressure trickles down to restaurants old and new throughout the region.

One important benefit of this growth is that, across many different sizes and styles of restaurant, food quality continues to improve. De Cavel, Wright, Francis, and Jeremy Lieb, culinary director for the Boca Restaurant Group, all patronize local farms for seasonal produce and seek out the highest grades of proteins, from heritage breed Red Wattle hogs to locally-raised paddlefish caviar, to serve to guests. And they're not the only ones. But with improvement comes a new standard across the board, and it's begun to raise staffing concerns among the chefs running these high-performance kitchens. Bhumini Desai, executive chef of Maplewood Kitchen, sees it as a problem of quality, not quantity. "Line cooks in general are a dime a dozen," he says, "but those who have the attention to detail are harder to find."

De Cavel goes one step further in clarifying the distinction. "There is a huge difference between being a culinarian and being a cook," he says. "The culinarian understands the season of the menu, the season of the produce, the difference between certain cuts of vegetables, and a certain way to make sauces. A cook doesn't have that [broad range of] knowledge."

Anyone who has ever watched the kitchen staff at a Waffle House knows that cooks can be first-rate. Having what it takes—self-discipline and mental toughness—to cross the bridge from good to great, however, is rare. And right now, in the Queen City, too many cooks who could make that leap are getting off at the last exit before the bridge.

→ **A GENERATION OR MORE AGO (IN THE PRE-nouvelle cuisine era), Cincinnati was a fine dining mecca—we had more Mobil Travel Guide five-star restaurants (three) than New York City (two).** It is said that if you were a server at Maisonette, The Gourmet Room, or the original Pigall's, you could move to Chicago or New York and get hired at a top restaurant without an interview. The service was impeccable, but it had to be, because the *food* was extraordinary. What set these restaurants apart mostly boiled down to preparation and technique. How precise was the *brunoise* of shallot? Did the *bordelaise* sauce possess the perfect viscosity? Skilled line cooks reproduced the same dish created by the head chef over and over again, with a maniacal attention to detail. Dressed in white, hair tucked under 16-inch toques, with not a tattoo or earring in sight, the (mostly male) cooks toiled for years in anonymity.

These days, de Cavel is the first name in Cincinnati fine dining, having stewarded the legendary Maisonette through much of the 1990s before leaving to open Jean-Robert at Pigall's in 2002. Since then he's opened (and closed) a slew of places, the most recent being Restaurant L, which debuted last fall. (It's also worth noting that he has personally mentored every chef mentioned here, save Francis.) He's been in the business long enough to have an astute view of a variety of trends, notably the rise in the last decade of, as he puts it, "hip, urban restaurants which have some cooking technique, but don't have that much."

The problem, as de Cavel sees it, comes down to cooks who want to move on to chef-manager-owner roles before they've mastered their craft. "They don't want to learn anymore, they want to act and take responsibility in the kitchen," he says. "At Maisonette, most cooks were there for a year to two years, there to really learn. Then they could move on with that on their résumé, and we would have younger cooks coming in. That pattern doesn't really exist today."

America's increased appetite for fast-casual food, a legacy of the economic downturn a decade ago, has opened the doors for less qualified cooks to open narrow-scope restaurants. The chance to mine the kaleidoscopic varieties of international street

food, BBQ, tacquerias, and sandwich shops can potentially turn a quick profit, and it seems like everyone's trying it.

In terms of economic advancement this trajectory can be great—except perhaps for more sophisticated restaurants where training is not only appreciated but required. "Culinary schools didn't see the evolution of restaurants and were slow in responding," notes de Cavel. "Young people wonder why they need to spend \$5,000 to \$10,000 for school, when they could get a full-time job and try to get their education where they work. Young people don't think they need to be well-educated [as cooks] to get better positions. It didn't used to be like that, but now, there's always a job available."

But for how long? It's always possible to move up, but if cooks don't spend time cultivating their skills and nurturing a sense of discipline, they will not find a career trajectory that gives them more control. If a young cook doesn't sow the seeds for a sustainable future in her early years, it's hard to ensure even a steady job in later years. Roy Silcott, who manages Frenchie Fresh, de Cavel's fast-casual Gallic-inspired burger joint, often encounters a different, though related, challenge. "Problems come when you get cooks who only want to do things their way," he says. "It doesn't matter how you teach them, or what you want them to do, they will be stubborn and want to do it their way."

→ **SO WHERE DOES ALL THIS LEAVE FINER DINING establishments?** If the new generation of line cooks are impatient to make an impact, they may not be aware that they are already doing just that, even in their entry-level role. Although a line cook's job can be exciting and rewarding, it is intense, exhausting work, and it can be hard to stick with for five to seven years. It's no surprise that cooks burn out as they move through the system, but according to Jeremy Lieb, the opt-out rate before reaching full mastery has reached epic proportions.

"We have a lot of people who come through to *stage*," the French term for a two-week stint to try each other out. "And listen, I'm a nice guy, and we have a great team, great equipment, great products to use. [But] 80 percent of them don't come back. We get them for a week, and then



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they're gone." Most of the chefs I spoke with were not fully convinced as to why this is happening, but they were familiar with the pattern. They all shared one common issue, a variation on *I had to ask the cook to correct his work*. This is normal, by the way, until a cook understands the expectations of the chef. Cooks who thought their skill set was solid suddenly discover they aren't bringing what Boca needs. Depending on their deficiencies, some cooks choose to move on rather than swallow their pride and meet the new expectations. "I get people that apply for a job with business cards that say that they are sous chefs," says Lieb. "It's like there's a different breed of people out there."

Daniel Wright is a bit more blunt. "When I was coming up, if I messed something up, the chef would hit me in the head with a baguette," he says. "I was told what I was doing wrong, and told how to do it better. With this softer generation, they don't want to be told they're doing something wrong, they only want to play off their strengths. But the fact is, until you start working on your weaknesses, you won't become stronger."

That said, chefs are sympathetic to the economic realities their staffs face. "I had a guy early on at Abigail Street, one of my sous chefs," Wright explains. "I had big aspirations for him and a year into it, he's like, 'I got a job as a sous chef for a [corporate restaurant group] and they're going to pay me \$25,000 more.' I realized that he was staring down \$800 a month in loan payments and it was a really big thing. That's incredibly hard [for me] to compete with as an independent restaurant."

Put another way: Young cooks might hang in there longer if the money was better, but often it is not. Most of the restaurants that garner critical acclaim are independently owned, or part of a smaller, regional restaurant group. They have a corps of cooks, some of whom can't sustain life at the bottom for long. "As an independent restaurant owner, you have to be a little bit intimidated by the hotels that have popped up around the area that can pay \$14 to \$15 an hour,

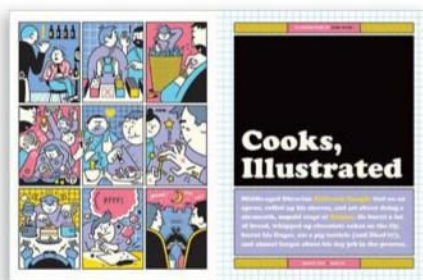
offer full benefits, and a 401(k)," says Silcott. "That's a real challenge for an independent restaurateur."

➔ **INDIVIDUAL CELEBRITY IS SEDUCTIVE** stuff, but fame without skill is a hollow legacy. The skills have to come from somewhere, and most chefs agree, it's best to hire early and cultivate talent in-house. It is not uncommon for a cook to skip culinary school if they can work for a chef who can nurture their skills. "I look for people who want to cook and want to learn. We have a kitchen full of guys who were [initially] green, and I just changed the way I trained people. I taught them how to cook, and that's kind of what's happening all over," says Lieb.

The situation also benefits from a pay-it-forward flavor. "Willingness to learn is something you can't teach," says Desai. "Somebody took the time to teach me, and get me to where I'm at today. If I can help somebody improve [his or her] career, that's absolutely something I'm willing to do. I'm grateful to have worked with some great people in my career, so it's my obligation to teach the up-and-coming cooks of Cincinnati, too."

With Frenchie Fresh, Silcott and de Cavel have the germ of a farm system for the Jean-Robert restaurant group. If they are able to expand the concept to multiple locations, the training ground grows. "Behind the scenes, Frenchie Fresh is kind of our own little culinary school," Silcott says. "Right now, I teach four students from Midwest Culinary Institute and their intentions are to become chefs. When they outgrow Frenchie Fresh—and they're growing exponentially every day—we'll be able to move them up to Jean-Robert's Table or French Crust. They can see that growth potential."

Professional growth is the key to a culinary career, and it doesn't stop when your name is on the door. Lieb summed up the common attitude of all the chefs I interviewed: "I want to attract great people, and I'll do my best to do that, but that's all I can do. We need to figure out new ways to get staff, to teach them, [but also] to keep them excited—growing, learning, and challenged." ©



and-a-half quarts is five pints. Can't you do this?" he asked impatiently. "Two cups in a pint so there are 10 cups. For a 2-to-1 ratio you need three parts, so one-third of 10 cups is three-and-a-third cups for the vinegar and six-and-two-third cups water." I scribbled it all down as he walked away shaking his head.

In addition to my newfound longing for the metric system, I have found that cooks rarely think about anything other than food. They love to chat up the vendors making deliveries of meats and cheeses or the mushroom hunters who stop in with mycological treasures. The cooks pore over specialty produce harvested by Sallie Ransohoff, whose nocturnal deliveries (via Subaru wagon) are timed toward the end of the shift. And when they're not geeking out over ingredients, they practice different techniques in their spare time. The second sous chef, Isaiah, once gave me a quart of ethereal pork consommé he made. He was just trying out a new clarifying technique.

A professional kitchen is a 100 percent results-oriented workplace. Either you hold your own and are a valuable member of the team, or you don't last long. Nobody in the Salazar kitchen cares that I'm a middle-aged guy with an advanced degree. Nobody cares that I have a job at a library where I aim to reduce my e-mail inbox to zero before the end of each day. My fellow cooks only want to know how fast and how well I'm going to fold pierogies. Speed is crucial in a kitchen, but so is craft. If the pierogies fall apart, we're all screwed.

A professional kitchen is also invariably composed of a mix of characters: the unconventional, the irregularly educated, the occasional erstwhile felon. While most chefs have a formal culinary education, cooking is one profession where you can earn your stripes by dint of cuts, burns, and old school hard knocks. As a result,

the very best kitchens end up with cooks as sharp as their knives—highly disciplined and impeccably clean. For many, *mise en place* is a lifestyle, not just prep for cooking. Hiner is a prime example—he doesn't do anything halfway. His respect for classic techniques, unflagging creativity, and skillful management seems super-human in comparison to the average 9-to-5er. Though I'm still not sure how his abiding love for '80s heavy metal fits into the equation.

→ **"DID YOU SEE WHAT'S IN THE WALK-IN-?"** is a regular greeting from Hiner. As I shrug out of my coat, I'll head downstairs to find some mildly exotic dead animal or unusual plant matter stashed on the walk-in shelf or draped over the beer kegs. A dwarf cow's head might be there on a Tuesday followed by a pair of dead squirrels on Thursday. A puffball mushroom the size of a volleyball isn't outside of the realm of possibility. No matter what lurks in the basement, I can always be sure that Hiner will try to make me eat it.

To be fair, open-mindedness is considerably easier in the dining room where the lamb tongue or cow brain is carefully prepared and lovingly plated with colorful sauces and attractive garnishes. A pig trotter, for instance, appears less threatening in context with several fresh mustards, a handmade plate, an attractive dining companion, and engaging conversation. Eating downstairs is a rough-and-ready affair: You do it standing up, under garish fluorescent lights, with no front-of-house foreplay to get you in the mood.

While there is certainly an element of ritualistic hazing that happens in kitchens, it's also part of a cook's commitment to "try everything." There's kind of a zero tolerance policy when it comes to finicky eaters. For the record, I never saw any squirrels make it to the dining room—though Hiner's hunting bounty has been known to fill a mean pot pie for staff meal. However, I did see him tug a gray, fist-sized, frayed eyeball from that heirloom dwarf cow head. The eyeball gave me significant pause, but not Big Rick the dishwasher. Big Rick is *always* hungry. Rick took the eyeball, cut it up, salted it liberally, and started munching.

"It's gooood," he purred.

So I caved and tasted it. It was indeed good. Hard to describe what an eyeball tastes like, but it wasn't a surprise. The head from whose socket the eye had come had simmered for three hours for stock so it had a very mild, slightly nutty taste.

Balut was another challenge altogether. Pop the intern is from the Philippines where a partially grown duck embryo—cooked while still in its shell—is a delicacy. Hiner shot a docu-drama video of me sampling my first *balut*. As I crack the shell, pulling away the outer pieces, my cursing begins. Hiner scientifically identifies the head of the embryo. There is still some yolk and egg white left inside the shell, and small feathers forming on the body. In the video, Hiner instructs me to eat the head. Somewhat terrified, my cursing escalates. I take a bite of the embryo's little head. I can't remember anything about the flavor; I was just too freaked out. But the broth I conserved from the egg was delicious. The yolk was strong tasting and a bit chalky. The white was, as Hiner warned me, "pretty much like Styrofoam."

While nothing was as bad as the *balut*, the pig's testicle was an experience to remember. Surprisingly large and smooth, with an eerie green tint, Hiner first battered then deep-fried it. Honestly, it wasn't too bad, especially with a little sambal sauce for dipping.

→ SATURDAY, 4:50 P.M.

"Make something with that pineapple for the staff," Hiner tells me, pointing to an item that would otherwise go unused, which is the general criteria for ingredients served to the kitchen. Service starts at 5!

"Check the walk-in for strawberries," he says. "Make a smoothie. Hurry. Lots to do."

I set aside the asparagus I'm cleaning for Erin and the marrow butter I'd been putting in pastry bags for Neal. I peel and core the pineapple, put it in the jumbo blender with ice, strawberries, apples, lime, and some ginger. Since smoothies are typically the domain of the lanky dishwasher Shauntez, he gets the first try. "That's OK. Not bad, not bad," nods Tez. "This your first smoothie?"

→ 5:20 P.M.

"Hol-breazy," Hiner commands using

my kitchen-coined nickname. “We need chocolate cake. Now...” He cues up Ronnie James Dio’s *Rainbow in the Dark* on the speaker over my work table in the basement. “No one touches that effing speaker!” he barks, then instructs me to “mise out the ingredients and call me. Have you made it before?”

I tell myself that I am not afraid. I have made the chocolate mousse, which is in the same family. Kinda. I switch the digital scale to grams and measure out the chocolate cake ingredients.

When there’s lightning... Dio’s voice ululates. I measure each of the ingredients into a separate deli container, as if I’m on a cooking show.

You know it always brings me down.

Hiner is long gone, distracted by the rush in the dining room upstairs. I could tell they were getting slammed when Fox came down, harried, to get something from the walk-in and yelled, “You’re too slow! We need you NOW!”

Do your deeeee-mons...

I get a double boiler going and melt the butter and chocolate.

Do they ever let you go?

I whip eggs and sugar to soft peaks, fold in the flour, measure the batter into little rings, and put it all in the walk-in and rush upstairs, finally free of Dio’s torturous screeching.

→ 6 P.M.

The line is barely controlled mayhem. I immediately burn the bread, accidentally grill my thumb, over-cook an order of oysters, and look like the proverbial lost puppy. It is a dangerous operation to have four bodies moving frenetically in a small space with fire and knives. I quickly show Erin my burnt thumb. “Aw, that’s nice,” she says, without looking up or breaking stride. I force myself to settle in.

→ 6:45 P.M.

Customers with napkin-clad cocktails in

hand are lined up three deep by the bar, oblivious to the intensity of the kitchen. Hiner barks out the orders like an auctioneer at a county fair. “Two rizzo, two B and B, and an oyster. Fire any time!” This is followed immediately by: “Snapper, burger medium rare, broccoli, rillette, and a nut allergy at bar four!”

We are busier than I have ever seen it. Bearded Neal and I are in charge of starters and appetizers while Erin is at the *plancha* cooking proteins. Fox oversees the entrées that are finished on the big gas stove. Technically, I’m also the runner for anyone who needs anything else. I am not afraid. I’m a grown man. I’ve got this. Farm green salad. Oyster sandwich. Plate chocolate cake. Bread for rillette.

I run downstairs to refill the large container of marinated olives. When there’s lightning... Dio again. “Coming up!” I holler. When I return the olives to the station I get yelled at for not placing them in the exact spot where they belong.


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I drop broccoli into the fryer. Do a quick sweep of the floor behind the line. Plate a pork belly dish. Hiner sends me to fetch a couple quarts of broth for the snapper entree and two lemons “while I’m down there.”

Do your deeeeee-mons, do they... “Coming up!” I get yelled at, again, and this time my manhood is questioned for not correctly placing lemons *exactly* where they belong. I grill an order of bread, shelve clean plates, fill small dishes with sambal sauce, and plate a burrata appetizer. I’ve over-fried the oysters for Neal so I do another order. There is no clockwatching here.

→ 10:58 P.M.

The kitchen closes at 11 p.m. on Saturdays. Orders of doughnuts and chocolate cake finish the night. I’m keenly aware of the 11 hours I’ve worked today. My reward for not messing up too badly and not getting in the way too much? I’m given the *plancha* to clean. The original *planchas* were made of

clay in South America. This one is made of steel and needs to be deglazed and cooled with water, sending up a wall of steam. It’s then scraped, then scraped some more. Like almost every aspect of kitchen life, there’s an unofficial contest in who can do it best. I fall somewhere in the lower middle.

→ 11:50 P.M.



Jordan Patton, the general manager, confirms that tonight we reached the highest revenue yet for a regular night at the restaurant. “Yeah! And we did it with only three and a half cooks!” cheers Bearded Neal.

I’m a half cook and I’ll take it, because a half cook is a far cry from where I started.

It’s 1:30 a.m. before Fox ushers me across the street to Low Spark for a beer. We’re joined by Hiner and Patton after they finish placing orders for additional food and wine for the next shift. The conversation flows from one topic to another — what’s happening in the kitchens at other restaurants, the OTR revival in general, our

overall lack of sleep, and Hiner’s ongoing refusal to get his oftentimes painfully debilitating finger looked at by a doctor. “It’s fine, it’s fine,” he assures me.

“Have you been up on the roof?” he asks, perhaps to change the subject. We leave our belongings with the bartender and head back to 1401 Republic. We go down into the basement kitchen and for once don’t yell “Coming down!” I’ve spent nearly 250 totally engrossing hours down here over the last six months. We go to the elevator and take it up to the rooftop. Stars and moon compete with street lamps and the lighting on blocks of renovated buildings. Several sites are wrapped in heavy scaffolding. At 2:30 a.m., parking spaces are full. All is still. We look out over Washington Park for a minute without speaking. In the silence I think about how hard these people work to create such transcendent food and how engrossing it is to be part of it. Then, against my will, I wonder how many e-mails await me in my inbox. ☺

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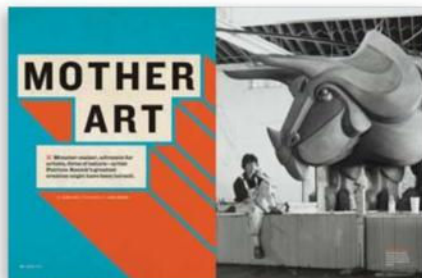
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ized that the piece was too big to get into the gallery, so she re-engineered the work just as she neared completion. One hour before the show opened, in February 1974, the great, gray dinosaur was fully in place on its platform.

Stegowagenvolkssaurus, with its sleek form and canny smirk, was a hit. Its image was picked up by the Associated Press, making national news, a meme before memes were a thing. After the Cincinnati Art Museum it showed at the CAC, then hit the road to the Chicago Federal Center in the summer of 1975.

Jim Farr, a.k.a. “Dauber,” is a pin-stripe maestro who has custom-painted hot rods for Pete Rose and Jack Roush. He has worked on *Stegowagenvolkssaurus* twice: When its left rear foot was scuffed during installation in the CAC, he was called in to airbrush the damage. Years later, he was involved in the sculpture’s repair and restoration for Steely Library—the work had been damaged, then lost after disassembly in Chicago. (Only Renick’s frantic letters and threat of a lawsuit had gotten it back.) Farr liked that Renick’s exuberant personality ran counter to the stuffiness of the art scene. They became friends. Renick remains an inspiration to him and “frankly, to a lot of people,” Farr says. “She really booted a lot of people in the ass and inspired them to do real quality work, to be imaginative.”

Farr has shown his own paintings at galleries all over town, but would get his framing done at Michaels, he says, “because that’s what I could afford. It’s a very, very difficult town to make it in if you’re an artist.”

For Renick, there was tension between being a working artist and teaching. “I remember her commenting that a lot of the male professors at DAAP really didn’t care for her very much,” says Farr. “Hell, she

didn’t take crap off any man.” There was resentment by some, one of Renick’s former colleagues told me, because she was strong-willed, and because she was simply producing more art than most, gaining recognition, and making connections outside the school—connections that were in fact useful for DAAP. Still, Renick wasn’t one to let petty rivalries bother her.

With a check for the damages to *Stegowagenvolkssaurus* in hand, and America’s bicentennial approaching, Renick set to work on a piece that would turn out to be even more monumental.

“I had an idea for a sculpture bearing on the aftermath of the Vietnam War, the more ambitious concept of a triceratops combined with a helicopter,” she recalled in a 2003 interview with Chapman for *Sculpture* magazine. “I did not see the work as a celebration, but as a cautionary tale, an expression of hope for the end of war. War is a dichotomy. It seduces the dream-self through heroic fantasy while threatening the physical self with extinction.” Renick was intent to step up her own game as well. “I wanted to prove to myself that I could do another large work,” she said. “I didn’t want to be one of those rocking chair people on the front porch of the future, saddened by what might have been.”

She created the maquette, wrote letters in search of donations of materials and studio space, and requested a personal leave to complete the work. When her request was rebuffed, Renick resigned from DAAP. In her letter to Foster Wygant, dean of UC’s Department of Education, who had made a big deal about her accomplishment as an artist when she was hired, she wrote: “It is ironic that a department and a college which claim to place great value on creativity should be so threatened by it.”

➔ **NOW RENICK BROUGHT HER POWERS** of persuasion to bear, most notably on the U.S. Army. After a series of exchanges, a salvaged chopper was found. And the Army, perhaps recognizing the wisdom of an end to war, agreed to donate and ship it at taxpayer expense to Renick’s front door.

One afternoon in May 1975, a flatbed semi pulled up to 343 Probasco Street bearing the airframe of an OH-6A Cayuse helicopter that had been damaged in Vietnam.

The Cayuse had been a scout, flown as a decoy over dense jungle concealing Viet Cong fighters in order to draw fire and by their muzzle flashes, expose enemy locations to bombers. It was an airborne Trojan horse of sorts, the gift of an easy target that conceals Death From Above. Along with a scrapped helicopter, the house became a depot of materials including barrels of Hetron, a resin used in creating fiberglass forms, and automotive modeling clay.

Maggie Moschell teaches art to fourth graders in the Mason school district. As a student from 1974 to 1978 in DAAP’s art education program, she had Renick as a teacher and later worked as her teaching assistant.

“It was a weird time to be in art school,” Moschell says. “We’d go to Chicago for a weekend and you’d walk into an empty gallery and there’d be a string across the wall. You had to guess if that was the artwork. And if it was, you’d have to guess why you were supposed to admire it.”

Renick talked Moschell into riding to Detroit in a rented truck to pick up four tons of donated clay. As they and a couple of other students sat in the cargo compartment with the door rolled up, Renick suggested a game to pass the time. She bet them that if they waved at fellow motorists, the people in shoddier cars would be more inclined to wave back. They kept score with hash marks in the dirt on the back of the truck. It was an ethnographic experiment in friendliness. Renick was a student of human nature with a sense of playfulness, and, Moschell says, an intense, infectious enthusiasm that enabled her to sell military men on the value of incorporating a war machine into contemporary sculpture, as well as students, craftsmen, and local companies on the value of being involved in a compelling, ambitious project.

“She asked questions that weren’t rude, but were deeper than what people typically asked during conversations,” says Moschell. “She was intensely curious. She wanted to know how others felt, what they thought about, what they were doing, and it was so genuine and so rare to have someone focus on you like that, that people just gravitated to her.”

Never mind that they had to move a mountain of cold clay with their bare

hands and arrived at their Detroit hotel exhausted. It was worth the adventure.

→ **RENICK SECURED A STUDIO IN THE** Strietmann Biscuit building at the southeast corner of 12th and Central Parkway. She painted the walls white and plotted *Triceracopter's* lines on the wall with black tape. The helicopter was brought up the freight elevator and placed on a platform. Constance McClure, who also had a studio in the Strietmann, remembers that the roof leaked. While she and Renick were friendly, they didn't talk much. Renick had this intensity and focus, McClure recalls, and was a perfectionist.

Working with automotive modeling clay demands meticulousness. Renick set about shaping a dinosaur and smoothing its skin around the helicopter, creating the form that would then be used as a mold for its final, fiberglass hull. She had to scramble and rebuild the beast's nose after the scaly surface she created (using casts of crackled shingles found on the roof) collapsed. Spare helicopter parts were requisitioned from the National Guard to replace a missing section of the helicopter's tail. With the help of fiberglass technician Thomas Backsheider, she gave the form a coat of epoxy resin and sprayed fiberglass over this to create cavity molds, which were woolly at the gaps where the shell-like molds were designed to break away. The interior of these final molds received another layer of resin and the final fiberglass that became the *Triceracopter* you see today. To create the mold for *Self-Portrait: She Became What She Beheld*, Renick made a mold of her own body. As the cast hardened, she found herself trapped, and had to call out for Chapman to cut her free. The work was sanded, painted, and given a seductive sheen for its star turn at the CAC on December 15, 1977.

→ **TRICERACOPTER HAD TAKEN RENICK** two years to complete. In the spring of '77, when Owen Findsen paid her a visit, she told him that she felt changed by the challenges of its creation, changed by solving problems, both physical and logistical, including getting her hands on

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a helicopter in the first place. When she told people what she was going to do, she added, “everybody thought I was crazy.”

Being told she was crazy was nothing new to Renick. Her misdiagnosis two decades earlier was still very much on her mind. In the 1980s, as her work became more personal, she set out to deal directly with the experience, even traveling to the site of her 13-month hospitalization.

In August 1981, she snapped a photo of the hospital, and later wrote about the experience of returning to the “elegant and stately building bathed in intense light, submerged in summer-time stillness.” The hospital stood on the banks of a river, Renick’s own personal Lethe, a source of loss and death she felt only narrowly to have escaped. Two friends she made in the hospital later committed suicide. Her friend Jack called her with the news that a woman named Margaret had hanged herself. And then, two years later, Jack took his own life with a drug overdose. In Renick’s typed first draft of her remembrance, she crossed out a sentence saying she was numbed by the news, then “outraged at the psychiatrists for not knowing Jack’s state of mind.” The next words she did not cross out: “I too had entertained thoughts of suicide in the early days after leaving the hospital.”

As Renick delved more deeply into her personal experience she created a set of boats—*Life Boats*, which hang in DAAP’s central atrium today. Next came *2068 Series*, a cycle of female forms strapped onto boat-like sarcophagi, attached to machinery. One figure has many faces, as though turning her head rapidly, another the head of the Statue of Liberty, another a diving helmet, and so on. The “2068” refers to Renick’s hospital case number.

It’s no stretch to suggest that the experience of having to crawl back from the brink of trauma had annealed an already strong artistic will. “Trauma has a way of altering one’s perceptions of self and attitudes about others,” Renick wrote in a coda to her remembrance of returning to the hospital. “To heal the psyche, there must first be a willingness to let go of the hurt and challenge the fear of adventuring beyond the security of a limited reality.” How she processed her experience offers a window into what drove her as an artist, art

advocate, and teacher. Being misdiagnosed doesn’t, for example, leave you with an inclination to trust blindly.

DAAP MFA alumni, sculptor, Fulbright Scholar, and Distinguished Professor Michael Johnson is pretty certain he wouldn’t be talking to me from his office at the University of Puget Sound were it not for Renick. She was his teacher, mentor, friend, and confidante. In the classroom Johnson still tries to channel Renick.

“Pat was a listener,” Johnson says. “In order to be an effective communicator or teacher you have to be an effective listener, and teaching is a compromise. It’s not directing a person. It’s helping someone direct themselves. I think that was one of her greatest gifts, one that she was able to apply to every aspect of her life.” Renick taught him that the most important thing an artist can do is “trust yourself, trust what you know and understand most intimately. That’s the most important place from which to start making work.” Johnson thinks that her experience led her to become the person she was, a woman turning darkness and self-doubt into raw, extroverted enthusiasm. She had, he says, this “drive to unshackle people.”

Renick said something similar to Chapman in that 2003 interview in *Sculpture*. “Perhaps because I came to art relatively late in life, and cherish the freedoms it offers, I’m most frightened by power in the hands of people who seem to thrive on tearing the wings off dreams.”

➔ **RENICK’S PASSION FOR ORGANIZING** and promoting artists led her to mount, with the help of Chapman and a few others, the first sculpture conference for women artists. In 1987 the National Sculpture Conference: Works by Women was itself a monumental work, gathering the major female practitioners in the field. Maya Lin, who endured conservatives’ ire as the Asian-American creator of the Vietnam Memorial, was there. So was African-American sculptor Elizabeth Catlett, as well as Clyde Connell, Dorothy Dehner, Claire Falkenstein, Sue Fuller, and Claire Zeisler. Over 1,200 participants attended seminars, presentations, and panels at a four-day celebration of women artists at the Sabin Convention Center in downtown

Cincinnati, with concurrent shows and happenings in museums, galleries, parks, and public spaces across the city.

Despite the fact that she had small children at the time, local stone sculptor Karen Heyl knew she had to be there. Heyl also works on a large scale, creating stone sculptures and bas reliefs that have been commissioned for installation across the country. She first met Renick, whom she admired, at the conference. They became friends, finding common ground in Renick’s *2068 Series*—Heyl had spent time in a convent where she, too, had been assigned a number.

“That just blew her apart when she found out I could identify with that feeling,” Heyl says. “I admired her because she was doing exactly what I wanted to be doing.”

The conference was a boost for Heyl at a time when she needed it. “Just to understand that we were all pushing against the same walls,” she says. Those walls were cultural, and started with the assumption that sculpture was a male preserve. It was a long-standing attitude encountered by an earlier artist of monumental works, Louise Nevelson, who was honored in absentia at the sculpture conference. (An example of Nevelson’s work stands outside the Main Library downtown, at the corner of Eighth and Walnut.) “They said, ‘Louise you can’t be a sculptor,’” says Heyl. “And she said, ‘Why not?’ ‘Because it takes balls to be a sculptor.’ And so she goes, ‘Well, if that’s all it takes, I’ve got balls.’”

Renick’s influence, while hard to quantify, can still be seen today. Certainly, The National Sculpture Conference: Works by Women raised national awareness of the local arts scene that she loved, says CAC Exhibition Coordinator David Dillon, once also a student in Renick’s Issues in Contemporary Arts class. But it stretches beyond simple awareness, too.

After the Strietmann Biscuit building was bought by an owner less sympathetic to artists, Renick, Chapman, and another artist, McCrystal Wood, purchased a building in Brighton, in the West End. If there is a single part of town where Renick’s spirit is most tangible, it’s there, in Brighton’s tiny arts district, where she worked and often hosted parties in a first-floor studio. Sitting just south of Central Parkway,

which was once the bed of the Miami-Erie Canal, Brighton was cut off, literally overlooked by people headed downtown. Renick petitioned the city to have a connector put in, across from the Mockbee, creating Brighton Triangle. The move was part of her local installation of *30-Module Sphere*, which she designed for a sculpture exhibition at Chicago's Navy Pier and had built by Brighton metal fabrication company Young & Bertke. The connector, Dillon says, could be seen as a metaphor for Renick's drive to bring people to the arts. And the sculpture, when I pass it now, is a literal reflection of Renick's unbreakable sphere of influence. Constructed of stainless steel triangles, it shimmers with the passing life of the city.

When Renick died in May 2007 from complications during a surgery, she left some 900 works of art, ranging from monumental sculptures to models, miniatures, prints, drawings, and jewelry. Mother Art's studio went quiet. According to her wishes, Chapman distributed Renick's ashes in glassine envelopes among her friends. They released her into the world, in exotic locales, over waterfalls, in the gardens of famous artists. And they kept her close to home, feeding her to trees in their yards, keeping her in studios or office drawers beside their tools. Jim Farr attached an envelope to *Stegowagenvolkssaurus's* dashboard. And Chapman buried the 2068 Series ceremonially on a friend's property in New Richmond, by the river. I imagine those forms being unearthed one day and raising much speculation among the archaeologists of the future.

One other thing that Michael Johnson said sticks with me, from a recollection of the phone calls he and Renick had right up to the end of her life. They spoke often, catching each other up on what was going on in their lives and work.

"She would always talk to me about making these things in the studio of your mind," he recalled. "Don't think about the inability to do something or the liability of doing something out here. Make it inside. Make it in your mind. Think about it. Dream about it. And that's how you're going to find a solution." ©



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MEADOWLARK IN DAYTON P. 142 ● BEER COLLABORATIONS P. 143 ● A WHOLE LOTTA BUTTER P. 144 ● FOND DELI IN MONTGOMERY P. 145

VARIETY PLATTER
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:
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→ SOMETIMES A RESTAURANT HAS AN uncanny ability to teleport us back in time. Meadowlark, a cozy new American bistro on the outskirts of Dayton, fits that bill with rustic dining tables, colorful mix-and-match cotton tea towels for napkins, and rotating local artwork. The overall effect is very boho-college town, say, Bloomington, Indiana, circa 1995. The food follows a well-trod multi-culti, scratch-made path as well, with plenty of local farms and purveyors represented. Evidence: I practically licked the bowl of a soothing Indian spiced beet soup laced with cilantro coconut cream. (Also evident: They care about your choosy kids. See the all-beef hot dogs, tasty spaghetti with marinara, and colorful fruit and cheese plate on the non-processed kiddie menu.)

But back to my time machine. The veggie burger was a delightful griddled vegan patty packed with tender grains, nuts, and vegetables, the perfect vehicle for the house-made ketchup. The salmon and strip steak entrées were cooked precisely. Service was warm and exceedingly gracious, with one exception: A waitress attempted to literally place our entrée plates on top of our appetizers. Not routine procedure, surely. Fortunately, all was forgiven as we dug into a generous dish of soul-comforting peach and raspberry crisp with a dark, not-too-sweet streusel and a scoop of vanilla bean ice cream. The epitome of a happy ending.

—JOANNE DRILLING



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BEYOND BASIC BREWS

As Cincinnati continues to cement its position as a growing mecca for craft beer, the connections and collaborations keep on flourishing. It's no surprise that bakers, sausage-makers, even soccer teams want in on the action. Here's a round up of beer collaborations that fall outside the standard six pack. —STEPHANIE MEINBERG



**Christian Moerlein +
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→ Last summer, Moerlein Lager House channeled the rabid fanaticism of local soccer fans with their Blood Orange IPA. Like the team, the beer became a fast favorite in its inaugural season. This intense orange and hop blend returns to defend its title as a 16-oz. can available at the stadium, the Moerlein Lager House, and from local retailers. **Moerlein Lager House, 115 Joe Nuxhall Way, downtown, (513) 421-2337, moerleinlagerhouse.com**

**Woodburn Brewery +
The Anchor OTR
OYSTER STOUT**

→ Woodburn's Chris Mitchell is no stranger to the finer points of traditional brewing, including adding oyster shells to help clarification. Thus was born a strong, briny beer using The Anchor OTR's oysters. With their pilot system, Woodburn often experiments with unique flavors in smaller batches. Don't dawdle—this specialty stout will go fast. **Woodburn Brewery, 2800 Woodburn Ave., East Walnut Hills, (513) 221-2337, woodburnbrewery.com**

**Urban Artifact +
Happy Chicks Bakery
PINWHEEL
KUMQUAT GOSE**

→ Beer and cupcakes, a match made in hipsterland (er, Northside) and the first in an ongoing partnership combining seasonal goeses with flavor-forward baked goods. Full disclosure: there is no actual icing (let alone cake) in this bright citrus, high-acidity brew, but you get the same taste of spring you'd find in its namesake cupcake. **Urban Artifact, 1660 Blue Rock St., Northside, (513) 620-4729, artifactbeer.com**

**MadTree +
Orchids at Palm Court
PER-SOOT
CREAM ALE**

→ If aromatics evoke memories, then winter wonder is still strong in this chef series collaboration with Todd Kelly of Orchids. Launched in mid-February, its sweet and malty backbone lets the warm flavors of persimmon, vanilla shortbread, and spicy *ras el hanout* shine through—a taste profile worth pursuing in any weather. **MadTree Brewing, 3301 Madison Rd., Oakley, (513) 836-8733, madtreebrewing.com**

**Rivertown +
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PORTERWURST
SAUSAGE**

→ To be clear: This is not sausage-flavored beer. BrewCity Sausage chef Anthony Lange wanted a porter that was available year-round to infuse in his wurst—and Rivertown's Roebeling fit the profile perfectly. Rich vanilla and espresso notes complement the juicy, robust, slightly sweet pork sausage. **Rivertown Brewery and Barrel House, 6550 Hamilton-Lebanon Rd., Monroe, (513) 360-7839, rivertownbrewery.com**

BETTER BUTTER

If the devil is in the details, isn't it time you put back that brick of generic butter in favor of something special? Inspired by Jungle Jim's dizzying array of international offerings—at last count they were selling 30-plus varieties of butter—I tasted, tested, and took notes. Whether you're whipping up a batch of almond sablés, clarifying it for a silky béarnaise sauce, or just slathering some on your morning slice of Blue Oven toast, there really is butter for every occasion. —JOANNE DRILLING

Anchor Organic Butter, New Zealand → When organic is a must, you can't go wrong with this flavorful spread from the Southern Hemisphere, made from the milk of cows that graze on open pasture year-round. \$5.99 for 8 ounces

Les Prés Salés Butter with Camargue Sea Salt, Celles, Belgium → It's made with fresh cream from cows raised on the Ardennes plateau, then studded with hefty crystals of hand-raked sea salt from the Camargue region of France that slowly dissolve on your tongue, making each bite taste especially savory. Try it in your next batch of chocolate chip cookies. \$3.49 for 8.8 ounces

Carr Valley Creamery Goat Butter, Laval, Wisconsin → Goat's milk makes killer cheese, but it's also a great alternative for those who struggle to digest conventional dairy. Sample this stellar example on a slice of pumpkin bread with a few shaved radishes for an elegant and impromptu snack. \$8.99 for 8 ounces

Delizia Burro di Parma, Parma, Italy → This unsalted, delicately flavored butter is produced with cream from family farms in the Reggio Emilia and Parma areas—the source cream for the coveted Parmigiano Reggiano. Expect the same subtle nuttiness found in the cheese. \$6.19 for 8 ounces

Double Devon Cream Butter, Wiltshire, England → Made with England's finest slightly salted double Devon cream, it's the ultimate butter indulgence. I don't really recommend using it in recipes; instead, save it for spreading on hot cranberry-orange scones. \$5.99 for 8 ounces

Meggle Alpine Butter, Wasserburg, Germany → Softer than average at room temperature, this butter is ideal for brötchen or other hard rolls. Its slightly sweet flavor is somewhat reminiscent of mascarpone cheese. \$5.49 for 8.8 ounces

Vermont Creamery Cultured Butter, Websterville, Vermont → Made with hormone-free freshly churned Vermont cream, this preciously packaged butter is ripened into cultured cream, then studded with sea salt crystals, making it an ideal topper for T-bone steak or your favorite baguette. \$7.99 for 6 ounces

Beurre de Chimay, Ardennes, Belgium → This clean-tasting butter is seriously multipurpose (great for baking) but practically screams for a piping hot waffle. \$4.99 for 8.8 ounces

Troyer Roll Butter, Millersburg, Ohio → My go-to for big-batch clarified butter, I put this giant roll of lightly salted, RBST hormone free Amish butter in a Dutch oven on low heat and leave it to slowly melt for an hour. After I skim the milk solids off with a ladle, I use it for a quick blender béarnaise sauce. \$12.49 for 2 pounds

Beurre D'Isigny AOP, Doux, Isigny-sur-Mer, France → Take your pound cake and croissant game to a whole new level with this extra silky unsalted French classic made from "grand cru" milk in regionally-protected tradition. \$5.49 for 8.8 ounces

MARY THRESS AND CAREY GREINER



→ **LAST SEPTEMBER**, MARY Thress and Carey Greiner opened Nothing Bundt Cakes, a Mason bakery franchise that exclusively features the ring-shaped treats. Greiner, a working mother of three, and Thress, an empty nester and former window company co-owner, make a pretty sweet team.

Why bundts? CG: This bakery started in Las Vegas, which is where I grew up. I've lived in Cincinnati for 16 years, and [when I heard they were franchising] I got really excited about bringing a piece of my hometown to my *new* hometown.

What are the best-selling flavors?

MT: Our top four are chocolate-chocolate chip, white-chocolate raspberry, lemon, and red velvet.

Your favorites? CG: My favorite is lemon—and I do not like lemon. I don't like lemon cookies, lemon meringue—but that's what's interesting to me about this cake. It makes me like things I usually don't.

How do you balance each other?

MT: My kids are grown. I'm not responsible for anyone right now, so my time is open. CG: [In addition to working with the bakery,] I work in a corporate environment, so I'm very structured. I like things to be neat and tidy. She's more comfortable knowing you can't control everything; you have to let things evolve and go with the flow. We value that in each other.

—MICHELLE BRANDSTETTER

 **Nothing Bundt Cakes**, nothingbundtcakes.com/bakery/oh/mason



TAKEOUT HERO

Bean Counter

→ **IT ALL STARTED WITH HUMMUS.** CHEF ETHAN SNIDER FOUND QUICK SUCCESS SELLING his handmade bean dips at farmers markets under the name Summuh (*hummus* spelled backwards). But he needed a bigger kitchen. He found that space in a strip mall behind a McDonald's in Montgomery. Within a few months it became obvious that his loyal clientele wanted more than just ground-up garbanzos. **Fond's** menu has since expanded into dishes that are organic and sourced from area farmers, bakers, and craft-food makers. Snider is not afraid to go bold: Asian-inspired tacos are stuffed with chicken, ginger, garlic, scallion, and basil, then topped with lemon mayo and jalapeño slaw. And his "Sunshine On My Shoulder" salad is a more-is-more explosion of local greens, chopped veggies, roasted pork jowl, and fried egg doused in a mouth-melting garlic vinaigrette then topped with hemp seeds. There's an eclectic mix on the ever-changing menu at Fond that will satisfy everyone—carnivores, vegetarians, vegans, and those avoiding gluten. Purchases from the deli case are also encouraged. Love the homemade pickles with your burger? Take home a jar. Can't get enough of the "Say WHAT?" sandwich with cheddar and hummus? Grab a tub of Snider's "My Thai" hummus, flavored with ginger, garlic, scallions, and Thai chilies. Here, it usually ends with hummus, too.

—J. KEVIN WOLFE

 **Fond Lunch and Deli**, 10764 Montgomery Rd., Montgomery, (513) 607-1854, fondlunchdeli.com. Breakfast and lunch Mon–Sat.

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AMERICAN

BROWN DOG CAFÉ

Quietly tucked into a strip mall on Pfeiffer Road near I-71, it's under most diners' radars. But if you haven't had a plate of Shawn McCoy's design set in front of you, it's about time. Many of the menu's dishes show his knack for the plate as a palette. A trio of stout day boat diver scallops—exquisitely golden from pan searing—perch atop individual beds of uniformly diced butternut squash, fragments of boar bacon, and shavings of Brussels sprout. The eye for detail and contrasts of colors and textures belongs to someone who cares for food. → 1000 Summit Place, Blue Ash, (513) 794-1610, browndogcafe.com. Breakfast and lunch Mon-Fri, dinner Mon-Sat. MCC, DS. \$\$

CABANA ON THE RIVER

Like a big outdoor picnic with a view of the serene hills of Kentucky and the Ohio River rolling by, this is one of those places west-siders would rather the rest of Cincinnati didn't know about. Its annual debut in late spring marks the official beginning of summer for many. People flock to the Cabana for good food prepared well: grilled mahi-mahi sandwiches, pork barbecue, steak on a stick, Angus beef burgers, Italian and steak hoagies, white chicken chili, and interesting salads. While some of the fare is familiar pub grub, nothing is sub-standard. Even potato chips are made in-house and seasoned with Cajun spices. → 7445 Forbes Rd., Sayler Park, (513) 941-7442, cabanaontheriver.com. Lunch and dinner seven days. MCC, DS. \$

EMBERS

The menu here is built for celebration: poshly priced steak and sushi selections are meant to suit every special occasion. Appetizers are both classic (shrimp cocktail) and Asian-inspired (beef satay); fashionable ingredients are name-checked (micro-greens and black truffles); a prominent sushi section (nigiri, sashimi, and rolls) precedes a list of archetypal salads; beer-sodden American Wagyu beef sidles up to steaks of corn-fed prime; non-steak entrées (Chilean sea bass or seared scallops with wild mushroom



COFFEE CART

Mercantile Library regulars, your caffeine fix just got a whole lot closer. Chuck Pfahler, founder of La Terza Coffee, has created a bespoke coffee cart complete with an incredibly quiet (no shushing needed!) German grinder and a state-of-the-art Italian espresso machine to produce espresso, cappuccino, cortado, and macchiato. The cart, known as Adesso ("now" in Italian), will also serve a variety of hot teas and a specialty blend of drip coffee. → Tues-Fri 9-2, mercantilelibrary.com

risotto and roasted beets) make for high-style alternative selections. Talk about a party. → 8170 Montgomery Rd., Madeira, (513) 984-8090, embersrestaurant.com. Dinner seven days. MCC, DC, DS. \$\$\$

HARVEST BISTRO

Angela Willett has long had ties to the Telford Avenue space her restaurant now occupies. She was a server and manager when the space was Tink's, and her husband, Joseph Clark, curated owner Jens Rosencrantz's expansive wine cellar when the restaurant morphed into La Poste. Now she's at the helm, offering up unexpected wines by the glass alongside well-executed American bistro fare, including a hearty stuffed Duroc pork chop stuffed with spinach, prosciutto, and fontina cheese; a popular mushroom ravioli with sage cream sauce; and market-priced beef entrées. → 3410 Telford Ave., Clifton, (513) 281-3663, harvestbistro.com. Lunch Tues-Fri, dinner Mon-Sat, brunch Sun. MCC. \$\$

RED FEATHER KITCHEN

Historically peasant-grade cuts of meat get the full Pygmalion treatment at Red Feather in Oakley, where there's deep respect for the time and tending necessary to bring a short rib, pork chop, or hanger steak to its full potential. After a quick sear to lock in juices, the steak takes a turn in the wood-fired oven. While primal cuts play a leading role, the supporting cast is just as captivating. The hot snap of fresh ginger in the carrot soup was especially warming on a winter evening and the crispy skin on the Verlasso salmon acts as the foil to the plump, rich flesh. Service here only improves the experience. → 3200 Madison Rd., Oakley, (513) 407-3631, redfeatherkitchen.com. Dinner Tues-Sun, brunch Sun. MCC. \$\$

RON'S ROOST

They stake their reputation on their fried chicken, serving 10,000 pieces weekly. It takes a few minutes, since each batch is made to order. Ron's also serves chicken 18 other ways, including pizza chicken quesadillas and chicken livers in gravy. It's all about the chicken here, but that's not all they have. The menu is five solid pages of stuff good enough to be called specialties: Oktoberfest sauerbraten, Black Angus cheeseburgers, fried whitefish on rye, hot bacon slaw,

lemon meringue pie (homemade, of course), and the best Saratoga chips this side of Saratoga. → 3853 Race Rd., Bridgetown, (513) 574-0222, ronstroost.net. Breakfast Sun, lunch and dinner seven days. MCC, DS. \$\$

THE SCHOOLHOUSE RESTAURANT

An old flag stands in one corner and pictures of Abe Lincoln and the first George W. hang on the wall of this Civil War-era schoolhouse. The daily menu of familiar Midwestern comfort fare is written in letter-perfect cursive on the original chalkboard. Once you order from a woman who bears an uncanny resemblance to your high school lunch lady, the elevated lazy Susan in the center of the table begins to fill up with individual bowls and baskets of cornbread, slaw, salad, mashed potatoes, chicken gravy, and vegetables. The deal here is quantity. More mashed potatoes with your fried chicken? More cornbread with your baked ham? You don't even have to raise your hand. → 8031 Glendale-Milford Rd., Camp Dennison, (513) 831-5753, theschoolhousecincinnati.com. Lunch Thurs & Fri, dinner Thurs-Sun. MCC, DS. \$

SYMPHONY HOTEL & RESTAURANT

Tucked into a West 14th Street Italianate directly around the corner from Music Hall, this place feels like a private dinner club. There's a preferred-by-reservation policy, and when you call, you'll be prompted to check the web site for the weekend's five-course menu, a slate of "new American" dishes that changes monthly. You can see the reliance on local produce in the spring vegetable barley soup. Salads are interesting without being busy, and the sorbets—served as the third course palate cleanser—are all made by Madisano's Gelato and Sorbet. Main courses of almond crusted mahi mahi, flat-iron steak, and a vegetable lasagna hit all the right notes, and you can end with a sweet flourish if you choose the chocolate croissant bread pudding. → 210 W. 14th St., Over-the-Rhine, (513) 721-3353, symphonyhotel.com. Dinner Fri & Sat, brunch Sun. \$\$\$

TELA BAR + KITCHEN

Classically conceived but casually executed comfort food, including mini-Monte Cristo sandwiches with tangy house-made pimento cheese

Cincinnati International Wine Festival March 3 and 4 at Duke Energy Center

You're invited to join Honorary Chair **Genevieve Janssens**, Director of Winemaking at Robert Mondavi Winery, at the Cincinnati International Wine Festival March 3 and 4 at Duke Energy Center.

Whether you are a long time lover of wine or an intrigued beginner, the Cincinnati International Wine Festival is the place to explore the world of wine. You can enjoy gourmet winery dinners at Cincinnati's finest restaurants, an exciting live wine auction and luncheon, and truly **GRAND Tastings**. There are always new wines to sample from around the world and experts ready to share their wine knowledge with you.

Don't miss the **Special Tasting Room** offering premium wines an hour before each Grand Tasting opens.

New this year are **Educational Seminars**, also presented before each Grand Tasting. On Friday evening discover your palate in "What's My (Wine) Style?"; on Saturday afternoon experience "POP! A Proper Primer (on Sparkling Wines)"; and on Saturday evening learn about the tactile components in wine and how your palate perceives the differences with "Map Your Palate!"

For more information on all the festival events, or to purchase tickets, visit winefestival.com.

Proceeds from the Cincinnati International Wine Festival benefit 90.9 WGUC and other local non-profit organizations. Since its inception, almost \$5 million has been contributed to Greater Cincinnati charities.

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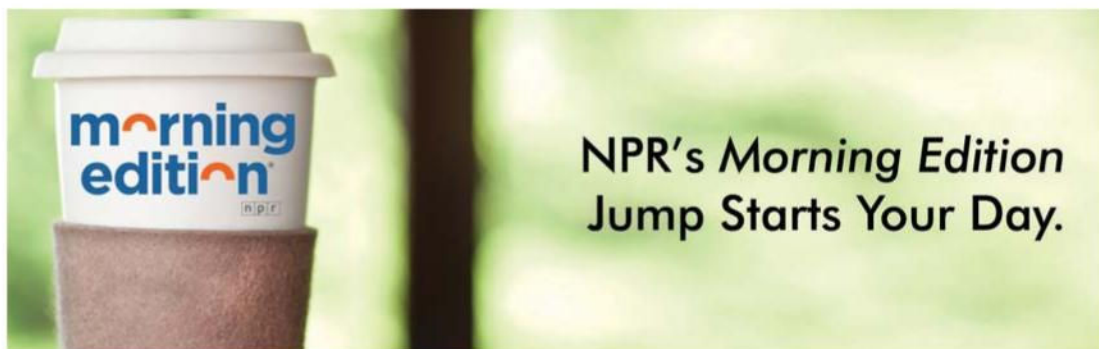
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Mixing humor and hard news, analysis and arts, *Morning Edition* hosts Steve Inskeep, Rachel Martin and David Greene deftly deliver the news and perspective you crave to jump-start your day. Each morning you enjoy compelling interviews and feature stories, expert commentary and up to the minute news.

Also heard regularly on *Morning Edition* are news analyst Cokie Roberts and sports commentator Frank Deford, as well as the special series *StoryCorps*, the largest oral history project in American history.

Plus, 91.7 News Director Maryanne Zeleznik has local news, weather and traffic to make sure you are well prepared for your morning commute and the rest of your day. On Mondays don't miss her local politics discussion with WVXU politics reporter Howard Wilkinson at 7:44 and 9:44 – or, Ann Thompson's *Focus on Technology* at 6:44 and 8:44.

Tune to 91.7 WVXU to be a more knowledgeable and engaged member of the Cincinnati community, and connect to the nation and the world.

Ask Me Another

Saturdays at 11:00 am

Do you put your spice rack in alphabetical order? Complete crossword puzzles in pen? Know the words to every TV theme song? Then, add *Ask Me Another* to your Saturday morning routine!

Ask Me Another brings the lively spirit and fun competition of your favorite trivia night to Saturday morning. With puzzles, word games, and trivia, it features the wit of host Ophira Eisenberg, the music of house musician Jonathan Coulton and special VIP guests who take a turn in the contestant's chair, all in front of a live audience.

The Very Important Puzzlers (VIPs) have included former *Daily Show* correspondent Jason Jones, *Orange is the New Black*'s Uzo Aduba, Leslie Odom Jr. from *Hamilton*, and Mike Rowe from *Dirty Jobs*.

In the words of one listener "*Ask Me Another* is quirky, witty, and makes my trivia heart sing!"

Listen to *Ask Me Another* every Saturday morning at 11:00.

ask

me

another

stuffed into sourdough bread and fried crisp, mac and cheese topped with a Mr. Pibb-braised short rib, and steak frites. Servers are slightly scattered, yet enthusiastic and friendly, with a good grasp of the beverage program. → **1212 Springfield Pk., Wyoming, (513) 821-8352, telabarand kitchen.com. Lunch and dinner Mon-Sat. MCC. \$\$**

TRIO

Trio is nothing if not a crowd pleaser. Whether you're in the mood for a California-style pizza or filet mignon (with side salad, garlic mashed potatoes, and seasonal veggies), the menu is broad enough to offer something for everyone. It may lack a cohesive point of view, but with the number of regulars who come in seven nights a week, variety is Trio's ace in the hole. A simple Roma tomato pizza with basil, Parmesan, and provolone delivered a fine balance of crunchy crust, sharp cheese, and sweet, roasted tomatoes. Paired with a glass of pinot noir, it made a perfect light meal. The service is friendly enough for a casual neighborhood joint but comes with white tablecloth attentiveness and knowledge. Combine that with the consistency in the kitchen, and Trio is a safe bet.

→ **7565 Kenwood Rd., Kenwood, (513) 984-1905, triobistro.com. Lunch and dinner seven days. MCC, DC. \$\$\$**

THE WILDFLOWER CAFÉ

Todd Hudson, the chef and owner of The Wildflower Café built his entire menu around organic and local food. Located in the older section of downtown Mason in a century-old house that occupies a wide corner lot at East Main Street and Kings Mills Road, Hudson serves up well-presented, uncomplicated food that's modest and nourishing. There is fresh fish of the day; burgers on pretzel buns with shaved onions and double-smoked bacon. There's an eclectic collection of entrées from quiche to beef du Jour, vegan vegetable curry to chicken and waffles. The attention and care for handmade is apparent. "I never thought about doing anything else," Hudson says. "It's not a trend. It's the past, and the future." → **207 E. Main St., Mason, (513) 492-7514, wildflowergourmetcafe.com. Lunch and dinner Tues-Sat. MCC. \$\$**

BARBECUE

ELI'S BBQ

Elias Leisring started building his pulled pork reputation under canopies at Findlay Market and Fountain Square in 2011. Leisring's proper little 'cue shack along the river serves up ribs that are speaking-in-tongues good, some of the zazziest jalapeño cheese grits north of the Mason-Dixon line, and browned mashed potatoes that would make any short order cook diner-proud. The small no-frills restaurant—packed cheek-by-jowl most nights—feels like it's been there a lifetime, with customers dropping vinyl on the turntable, dogs romping in the side yard, and picnic tables crowded with diners. The hooch is bring-your-own, and the barbecue is bona fide. → **3313 Riverside Dr., East End, (513) 307-8318, elisbarbecue.com. Lunch and dinner seven days. Cash only. \$**

PONTIAC BBQ

Dan Wright's BBQ dream comes to life in a honky-tonkish setting, delivering inexpensive barbecue that draws from multiple traditions—Kansas City, Memphis, and Texas—a few basic sides (bacon-and-pickled-jalapeño-topped white grits and a silky mac-and-cheese), and plenty of bourbon. Snack on fried pickles or smoked wings, then move on to brisket (both fatty and lean), pulled pork, and smoked-on-the-bone short ribs. This is ridiculously high-quality comfort food at a friendly price point. → **1403 Vine St., Over-the-Rhine, (513) 579-8500, pontiacbbq.com. Lunch and dinner Tues-Sun, brunch Sun. MCC. \$\$**

WALT'S BARBEQUE

Walt's Barbeque on Colerain Avenue serves Texas-style barbecue, with an emphasis on pork. Their house-made sauce is excellent—thick, slightly spicy, slightly sweet, and not too tangy—and the smoked hickory flavor is evident in all of their slow-cooked fare. The ultra-tender baby back ribs were, by far, the highlight of the menu. Walt's serves more than 17 different hot and cold side dishes, including fantastic collard greens, baked beans, and a sweet

potato casserole that is more dessert than vegetable.

→ **6040 Colerain Ave., Colerain Township, (513) 923-9800, walt sbarbeque.com. Lunch and diner seven days. MCC, DS. \$**

WALT'S HITCHING POST

A Northern Kentucky institution returns. Roughly 750 pounds of ribs per week are pit-fired in a small building in front of the restaurant, with a smaller dedicated smoker out back for brisket and chicken. Walt's ribs begin with several hours in the smokehouse and then are quick-seared at the time of service. This hybrid method takes advantage of the leaner nature of the baby-back ribs they prefer to use. Each rib had a just-right tooth to it where soft flesh peeled away from the bone. One hidden treasure: Walt's house-made tomato and garlic dressing. Slightly thicker than a vinaigrette yet unwilling to overwhelm a plate of greens, the two key elements play well together. → **3300 Madison Pike, Ft. Wright, (859) 360-2222, waltshitchingpost.com. Dinner seven days. MCC. \$\$**

CAJUN/ CARIBBEAN

DEE FELICE CAFÉ

To call Dee Felice Café a jazz supper club would be too conventional. Though the waitstaff in white shirt and tie are more formally dressed than most of the diners, the atmosphere is decidedly casual. The music and menu are still true to the original spirit of Emidio DeFelice, a drummer and bandleader who opened the restaurant in 1984 to create a jazz venue that he and his fellow musicians could relax in and enjoy a meal. It made sense to feature cuisine from the birthplace of jazz, New Orleans, and the Cajun and Creole dishes of southern Louisiana still dominate the menu, though there are a few Italian dishes, as well as steaks (the most consistently well-executed dishes on the menu) and salads. The joint is most definitely still jumpin'. → **529 Main St., Covington, (859) 261-2365, deefelice.com. Dinner seven days. MCC, DC, DS. \$\$\$**

SWAMPWATER GRILL

At first blush, this place is a dive where homesick Cajuns can find a good pile of jambalaya. But thoughtful details like draft Abita Root Beer and char-grilled Gulf Coast oysters on the half shell signal its ambition. Bayou standards like jambalaya, gumbo, and fried seafood also make an appearance. But the extensive menu also features amped up pub-style items for those who may be squeamish about crawfish tails (which can be added to just about anything on the menu). You'll also find a roundup of oyster, shrimp, and catfish Po'Boys, as well as a selection of hardwood-smoked meats. → **3742 Kellogg Ave., East End, (513) 834-7067, swampwatergrill.com. Lunch and dinner Tues-Sun, brunch Sat & Sun. MCC. \$\$**

KNOTTY PINE ON THE BAYOU

The Pine serves some of the best Louisiana home-style food you'll find this far north of New Orleans. Taste the fried catfish filets with their peppery crust, or the garlic sautéed shrimp with smoky greens on the side, and you'll understand why it's called soul food. Between February and June, it's crawfish season. Get them boiled and heaped high on a platter or in a superb crawfish etouffée. But the rockin' gumbo—a thick, murky brew of andouille sausage, chicken, and vegetables—serves the best roundhouse punch all year round. As soon as you inhale the bouquet and take that first bite, you realize why Cajun style food is considered a high art form and a serious pleasure. And you'll start planning your return trip. → **6302 Licking Pk., Cold Spring, (859) 781-2200, letseat.at/KnottyPine. Dinner Tues-Sun. MCC, DS. \$\$**

CHINESE

AMERASIA

A sense of energetic fun defines this tiny Chinese spot with a robust beer list. The glossy paper menu depicts Master

Chef Rich Chu as a "Kung Food" master fighting the evil fast-food villain with dishes like "fly rice," "Brocco-Lee," and "Big Bird's Nest." Freshness rules. Pot stickers, dumplings, and wontons are hand-shaped. The Dragon's Breath wontons will invade your dreams. Seasoned ground pork, onion, and cilantro meatballs are wrapped in egg dough, wok simmered, and topped with thick, spicy red pepper sauce and fresh cilantro. Noodles are clearly Chef Chu's specialty, with zonzon (a tangle of thin noodles, finely chopped pork, tofu, and mushrooms cloaked in spicy dark sauce and crowned with peanuts and cilantro) and Matt Chu's Special (shaved rice noodle, fried chicken, and seasonal vegetables in gingery white sauce) topping the menu's flavor charts. → **521 Madison Ave., Covington, (859) 261-6121. Lunch Mon-Fri, dinner Mon-Sat. MCC. \$**

CHINESE IMPERIAL INN

The chillies-on-steroids cooking here will have you mopping beads of garlic-laced sweat from your brow. The musky, firecracker-red Mongolian chicken stabilizes somewhere just before nirvana exhaustion, and aggressively pungent shredded pork with dried bean curd leaves your eyes gloriously glistening from its spicy hot scarlet oil. Even an ice cold beer practically evaporates on your tongue. Do not fear: not all the dishes are incendiary. Try the seafood—lobster, razor clams, Dungeness and blue crabs, whelk, and oysters—prepared with tamer garlicky black bean sauce, or ginger and green onions. The Cantonese wonton soup, nearly as mild as your morning bowl of oatmeal, is as memorable as the feverish stuff. Sliced pork and shrimp are pushed into the steaming bowl of noodles and greens just before serving. Think comforting, grandmotherly tenderness. → **11042 Reading Rd., Sharonville, (513) 563-6888, chineseimperialinn.com. Lunch and dinner seven days. MCC, DS. \$**

HOUSE OF SUN

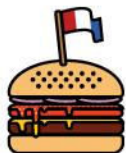
Ask the gracious Taiwanese gentleman who welcomes you for the Chinese menu. He'll gleefully grab the real menu, which commences a ballet of smoky, spicy sliced conch; thick handmade noodles soaking up rich, nostril-searing beef stock; and crispy pork ears arranged like flower petals on the plate (think of fine Italian prosciutto). The real stars of the menu are the chicken dishes: smoked with skin brittle as caramelized sugar; salty with ginger oil for dipping; and the popular Taiwanese "Three Cup" chicken made by cooking the bird with a cup each of soy sauce, water, and wine. Served with an audible crackle, it's robustly flavored with ginger—at once subtle, bold, sweet, and superb. → **11959 Lebanon Rd., Sharonville, (513) 769-0888, houseofsuncincy.com. Lunch and dinner Mon-Sun. DS, MC, V. \$\$**

ORIENTAL WOK

This is the restaurant of your childhood memories: the showy Las Vegas-meets-China decor, the ebulliently comedic host, the chop sueys, chow meins, and crab rangoons that have never met a crab. But behind the giant elephant tusk entryway and past the goldfish ponds and fountains is the genuine hospitality and warmth of the Wong family, service worthy of the finest dining establishments, and some very good food that's easy on the palate. Best are the fresh fish: salmon, sea bass, and halibut steamed, grilled, or flash fried in a wok, needing little more than the ginger-green onion sauce that accompanies them. Even the chicken lo mein is good. It may not be provocative, but not everyone wants to eat blazing frogs in a hot pot. → **317 Buttermilk Pk., Ft. Mitchell, (859) 331-3000; 2444 Madison Rd., Hyde Park, (513) 871-6888, orientalwok.com. Lunch Mon-Fri (Ft. Mitchell); buffet Sun 11-2:30; lunch Tues-Sat (Hyde Park) dinner seven days (both). MCC. \$\$**

THE PACIFIC KITCHEN

The monster of a menu can be dizzying. Ease in with some top-notch Korean Fried Chicken. These slightly bubbly, shatter-crisp wings are painted with a thin gochujang pepper sauce (a foil to the fat). It takes 36 hours to prep the Cantonese duck, between a honey-vinegar brine to dry the skin, a marinade of star anise, bean paste, and soy within the re-sealed cavity, and the crispy convection oven finish. Dolsot bibimbap had plenty of crispy rice at the bottom of the stone bowl, and the accompanying banchan were soothing yet flavorful, especially the strips of lightly pickled cucumber. Even dishes like a Malaysian goat stew



FRENCH FLING

James Beard-award winning chef Anne Kearney has reinvented her upscale French bistro, Rue Dumaine, as the more casual Bar Dumaine, serving peel-n-eat shrimp, Croque Monsieur, and Trout Amandine. A provision in the lease made Kearney responsible for any property tax increases, and a reassessment of the shopping center meant a 70 percent increase in Kearney's taxes. She'll stay until the lease is up July 31, but there's no word on what happens after that. → [facebook.com/bardumaine](#)

resonated with rich, original flavors. → **8300 Market Place Lane, Montgomery, (513) 898-1833. Lunch and dinner seven days; dim sum Sat & Sun. MCC. \$\$**

RAYMOND'S HONG KONG CAFÉ

It has all the elements of your typical neighborhood Chinese restaurant: Strip mall location. General Tso and kung pao chicken. Fortune cookies accompanying the bill. The dragon decoration. But it is the nontraditional aspects of Raymond's Hong Kong Café that allow it to stand apart. The menu goes beyond standard Chinese fare with dishes that range from Vietnamese (beef noodle soup) to American (crispy Cornish hen). The Portuguese-style baked chicken references Western European influences on Chinese cuisine with an assemblage of fried rice, peppers, carrots, broccoli, zucchini, and squash all simmering together in a creamy bath of yellow curry sauce. Deciding what to order is a challenge, but at least you won't be disappointed. → **11051 Clay Dr., Walton, (859) 485-2828. Lunch and dinner seven days. MCC. \$\$**

SHANGHAI MAMA'S

This 1920s Asian noodle house—complete with dark woodwork and bird cages—offers big bowls of noodle soups, rice bowls, dim sum, and crunchy, traditional salads, all under \$10. The noodle bowl selections are the most popular, with everything from spicy chicken to Shanghai ribs, shrimp to tofu, and orange duckling to wild mushrooms. Try the Shanghai flatbreads, a “pancake” with different toppings and tangy dipping sauce. You'll find the downtown professional crowd during the day, but come weekend nights Shanghai Mama's is bright lights big city with after-theater diners, restaurant staff, and bar patrons socializing and slurping noodle soups until the wee morning hours. → **216 E. Sixth St., downtown, (513) 241-7777, shanghaimamas.com. Lunch Mon-Fri, dinner Mon-Sat. MCC. \$**

SICHUAN BISTRO CHINESE GOURMET

Like many Chinese restaurants that cater to both mainstream American and Chinese palates, this strip mall gem uses two menus. The real story here is found in dishes of pungent multilayered flavors that set your mouth ablaze with fermented peppers and fresh chilies and then just as quickly cool it down with the devilish, numbing sensation of hua jiao, Sichuan pepper. Its numbing effect is subtle at first: appetizers of cold sliced beef and tripe, as well as slices of pork belly with a profusion of minced garlic, lean toward the hot and sweet; mapo tofu freckled with tiny fermented black beans and scallions, and pork with pickled red peppers and strips of ginger root, progress from sweet to pungent to hot to salty—in that order. Alternated with cooling dishes—nibbles of rice, a verdant mound of baby bok choy stir-fried with a shovelful of garlic, refreshing spinach wilted in ginger sauce, a simply sensational tea-smoked duck—the effect is momentarily tempered. → **7888 S. Mason Montgomery Rd., Mason, (513) 770-3123, sichuanbistro.com. Lunch and dinner Tues-Sun. MCC, DS. \$**

SUZIE WONG'S ON MADISON

A few items on the menu resemble those that were once served at Pacific Moon, such as laub gai and Vietnamese rolls, both variations of lettuce wraps. For the laub gai, browned peppery chicken soong (in Cantonese and Mandarin, referring to meat that is minced) is folded into leaf lettuce with stems of fresh cilantro and mint, red Serrano peppers, a squeeze of lime juice, and a drizzle of fish sauce. In the Vietnamese roll version, small cigar-sized rolls stuffed with chicken and shrimp are crisp fried and lettuce wrapped in the same manner. The Pan-Asian menu also includes Korean kalbi (tender beef ribs marinated and glazed in a sweet, dark, sesame soy

sauce) and dolsat bibimbap, the hot stone bowl that's a favorite around town. → **1544 Madison Rd., East Walnut Hills, (513) 751-3333, suziewongs.com. Lunch and dinner Mon-Sat. MCC, DS. \$\$**

UNCLE YIP'S

Long before sushi somehow un-disgusted itself to the Western World, China had houses of dim sum. Uncle Yip's valiantly upholds that tradition in Evendale. This is a traditional dim sum house with all manner of exotic dumplings, including shark fin or beef tripe with ginger and onion. As for the seafood part of the restaurant's full name, Uncle Yip has most everything the sea has to offer, from lobster to mussels. The menu has more than 260 items, so you'll find a range of favorites, from moo goo gai pan to rock salt frog legs. → **10736 Reading Rd., Evendale, (513) 733-8484. Lunch and dinner seven days. MCC, discount for cash. \$\$**

YAT KA MEIN

This noodle house caters to our inner Chinese peasant. Yat Ka Mein offers humble, everyday Cantonese dishes of egg noodles, tasty dumplings packed with shrimp or pork, fresh veggies, and chicken broth. Almost begrudgingly the menu includes popular American-style Chinese dishes, like the ubiquitous sweet and sour chicken, Moo Goo Gai Pan, roast duck, and so forth. But what makes the place unique are less familiar dishes like Dan Dan noodles, a spicy, sweat-inducing blend of garlic, chili peppers, and ground chicken marinated in chili sauce. → **2974 Madison Rd., Oakley, (513) 321-2028, yatkamein.biz. Lunch and dinner seven days. MCC. \$\$**

ECLECTIC

BOUQUET RESTAURANT AND WINE BAR

Cozy, off the beaten path, and with a menu touched with a lovable Southern drawl, right down to the bourbon-centric cocktails, it verily announces “Come on back, y’all.” You definitely want to start with the “motherboard,” a selection of five cheeses, four cured meats, and plenty of accompaniments—stuffed peppadews, warm olives, mustards, jams, pistachio relish, and seven (!) types of pickles. Expect the highest quality cuts and wedges, all knowledgeably identified by the cheerful and attentive staff. Favorites include forest ham from Louisville's Woodlands Pork, smoked picnic ham from Eckerlin Meats, and cheeses from Kenny's Farmhouse Cheese near Bowling Green, Kentucky. Wild-caught blue catfish from Western Kentucky's Lake Barkley had a meatier texture and stronger flavor than your average bottom dweller, and the sorghum-glazed Marksbury Farm pork belly was juicy and surprisingly light. → **519 Main St., Covington, (859) 491-7777, bouquetrestaurant.com. Dinner Mon-Sat. MCC, DS. \$\$**

DUTCH'S LARDER

The praise for Dutch's sandwiches is well deserved. The bold beefiness of the short rib grilled cheese was paired perfectly with some sweet and stinky taleggio, and served pressed, almost panini-style. The individual ingredients of the BLT sing in peak-season harmony—a crisp slice of house-cured bacon, a purple-flecked heirloom tomato straight from the vine, snappy aioli, and just enough butter lettuce for crunch. Free-flowing evenings on the patio call for a charcuterie plate. Surgically thin slices of peppery, salmon-hued Smoking Goose capicola rubbed shoulders with varzi, a Lombardian salami with a slightly course texture and unexpected notes of clove and cinnamon. The Bent River camembert was sweet and sour, with a texture only slightly

firmer than sweetened condensed milk, and the six-month aged manchego's salty-nuttiness was only enhanced by a housemade pistachio-and-honey paste. → **3378 Erie Ave., Hyde Park, (513) 871-1446, dutchs.squareSPACE.com. Lunch and dinner Tues-Sun. MCC. \$\$**

THE LITTLEFIELD

Inside a modest 1,500 square-foot space on Spring Grove, just south of Hamilton Avenue, at least 70-odd bourbons behind the bar drive this little restaurant's philosophy. The menu is meant to be limited, the better to support and celebrate the bottled flavors up front. There are surprises: a faint hint of curry powder deepens the moody cauliflower fritters; skewered golf-balls of mild, peppery ground lamb get a faint crust from the final sear. You'll also want to order the brisket. Applewood-smoked then braised, the meat maintains just enough fat to stay soft, and the earthy, smoky-sweet flavor comes with a patent-leather char to remind you of the caramelized nuances in your glass. The signature pot pie is lighter than most, more like a hearty (read: lots of white and dark meat) soup than a fricassee held captive within a flaky crust. → **3934 Spring Grove Ave., Northside, (513) 386-7570, littlefieldns.com. Dinner Mon-Sat. V, MC. \$**

THE MERCER

This Vine Street spot is the brainchild of Jon Zipperstein, owner of neighboring OTR knockout Kaze, as well as the steak and sushi mainstay Embers in Kenwood. The Mercer proves admirably that comforting staples—when prepared with precision and served with warmth—can send even the most curmudgeonly diner off fat and happy. Take the short ribs. Many places do a great short rib, but these are lovely, dutifully seared, braised slow and low until tender, and not overwhelmed by fatty gravy. It's the polenta that really launches this dish into high orbit, the quicksand texture that ever-so-slowly absorbed the braising liquid, still suggestive of root vegetable sweetness. For dessert try the savory cheesecake. It's criminally rich, and worth saving room for the unique mix of four cheeses: blue, goat, cream, and ricotta. The slice relies on compressed grapes, crumbs of rosemary-infused walnut cookie crust and drops of a port and pear reduction to offer just a hint of sweet. → **1324 Vine St., Over-the-Rhine, (513) 421-5111, themercerotr.com. Dinner Tues-Sun. MCC. \$\$**

NICHOLSON'S

To remind local diners that they were here before those young dog-toting punks with their exposed brick and crafty ales in Over-the-Rhine, Nicholson's branded themselves Cincinnati's “first and finest gastropub,” and revamped the menu to include plenty of snacks and small plates for grazing, and not-quite-brawny, straightforward sandwiches and main dishes. Try the pumpkin crusted trout, bowl of cock-a-leekie soup, or check out the cranberry-apple or Scottish BBQ style burgers—each made with your choice of beef, turkey, lamb, or chicken patties. And the bar's clubby intimacy makes it easy to belly up and enjoy their impressive collection of single malts or a Scottish stout. → **625 Walnut St., downtown, (513) 564-9111, nicholsonspub.com. Lunch and dinner seven days. MCC. \$\$**

THE PRESIDENT'S ROOM

This newest incarnation of the Phoenix event center's main dining area, chef Jeremy Luers takes on homey European classics and adds a soupçon of modern sensibility. His menu demonstrates a surprising range of pasta dishes, and the tonarelli is one example that soars; toothy spaghetti-like noodles mingle with cockles—tiny saltwater clams—and salty ham hock. Entrées are formidable and priced to match. A boneless beef short rib is prepared sauerbraten style, braised in red wine thickened with gingersnaps and

served atop pureed Yukon Gold potatoes and braised red cabbage. Luers's piece de resistance is his choucroute garni royale, an Alsatian hot pot studded with pork, potatoes, and kraut. Meant to be split between two to three diners, the dish may require independent arbitration for the pork belly and spare ribs. ➔ **812 Race St., downtown, (513) 721-2260, thepresidentsrm.com. Dinner Wed-Sat. MCC. \$\$**

SENATE

Ever since it began dishing out its lo-fi eats, Chef Dan Wright's gastropub has been operating at a velocity few can match. From the howl and growl of supremely badass hot dogs to the palate-rattling poutine, Senate has led the charge in changing the local conventional wisdom about what makes a great restaurant. Consumption of mussels charmolua means either ordering additional grilled bread to soak up every drop of the herby, saffron-laced broth or drinking the remainder straight from the bowl and perfectly crisped and seasoned fries inspire countless return visits. ➔ **1212 Vine St., Over-the-Rhine (513) 421-2020, senatepub.com. Lunch and dinner Tues-Sat. MC, V, DS. \$**

THE SUMMIT

This "laboratory restaurant" staffed by Midwest Culinary Institute students features a limited but eclectic menu. Soft shell crab goes Latin with black beans, avocado, lime, and chiles. Spanish mackerel is given a Mediterranean twist with yogurt, cucumbers, pickled red onion, and chickpeas. A more traditional pasta dish of hand cut pappardelle with prosciutto, peas, and Parmesan makes an appearance alongside a Kurabota (the pork equivalent of Kobe beef) "hot dog." Some dishes work better than others: There is redemption in a rustic combination of morels with cream, shallots, and tangy, smoky Idiazábal sheep's milk cheese. The complex flavor of earth, wood, and char makes this a classic dish for enjoying, not for analyzing. That's exactly what culinary students should be striving for. ➔ **3520 Central Parkway, Clifton, (513) 569-4980, midwestculinary.com. Dinner Thurs-Sat. MCC, DS. \$\$**

TASTE OF BELGIUM

Jean-François Flechet's waffle empire grew from a back counter of Madison's grocery at Findlay Market to multiple full-service sit-down spots. There's more on the menu than the authentic Belgian treat, though it would be a crime to miss the chicken and waffles: a dense, yeasty waffle topped with a succulent butter-milk fried chicken breast, Frank's hot sauce, and maple syrup. There are also frites, of course, and croquettes—molten Emmentaler cheese sticks—plus a gem of a Bolognese. And let's not forget the beer. Six rotating taps offer some of the best the Belgians brew, not to mention those made by OTR neighbors. ➔ **1133 Vine St., Over-the-Rhine, (513) 381-4607, authenticwaffle.com. Breakfast and lunch Mon-Sat, dinner Tues-Sat, brunch Sun. MCC. \$\$**

20 BRIX

Paul Barraco mixes Mediterranean influences with homespun choices, and he comes up with some marvelous food. Lamb meatballs with melted leeks and romesco sauce are sweet and peppery, and their simplicity partners well with a lush Zinfandel. And his chicken and waffles could inspire you to regularly take a solo seat at the bar. The excellent wine list, arranged by flavor profiles rather than varietals, features dozens of varieties by the glass in five-ounce or two-ounce pours, which makes it easy to try several. ➔ **101 Main St., Milford, (513) 831-2749, 20brix.com. Lunch and dinner Mon-Sat. MCC, DS, DC. \$\$**

TERANGA

West African cuisine consists of mostly simple, home-style dishes of stews and grilled lamb with just enough of the exotic to offer a glimpse of another culture. Be prepared for a few stimulating sights and flavors that warm from within. An entire grilled tilapia—head and all—in a peppery citrus marinade and served on plantains with a side of Dijon-coated cooked onions is interesting enough to pique foodie interest without overwhelming the moderate eater. Stews of lamb or chicken with vegetables and rice are a milder bet, and

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Moroccan-style couscous with vegetables and mustard sauce accompanies most items. The dining room atmosphere is extremely modest with most of the action coming from the constant stream of carryout orders. → **8438 Vine St., Hartwell, (513) 821-1300, terangaenterprise.com. Lunch and dinner seven days. MCC, check. \$**

THE WINDS CAFÉ

Located about an hour north of Cincinnati, the Winds opened in 1977 as a collectively owned cafe in the staunchly liberal town of Yellow Springs, Ohio. Chef Kim Korkan uses local farmers' products to create natural, wholesome food on the menu, which changes every two months. Winter root vegetables, smoky sauces, and game give way to spring lamb, asparagus crepes with fresh chives and house-made ricotta, and wild river salmon with squid ink linguine and lemon cream. Walleye, halibut, swordfish, and shrimp appear on summer menus, while the bounty of vegetables and fruits moves to center stage. This is mindful cuisine, based on the best the Earth has to offer. → **215 Xenia Ave., Yellow Springs, (937) 767-1144, windscafe.com. Lunch and dinner Tues-Sat, brunch Sun. MCC. \$**

ZULA

For a restaurant whose name loosely derives from an Israeli slang term for "hidden treasure," it seems apt that a dish or two might sneak in and stun—like the mussels Marseilles, with its bouillabaisse-style broth, rich with saffron, tomato, and fennel. But Zula is no one-trick pony. With a wood-fired oven on the premises, it's incumbent on you to try the flatbreads. One *zula* is the eggplant option, where caramelized onions and marinated red bell peppers

pair well with subtly sweet fontina. Not every bite at Zula is a game-changer, but one is all you need. → **1400 Race St., Over-the-Rhine, (513) 744-9852, zulabistro.com. Dinner Tues-Sat. MCC. \$\$**

FRENCH

JEAN-ROBERT'S TABLE

No other chef in town has as much presence as Jean-Robert de Cavel, and no other restaurant is steeped in such a singular personality. Who else could conjure up a surf and turf tartare of steak and salmon, or try his hand at a luxurious "haute pocket" (a.k.a., a vol au vent), cramming obscene amounts of lobster and succotash into airy layers of buttery puff pastry? But these touches are more than mere outré Gallic insouciance. Always lurking in the background is a reverence for the classics: Filet mignon cooked so skillfully that the meat maintains that textbook tinge of sourness; frites so crisp that your burger blushes. De Cavel shows us how not to simply pay lip service to staid Old World traditions, but how to find *vitalité* in their modern antecedents. → **713 Vine St., downtown, (513) 621-4777, jrtable.com. Lunch Mon-Fri, dinner Mon-Sat. MCC, DS. \$\$**

LA PETITE PIERRE

This quiet Camargo Road outpost boasts a rich history, with a pedigree stretching back to Maisonette. Named for Pierre Adrian, who steered Maisonette to a Mobil five-star rating in the mid-1960s, the restaurant initially opened in 1989 as both a catering company and a sit-down eatery by two of Adrian's daughters, Michele Vollman and Suzy DeYoung. Two years ago, after DeYoung's departure to open La Soupe, Vollman assumed sole ownership of the business. Despite the restaurant's Gallic roots, entrées sometimes pivot away from the classics. A filet of sea bass has an Italian accent: light tomato jus and citrus aioli dressing,

served over fresh greens and herbed breadcrumbs. And while a seared pork belly dish may seem like a throwback, the richness of the belly, the pickled onions, and the Aleppo pepper and cheddar grits keep it current. → **7800 Camargo Rd., Madeira, (513) 527-4909, lapetitepierre.com. Lunch Tues-Fri, dinner Thurs-Sat, brunch Sun. MCC. \$\$**

LE BAR A BOEUF

Jean-Robert de Cavel's upscale alterna-burger-shack features *bifteck haché*, ground beef patties that are a mainstay of French family dinners, according to de Cavel. His "Les Ground Meat" is available in beef, Wagyu beef, bison, lamb, and fish (a blend of albacore tuna and salmon). Portions are eight ounces, taller than a typical burger, and seared on the kitchen's iron griddle. It's easy to turn many of the generously portioned appetizers into dinner. Pair the open-faced beef tongue "French Dip" sandwich with a spinach salad and you'll have one of the best choices in the house. Or go for mac-and-cheese. The lobster mac always sounds lush, but do consider the humble beef cheek version, enlivened by a touch of truffle oil, instead. → **2200 Victory Pkwy., East Walnut Hills, (513) 751-2333, jrcincy.com/le-bar-a-boeuf/. Dinner Tues-Sat. MCC. \$\$**

INDIAN

AMMA'S KITCHEN

Muthu "Kumar" Muthiah serves traditional southern Indian and Indo-Chinese vegetarian cuisine, but with a sizable Orthodox Jewish community nearby, Muthiah saw an opportunity: If he was going to cook vegetarian, why not also make it kosher? Muthiah prepares every item—from the addictively crunchy gobi Manchurian, a spicy Chinese cauliflower dish, to the lemon pickle, tamarind, and mint sauces—entirely from scratch under the careful eye of Rabbi Michael Stern. Always 80 percent vegan, the



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daily lunch buffet is 100 percent animal-product-free on Wednesdays. Tuck into a warm and savory channa masala (spiced chickpeas) or malai kofta (vegetable dumplings in tomato sauce) from the curry menu. Or tear into a crispy, two-foot diameter dosa (chickpea flour crepe) stuffed with spiced onions and potatoes. ➔ **7633 Reading Rd., Roselawn, (513) 821-2021, ammaskitchen.com. Lunch buffet seven days (all-vegan on Wed), dinner seven days. MC, V, DS. \$**

BOMBAY BRAZIER

Most of the menu at this fine-dining Indian spot is mix 'n match, with a dozen-plus northern-Indian style sauces available (vindaloo, madras, sambar, mango, saag, rogan josh, and more) to pair with nine proteins (chicken, lamb, beef, salmon, scallops, shrimp, prawns, lobster, and paneer). House-made paneer (a tofu-like cheese) is marinated on the spot and—for the marvelous appetizer Paneer Afghani—grilled over the 400-degree clay tandoor oven, giving it a wonderful smoky flavor and a hit of black pepper. The chicken tikka is moist and flavorful; tilapia filets marinated, baked in the tandoor, and served over sour cream and onions are tender. Vegetarians will find plenty of legumes, mushrooms, paneer, and vegetables dispersed among sauces redolent with garlic, ginger, herbs, and spices. ➔ **7791 Cooper Rd., Montgomery, (513) 794-0000. Dinner seven days. MCC. \$\$**

BRIJ MOHAN

Order at the counter the way you might at a fast food joint, except the shakes come in mango and there's no super-sizing your mint lassi. The saag, full of cream in most northern Indian restaurants, is as intensely flavored as collard greens in the Deep South—real Punjabi soul food. Tarka dal is spectacular here, the black lentils smoky from charred tomatoes and onions, and the pani puri, hollow fried shells into which you spoon a peppery cold broth, burst with tart cool crunch. Follow the spice with soothing ras malai, freshly made cheese simmered in thick almond-flavored milk, cooled and sprinkled with

crushed pistachios. ➔ **11259 Reading Rd., Sharonville, (513) 769-4549, brijmohansweets.com. Lunch and dinner Tues–Sun. MC, V, DC. \$**

ITALIAN

A TAVOLA

In 2011, Jared Wayne opened A Tavola Pizza with two friends just as OTR was blowing up. A Ferrara pizza oven was ordered from Italy; Wayne, a skilled woodworker, built custom tables; and the menu was fleshed in with trendy crowd-pleasers like charcuterie and craft cocktails. Fast-forward three years. Brother Nick is now a co-owner, and the Waynes have opened a second pizzeria: A Tavola Madeira capitalizes on the menu from the Vine Street location, including the fresh and zesty asparagus, artichoke, and feta pizza on a Neapolitan crust; gooey mozzarella-filled arancini, or risotto fritters; and the unequaled Blue Oven English muffin eggplant sliders. Wash down your small plates with a glass of crisp and grassy Sannio falanghina or an ice-cold Peroni lager. Not ones to rest on their laurels, they also fire up a third Italian import—an Italforni Bull Oven—for their take on Roman-style pies (with a thinner, crispier crust). They're definitely going to need a bigger parking lot. ➔ **7022 Miami Ave., Madeira, (513) 272-0192, atavolapizza.com. Lunch and dinner seven days. MCC. \$**

BARRESI'S

Anyone who likes a big bowl of pasta will find both familiar comfort and flavor in the linguine with clam sauce or the penne primavera with the holy trinity of garlic, olive oil, and butter. And of course the basket of zeppoles, warm pillows of fried, salted dough. More than a dozen seafood, chicken, and steak dishes are created by interchanging familiar preparations: Florentine (spinach, cream cheese

sauce, and pecans); Sicilian (capers, garlic, olive oil, and lemon); Marsala; and lobster cream sauce among them. But despite reduced portion pricing, Barresi's is more expensive than Primavista, and nearly as expensive as Boca or Nicola's. ➔ **4111 Webster Ave., Deer Park, (513) 793-2540, barresis.com. Dinner Tues–Sat. MCC, DC. \$\$\$**

FORNO

Cristian Pietoso's second restaurant has all the bones of an upscale eatery, but the menu is infused with enough Italian soul to make nonna proud. In most instances, raving about a side of creamed corn wouldn't bode well for the rest of the menu. Here, that side dish—kernels swimming in a pool of truffle-laced heavy cream that demands sopping up—is evidence that each component prepared by chef de cuisine Stefano Carne is purpose-driven. The red wine-braised honeycomb tripe, which carries a warning label ("Don't be scared!"), and the pappardelle with spiced cinghiale (wild boar) ragu are examples of the elevated, adventurous comfort food that Pietoso strives for. ➔ **3514 Erie Ave., East Hyde Park (513) 818-8720, fornoosteriabar.com. Dinner Tues–Sun, brunch Sun. MCC. \$\$**

NICOLA'S

Nicola's is so fluently on the mark that other Italian restaurants on American soil can sometimes feel contrived. It begins with the charming Nicola "Nick" Pietoso, who has steadily built a service staff that operates with consistent proficiency and palpable warmth. The elegantly set tables don't overwhelm the familial or neighborhood quality of the environment, and the menu blends the cornerstones of Italian cuisine with innovative touches. The handmade pastas are as memorable as your first kiss, and the seemingly haute meat and seafood entrées—chicken with spinach gnudi, celery root, and apple; and salmon with fennel and farro among them—are thoroughly rooted in the bold and simple. ➔ **1420 Sycamore St., Over-the-Rhine, (513) 721-6200, nicolasrestaurant.com. Dinner Mon–Sat. MCC, DC, DS. \$\$\$**

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PADRINO

This sister restaurant to 20 Brix is also owned and operated by the Thomas family and their superstar Executive Chef Paul Barraco, who brings his passion for the slow food movement to the Padrino menu. Billed as "Italian comfort food," Padrino offers the classics (like lasagna and chicken carbonara) plus hoagies and meatball sliders, an impressive wine list, seasonal martinis, and a decadent signature appetizer—garlic rolls, doughy buns smothered in olive oil and garlic. Best of all, Barraco's pizza sauce, which is comprised of roasted tomatoes and basil, is so garden-fresh that one can't help but wonder: If this is real pizza, what have we been eating all these years? **111 Main St., Milford, (513) 965-0100, 20brix.com/padrino. Lunch and dinner seven days. MCC, DS. \$\$**

PRIMAVISTA

Besides offering the old world flavors of Italy, Primavista also serves up a specialty no other restaurant can match: a bird's eye view of Cincinnati from the west side. The kitchen is equally comfortable with northern and southern regional specialties: a Venetian carpaccio of paper thin raw beef sparked by fruity olive oil; house-made fresh mozzarella stuffed with pesto and mushrooms; or artichoke hearts with

snails and mushrooms in a creamy Gorgonzola sauce from Lombardy. Among the classics, nothing is more restorative than the pasta e fagioli, a hearty soup of cannellini, ditali pasta, and bacon. Most of the pastas are cooked just a degree more mellow than al dente so that they soak up the fragrant tomato basil or satiny cream sauces. The fork-tender osso buco Milanese, with its marrow-filled center bone and salty-sweet brown sauce (marinara and lemon juice), is simply superb. Desserts present further problems; you'll be hard-pressed to decide between the house-made tiramisu or bread pudding with caramel sauce, marsala soaked raisins, and cream. **810 Matson Pl., Price Hill, (513) 251-6467, pvista.com. Dinner Tues-Sun. MCC, DC, DS. \$\$**

TRATTORIA ROMA

When Salvatore Aracri, whose family hails from the Italian region of Calabria, says "it's freshly made from zero," the owner and floor-pacing manager of downtown's Trattoria Roma restaurant means to say that all of his restaurant's pasta is freshly made. Not that he needed to point that out. The lasagna noodles are as thick as shingles and fantastically chewy, and the house-made sauce is vibrant and sweet, saturated with peppery ground beef and a rich blend of cheeses that stretch from the plate to your mouth in thick white ropes. The oven-baked salmon, served with steamed risotto and buttery asparagus, plus a side of mussels sautéed in a white wine sauce, is a moist, briny treat. And even though the cooks like to get creative with their specials from time to time (rabbit, octopus, etc.), the specialita della casa is pasta, pasta, pasta. **580 Walnut St., downtown, (513) 723-0220, trattoriaroma.net. Lunch and dinner Mon-Fri, dinner Sat and Sun. MCC, DS. \$\$**

VIA VITE

Cristian Pietoso serves up crowd-pleasing entrées, including the Pietoso family Bolognese, over penne, right on Fountain Square. (Add in a golf-ball-sized veal meatball heavy with lemon zest, and it's an over-the-top comforting main dish.) The same applies to the risotto, where a few small touches add sophistication. Carnaroli rice results in a glossier, starchier dish. A puree of asparagus turns the risotto an eye-popping green, and the poached lobster garnish creates a nice back-and-forth between vegetal and briny flavors. Braised lamb shank over polenta is comforting workhorse, and the flavorful beef eye of rib atop an umami bomb of porcini-marsala gravy introduces an unusual garnish—a rich corn flan. **520 Vine St., downtown, (513) 721-8483, via-viterestaurant.com. Lunch Mon-Fri, dinner seven days, brunch Sat & Sun. MCC, DS. \$\$**



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JAPANESE

ANDO

You don't go just anywhere to dine on uni sashimi (sea urchin) or tanshio (thinly sliced charcoal-grilled beef tongue). Don't miss the rich and meaty chyu toro (fatty big-eye tuna), or the pucker-inducing umeshiso maki (pickled plum paste and shiso leaf roll). Noodles are also well represented, with udon, soba, or ramen options available. And don't forget to ask about the specials; owners Ken and Keiko Ando always have something new, be it oysters, pork belly, or steamed monkfish liver, a Japanese delicacy that you'll be hard-pressed to find in any of those

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Hyde Park pan-Asian wannabes. The only thing you won't find here is sake, or any other alcohol. Bring your own, or stick to the nutty and outright addicting barley tea. **→5889 Pfeiffer Rd., Blue Ash, (513) 791-8687, andojapaneserestaurant.com. Lunch Tues-Fri, dinner Tues-Sun. MCC. \$\$\$**

KYOTO

Owner Jason Shi seems to know everybody's name as he chats up diners, guiding them through the extensive sushi and sashimi menu. Five young sushi chefs, all part of Shi's family, work at light speed behind the bar, a choreography backlit by rows of gleaming liquor bottles. Dinner proceeds with glorious chaos as a feisty Carla Tortelli-like server delivers one dish after another—slivers of giant clam on ice in a super-sized martini glass, a volcanic tower of chopped fatty tuna hidden inside overlapping layers of thin avocado slices, smoky grilled New Zealand mussels drizzled with spicy mayo, and delicate slices of a samurai roll—all between shots of chilled sake. **→12082 Montgomery Rd., Symmes Twp., (513) 583-8897, kyotosushibar.com. Lunch and dinner seven days. MCC. \$\$**

MATSUYA

At this relaxed little sushi boutique, try ordering kaiseki, a traditional six-course meal that features a succession of small plates but plenty of food. You might encounter an entire steamed baby octopus or yellowtail with daikon radish, pickled mackerel or deep-fried oysters. You can depend on cucumber or seaweed salad, tempura shrimp, a grilled meat or fish, and of course, sushi—and sometimes even the colorful Bento box sampler. There's a Nabemano—tableside pot cooking—section on the menu featuring shabu shabu: slices of prime beef swished through bubbling seaweed broth just until the pink frosts with white. Served with simmered vegetables, ponzu sauce, daikon, and scallions, the concentrated, slightly sour flavor of the beef is vivid. **→7149 Manderlay Dr., Florence, (859) 746-1199. Lunch Mon-Fri, dinner seven days. MCC, DC, DS. \$\$**

MEI

Mei's menu is meant to represent traditional Japanese cuisine, appealing to the novice as well as the sushi maven. It is divided into sections that encourage a progressive meal of small dishes: One each for hot and cold appetizers, noodles, sushi and sashimi, special rolls, soups and salads, sushi dinners (with miso soup), and combinations (such as tempura paired with sashimi). Deep-fried soft shell crab comes with ponzu sauce—a dipping sauce made of rice vinegar, soy sauce, mirin, and citrus juice—and the kind of yakitori that you can find on the streets of New York. Bento boxes—lacquered wooden boxes divided into compartments—offer the neophyte a sampling of several small dishes. Mei's are lovely: deep red and stocked with tempura, cooked salmon, sashimi, stewed vegetables, and a fabulous egg custard with shrimp and ginkgo nut. Mei's sushi—nigiri, maki, and handrolls—is exceptionally good with quality cuts of fresh seafood. The staff is knowledgeable, extremely efficient, respectful, and attentive, even when it's at peak capacity. **→8608 Market Place Lane, Montgomery, (513) 891-6880, mejapaneserestaurant.com. Lunch Tues-Fri, dinner Tues-Sun. MCC, DS. \$\$**

KOREAN

RIVERSIDE KOREAN RESTAURANT

Come for the jo gi mae un tang—a bowl of sizzling, happy hellbroth pungent with red pepper, garlic, and ginger, crowded with nuggets of fish, tofu, and vegetables. Come for the restorative power of sam gae tang, a chicken soup for the Seoul—a whole Cornish hen submerged in its own juices and plumped with sticky rice and ginseng, dried red dates, and pine nuts. Revered for their medicinal properties, both dinner-sized soups will leave your eyes glisten-

ing and your brow beaded with sweat. They're a detox for your overindulgence, rejuvenation for when you're feeling under the weather. Expect crowds on weekends. Expect too, that dozens of them have come for dolsot bibimbap, the hot stone pots filled with layers of rice, vegetables, meat or tofu, egg, and chili paste. Characterized by its electric color and addictive flavors, Riverside Korean's version is a captivating bowl of heaven. **→512 Madison Ave., Covington, (859) 291-1484, riversidekoreanrestaurant.com. Lunch Tues-Fri, dinner Tues-Sun. MCC, DS. \$\$**

SUNG KOREAN BISTRO

Co-owner and executive chef Sung Oh, formerly of Riverside Korean Restaurant, creates a modern, sophisticated urban-Asian experience: all right angles with minimal decorative touches; Shoji screens of translucent white paper over the windows; jazz floating through the ambient red glow of a dark, backlit bar and low-hanging lanterns. The dolsot bibimbap, a.k.a. the "stone bowl," suffers by comparison with the Riverside version—in which you mix an egg, sunny side up, with veggies, spicy bean paste, and rice that turns crispy in a hot stone bowl. The best dish came from the "Dinner with Grill" menu: doegi galbi, the barbecued pork ribs. Glazed with the ubiquitous sweet and spicy bean paste that Oh calls "Korean ketchup," the ribs were moist and tender and packed a perfect punch of heat. **→700 Elm St., downtown, (513) 721-7864, sungkoreanbistro.com. Lunch and dinner Mon-Sat. MCC, DS. \$\$**

SURA

This traditional Korean oasis has been flying well beneath the radar since 2010. Don't let the pepper count on the menu deter you. Each entrée arrives with purple rice and assorted small bites aimed at cutting the heat—steamed broccoli, pickled radishes, soy-sauce-marinated tofu, pan-fried fish cake, and housemade kimchi. Korean barbecue staple *osam bulgogi*—one of only two items meriting a three pepper rating—swiftly clears sinuses with a flavor-



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ful duo of pork belly and squid lashed with Korean red pepper paste and served on a sizzling skillet. The two-pepper *kimchi jigae* stew marries fermented Korean cabbage with hunks of tofu and shards of pork in a bubbling tomato-based broth. Make sure to order a bowl of the bone noodle soup for the table—a comforting combination of thick noodles and bits of flank steak floating in a umami-rich marrow broth that magically soothes the burn. **7876 Mason-Montgomery Rd., Mason, (513) 204-3456, surakorean.com. Lunch and dinner Mon-Sat. MCC. \$\$**

MEDITERRANEAN

ANDY'S MEDITERRANEAN GRILLE

In this lively joint with a burnished summer lodge interior of wood and stone, even the food is unrestrained: rough-cut chunks of charbroiled beef tenderloin, big slices of onion and charred tomato turned sweet and wet in the heat, skewers of marinated and charbroiled chicken perched on rice too generous for its plate. Co-owner Andy Hajjar mans his station at the end of the bar, smoking a hookah pipe that fills the air with the sweet smell of flavored tobacco, while the friendly but hurried staff hustles through. **906 Nassau St., Walnut Hills, (513) 281-9791, andyskabob.com. Lunch Mon-Sat, dinner seven days. MCC. \$\$**

CAFÉ MEDITERRANEAN

Chef-driven Middle Eastern cuisine leans heavily on Turkish tradition here. The baba ghanoush uses seared eggplant, which adds a pleasant smokiness to the final product. Börek is described as a "Turkish Egg Roll," wrapping spinach, leeks, and goat cheese into phyllo dough, and baking it to brittle flakiness. The pastry arrives atop a vivid cherry tomato marmalade, which adds a welcome dimension of barely sweet fruitiness. While there is a smooth, simple hummus on the menu, you should go for the classic sucuklu hummus, which is spiked with sujuk, a common beef sausage popular all over the Middle East. **3520 Erie Ave., East Hyde Park, (513) 871-8714, cafe-mediterranean.com. Dinner Tues-Sun, Lunch Sun. MCC. \$\$**

FLOYD'S

Sure, you can go here for the great baked kibbeh, a blend of delicately spiced ground lamb, pine nuts, and onions, stuffed inside a shell of ground lamb, lamb fat, and bulgur wheat. Or you could visit for the vegetarian moussaka with eggplant, onions, tomatoes, and cilantro. But you'd be missing out on Floyd's famous tender-crisp spit-roasted chicken and lima beans with chopped parsley, garlic, and olive oil. Not all of the specialties are the real Lebanese deal, but we'll keep ordering them anyway. **127 Calhoun St., Clifton Heights, (513) 221-2434, floydsdscincy.com. Lunch Tues-Fri, dinner Tues-Sat. MC, V. \$**

HACI GRILL

Bypassing these appetizers is a fate worse than death. Dine with a group and sample as many as you can. Carrot tarator is a must-try—a mild yogurt spiked with shreds of fresh carrot that delicately sweeten an otherwise one-note tang dip. Fun as it is to graze, the burly falafel platter is a meal. Atomically dense chickpea patties stay succulent thanks to a mince of garlic, celery, pine nuts, and onion. But kebabs are the stars. Doner kebabs are reminiscent of a gyro, with whole slices of pressed lamb and veal vertically sliced from a rotisserie. Traditional shish kebabs

feature succulent whole cuts of chargrilled lamb, while the kofte finds ground beef and lamb pressed into a patty and grilled tender—yielding a crust that's impossible not to love. Then there are the yogurt kebabs: Tender, chargrilled meats are tossed with house-made yogurt and flatbread croutons, then topped with a tomato sauce. The iskender version utilizes a lamb, beef, and veal combination to absolutely stunning results—an unexpectedly comforting dish. **7334 Tylers Corner Dr., West Chester, (513) 438-0008, hacigrill.com. Lunch and dinner seven days. MCC. \$\$**

SANTORINI

Steak, eggs, and home fries. Jumbo haddock sandwich with Greek fries. Chocolate chip hot cakes with bacon. Notice something wrong with this menu? Chicken Philly cheese steak sandwich with Olympic onion rings. Yep, it's obvious: What's wrong with this menu is that there's nothing wrong with this menu. Greek feta cheese omelette with a side of ham. It's been owned by the same family for more than 30 years. Santorini has diner standards, like cheeseburgers, chili five ways, and breakfast anytime, but they also make some Greek pastries in house, like spanakopita and baklava. **3414 Harrison Ave., Cheviot, (513) 662-8080. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner Mon-Sat, breakfast and lunch Sun. Cash. \$**

SEBASTIAN'S

When the wind is just right, you can smell the garlicky meat roasting from a mile away. Watch owner Alex Sebastian tend to the rotating wheels of beef and lamb, and you understand how Greek food has escaped the American tendency to appropriate foreign cuisines. Sebastian's specializes in gyros, shaved off the stick, wrapped in thick griddle pita with onions and tomatoes, and served with cool tzatziki sauce. Alex's wife and daughter run the counter with efficient speed, and whether you're having a crisp Greek salad with house-made dressing, triangles of spanikopita, or simply the best walnut and honey baklava this side of the Atlantic (often made by the Mrs.), they never

The Spirituality of Laughter: Rabbi Bob Alper

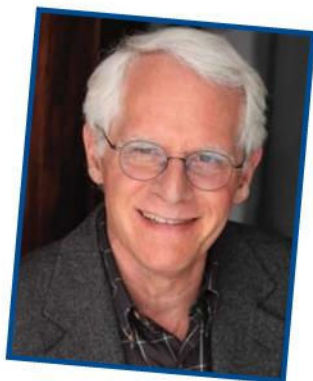
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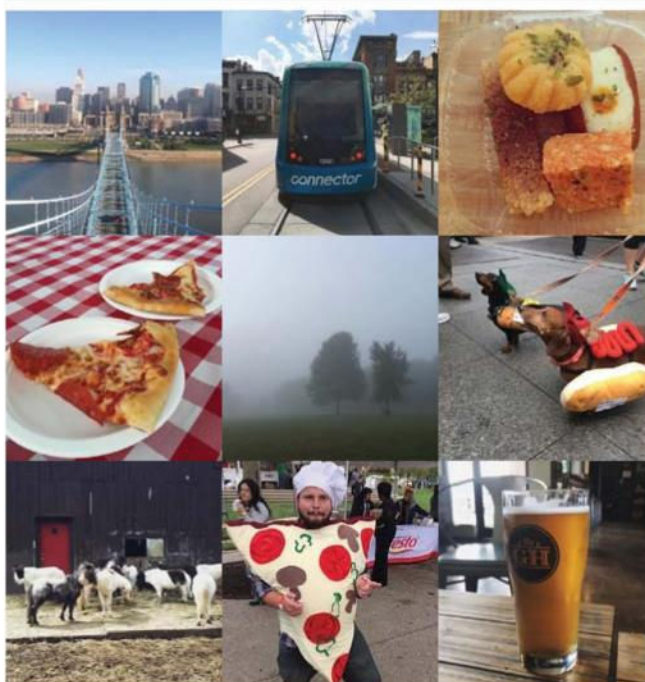
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miss a beat, turning more covers in their tiny deli on one Saturday afternoon than some restaurants do in an entire weekend. ➔ **5209 Glenway Ave., Price Hill, (513) 471-2100, sebastiansgyros.com. Lunch and dinner Mon-Sat. Cash. \$**

SULTAN'S MEDITERRANEAN CUISINE

The meze, a parade of small plates and appetizers—the refreshing yogurt dish with cucumber, mint, and garlic known as cacik, and its thicker cousin haydari, with chopped walnuts, dill, and garlic—is rounded out with flaky cheese or spinach boureks, falafels, soups, salads, and more, while baked casseroles or stuffed cabbage and eggplant dishes (dubbed “Ottoman specials”) augment the heavy focus on kebabs: chunks of lamb and beef on a vertical spit for the popular Döner kebab (a.k.a. Turkish gyro), peppery ground lamb for the Adana kebab, or cubed and marinated for the Shish kebab. ➔ **7305 Tyler's Corner Dr., West Chester, (513) 847-1535, sultanscincinnati.com. Lunch and dinner seven days. MCC, DS. \$\$**

MEXICAN

EL MESON

The last place you'd expect to find a lively pan-Latin restaurant is among the stark concrete environment of gas stations and dollar stores in West Carrollton. Nearly two dozen tapas are featured throughout the menu, and ordering a handful is one of the best ways to experience El Meson. Gambas al Ajillo may be the best small plate: Sautéed shrimp swimming in oil brick-red from pepper, resonant with garlic, crisp-charred along the edges of the bowl. The house-made chorizo, smoky-dark and buzzy from good Spanish paprika, goes well with the “tapa mixta espana,” a sampler of roasted red peppers, olives,

caperberries, crusty bread, and cubes of slightly tangy Manchego cheese. Servers confidently make recommendations and patiently help you navigate the crazy-busy menu. You won't necessarily feel ignited by the blazing sun of the southern hemisphere, but El Meson is authentic enough to have you imagining a few chickens scratching around the parking lot. This is one family fiesta worth showing up for. ➔ **903 E. Dixie Dr., West Carrollton, (937) 859-8229, elmeson.net. Lunch Mon-Fri, dinner Mon-Sat. \$\$**

EL VALLE VERDE

Guests with dietary issues, high anxiety, and no Spanish may take a pass, but for hardy souls, this taqueria delivers a memorable evening. Seafood dishes are the star here—ceviche tostadas, crisp corn tortillas piled high with pico de gallo, avocado, and lime-tastic bits of white fish, squid, and crab; the oversized goblet of *cocktel campechano*, with ample poached shrimp crammed into a Clamato-heavy gazpacho; and simmering *sopa de marisco* came with langoustines, mussels, crab legs, and an entire fish—enough to feed three. ➔ **6717 Vine St., Carthage, (513) 821-2232. Lunch and dinner seven days. \$**

HABAÑERO

It's easy to find a cheap burrito place around a college campus, but you'd be hard-pressed to find one as consistently good as Habañero, with its flavors of Latin America and the Caribbean wrapped up in enormous packages. Fried tilapia, apricot-glazed chicken breast, hand-rubbed spiced flank steak, shredded pork tenderloin, or cinnamon-roasted squash are just some of the ingredients for Habañero's signature burritos. All salsas are house-made, from the smoky tomato chipotle to the sweet-sounding mango jalapeño, which is hot enough to spark spontaneous combustion. ➔ **358 Ludlow Ave., Clifton, (513) 961-6800, habanerolat.com. Lunch and dinner seven days. MCC, DC, DS. \$**

MAZUNTE

Mazunte runs a culinary full court press, switching up

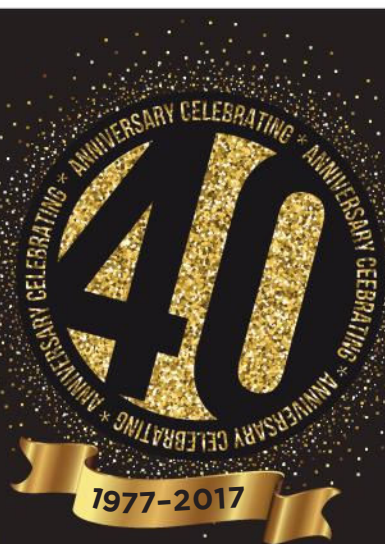
specials to keep both regulars and staff engaged. Tamales arrive swaddled in a banana leaf, the shredded pork filling steeped in a sauce fiery with guajillo and ancho chilies yet foiled by the calming sweetness of raisins. The fried mahi-mahi tacos are finished with a citrusy red and white cabbage slaw that complements the accompanying mango-habañero salsa. With this level of authentic yet fast-paced execution, a slightly greasy pozole can be easily forgiven. Don't miss the Mexican Coke and self-serve sangria (try the blanco), or the cans of Rhinegeist and MadTree on ice. ➔ **5207 Madison Rd., Madisonville, (513) 785-0000, mazuntetacos.com. Lunch and dinner Mon-Sat, brunch Sun. MCC. \$**

MONTOYA'S

Mexican places seem to change hands in this town so often that you can't get the same meal twice. Montoya's is the exception. They've been hidden in a tiny strip mall off the main drag in Ft. Mitchell for years. It's unpretentious and seemingly not interested in success, which means success has never gone to their head here. At a place where you can get Huracan Fajitas with steak, chicken, and chorizo or Tilapia Asada, the tacos are still a big item. ➔ **2507 Chelsea Dr., Ft. Mitchell, (859) 341-0707. Lunch and dinner Tues-Sun. MC, V, DS. \$**

NADA

The brains behind Boca deliver authentic, contemporary, high-quality Mexican fare downtown. You'll find a concise menu, including tacos, salads and sides, large plates, and desserts. Tacos inspired by global cuisine include the Señor Mu Shu (Modelo and ginger braised pork) and fried avocado (chipotle bean purée). The ancho-glazed pork shank with chili-roasted carrots comes with a papaya guajillo salad (order it for the table); dreamy mac-and-cheese looks harmless, but there's just enough of a roasted poblano and jalapeño punch to have you reaching for another icy margarita. ➔ **600 Walnut St., downtown, (513) 721-6232, eat-drinknada.com. Lunch Mon-Fri, dinner seven days, brunch Sat & Sun. MCC, DS. \$\$**



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TAQUERIA CRUZ

The menu at this four-table mom-and-pop welcomes you to "a little piece of Mexico." The huaraches (spelled guarachis here), are flat troughs of thick, handmade fried masa dough the approximate shape and size of a shoeprint, mounded with beans and slivers of grilled beef or chili-red nubs of sausage, shredded lettuce, a crumble of queso fresco, and drizzle of cultured cream. Should you have an adventurous side, you can have your huarache topped with slippery tongue, goat meat, shredded chicken, or pork. There are stews, carne asada plates, and sopes—saucers of fried masa much like huaraches, only smaller. **→ 518 Pike St., Covington, (859) 431-3859. Lunch and dinner seven days. Cash. \$**

TAQUERIA MERCADO

On a Saturday night, Taqueria Mercado is a lively fiesta, with seemingly half of the local Hispanic community guzzling margaritas and cervezas, or carrying out sacks of burritos and carnitas tacos—pork tenderized by a long simmer, its edges frizzled and crispy. The Mercado's strip mall interior, splashed with a large, colorful mural, is equally energetic: the bustling semi-open kitchen; a busy counter that handles a constant stream of take-out orders; a clamorous, convivial chatter in Spanish and English. Try camarones a la plancha, 12 chubby grilled shrimp tangled with grilled onions (be sure to specify if you like your onions well done). The starchiness of the rice absorbs the caramelized onion juice, offset by the crunch of lettuce, buttery slices of avocado, and the cool-hot pico de gallo. A shrimp quesadilla paired with one of their cheap and potent margaritas is worth the drive alone. **→ 6507 Dixie Hwy., Fairfield, (513) 942-4943; 100 E. Eighth St., downtown, (513) 381-0678, tmercadoincincy.com. Lunch and dinner seven days. MCC, DS. \$**



BLESS THIS BEER

Urban Artifact in Northside is hoping you won't give up beer for Lent. Their newest brew, set to debut on Fat Tuesday, is a Belgian Quadrupel made from wild yeast collected at the National Shrine of St. Anthony in Mt. Airy. Shrine Guardian, Father Carl Langenderfer, was on hand to bless the mash during the beer making process. While Quadrupel has traditionally been made by monks specifically for seasons of fasting, nobody's advocating drinking your dinner. **→ artifactbeer.com**

SEAFOOD

THE ANCHOR OTR

Thoughtfully prepared, unfussy dishes, from a streamlined menu that focuses on seafood. There's a rotating selection of oysters from both the East and West Coasts, served with lemon wedges, granita made with pickled onions and horseradish, and mignonette and cocktail sauces. Whole fish of the day is offered grilled, fried, or Thai style (topped with a refreshing salad of mango, red onions, cashews, Thai chiles, basil, mint, and cilantro) and expertly deboned tableside. Also recommended: grilled calamari salad, crunchy salt shrimp with celery root slaw, crab cake sliders, and a lovely, palate-cleansing chopped raw kale salad. **→ 1401 Race St., Over-the-Rhine, (513) 421-8111, theanchor-otr.com. Dinner Tues-Sat. MCC, DS. \$**

MCCORMICK & SCHMICK'S

The daily rotation reads like a fisherman's wish list: fresh lobsters from the coast of Maine, ahi tuna from Hawaii, North Carolina catfish, Massachusetts cod. But high-quality ingredients are only half the equation; preparation is the other. Flaky Parmesan-crustied tilapia, with a squeeze of lemon, makes the taste buds dance. The spacious digs and attentive waitstaff make it a sophisticated destination. It's likely to remain a favorite. After all, it's right in the middle of things. **→ 21 E. Fifth St., downtown, (513) 721-9339, mccormickandschmicks.com. Lunch Mon-Fri, dinner seven days. MCC, DC, DS. \$**

PELICAN'S REEF

Over the years Chef John Broshar has developed his niche, inspired by the seasonal availability of fish obtained daily from one or more of the purveyors he uses. Malabar snapper and swordfish from Hawaii, Australian triple tail, wild Alaskan

salmon, wreckfish from South Carolina, Florida yellow tail, rainbow trout, and wild striped bass are just some of the varieties that rotate through the extensive features listed on a 10-foot by 2-foot chalkboard. The regular offerings are no slouch: Grilled grouper sandwich with chipotle tartar sauce, chubby fish tacos, perfectly fried piping hot oysters tucked into a buttered and toasted po' boy bun with housemade slaw, and tart-sweet key lime pie. And of course, the damn good New England style chowder. **→ 7261 Beechmont Ave., Anderson Twp., (513) 232-2526, thepelicansreef.com. Lunch and dinner Mon-Sat. MCC, DS. \$**

STEAKS

CARLO & JOHNNY

The stars of the menu are 14 delectable steaks that could sway the vegi-curious to recommit. Not sure which to choose? If you prefer brawny flavor over buttery texture, go for one of the three bone-in rib cuts. Or if it's that melt-in-your-mouth experience that raises your serotonin levels, C&J features several tenderloin cuts, including the hard to find bone-in filet. There are the usual suspects of chops, et al, but we found the Kentucky bison strip steak one of the more interesting beef alternatives. **→ 9769 Montgomery Rd., Montgomery (513) 936-8600, jeffruby.com. Dinner seven days. MCC. \$\$\$**

JEFF RUBY'S

Filled most nights with local scenesters and power brokers (and those who think they are), everything in this urban steakhouse is generous—from the portions to the expert service to the, er, cleavage. Black-jacketed waiters with white floor-length aprons deliver two-fisted martinis and stacks of king crab legs, or mounds of greens dressed in thin vinaigrettes or thick, creamy emulsions. An occasional salmon or sea bass appears, and there's a small but decent assortment of chops—lamb, veal, and pork. But most customers, even the willowy model types, inhale slabs of beef (dry aged USDA prime) like they're dining in a crack house for carnivores. The best of these is Jeff Ruby's Jewel, nearly a pound-and-a-half of bone-in rib eye. This is steak tailor-made for movers and shakers. **→ 700 Walnut St., downtown, (513) 784-1200, jeffruby.com. Dinner Mon-Sat. MCC. \$\$\$**

MORTON'S, THE STEAKHOUSE

Amid the dark polished woods and white linen, the Riedel stemware and flower arrangements, assorted suits grapple with double cut filet mignons, 24 ounces of porterhouse, pink shiny slabs of prime rib, overflowing plates of salty Lyonnaise potatoes, or mammoth iceberg wedges frosted with thick blue cheese dressing. Jumbo is Morton's decree: Oversized martini and wine glasses, ethereal towering lemon soufflés, roomy chairs, and tables large enough for a plate and a laptop. Even steaks billed as "slightly smaller" weigh in at 8 to 10 ounces. **→ 441 Vine St., downtown, (513) 621-3111, mortons.com. Dinner seven days. MCC. \$\$\$**

THE PRECINCT

Part of the appeal of the Ruby restaurants is their ability to deliver deep, comfort-food satisfaction. And the steaks. The meat in the "Brandon Phillips" was tender with a rich mineral flavor, and the peppercorn crust provided a nice crunch, not to mention blazing heat. The supporting cast is strong—the basket of warm Sixteen Bricks bread with a mushroom truffle butter, the addictive steakhouse-standard onion straws, the creamy garlic mashed potatoes, the crisp-tender asparagus topped with a sprinkle of chopped nuts and hazelnut vinaigrette—and dinner ends on a sweet note with a piece of Ruby family recipe

cheesecake. Neither cloyingly sweet nor overwhelmingly creamy, it's a lovely slice of restraint. **→ 311 Delta Ave., Columbia-Tusculum (513) 321-5454, jeffruby.com. Dinner seven days. MCC. \$\$\$**

TONY'S

He is a captivating presence, Tony Ricci. Best known for his 30 years in fine dining—including the Jeff Ruby empire while managing the venerable Precinct—Ricci has built a life in the hospitality industry. Much of Tony's menu is right out of a steakhouse playbook: jumbo shrimp and king crab legs from the raw bar; Caprese, Greek, and Caesar salads; sides of creamed spinach, mac-and-cheese, asparagus, and sautéed mushrooms; toppings of roasted garlic or Gorgonzola butters to accompany your center cut of filet mignon. There are boutique touches, though, that make it stand out—a garlic herb aioli with the calamari, steak tartare torch-kissed and topped with a poached egg, a superb rack of lamb rubbed with aromatic sumac and served with mint pesto. **→ 12110 Montgomery Rd., Symmes Township, (513) 677-1993, tonysofcincinnati.com. Dinner seven days. MCC, DS. \$\$\$**

THAI

GREEN PAPAYA

It takes time to sort through the many curries and chef's specialties, not to mention the wide variety of sushi on the something-for-everyone menu. Have the staff—friendly, attentive, and knowledgeable—help you. When the food arrives, you'll need only a deep inhale to know you made the right choice. The Green Papaya sushi rolls are as delicious as they look, with a manic swirl of spicy mayo and bits of crabstick and crispy tempura batter scattered atop the spicy tuna, mango, cream cheese, and shrimp tempura sushi—all rolled in a vivid green soybean wrap. **→ 2942 Wasson Rd., Oakley, (513) 731-0107, greenpapayacincinnati.com. Lunch Mon-Sat, dinner seven days. MCC. \$**

SUKHOTHAI

Nestled in the nearly hidden Market Place Lane, this tiny restaurant isn't exactly slick. But if it's noodle dishes and curries you're after, Sukhothai's pad kee mao—wide rice noodles stir-fried with basil—is the best around. Served slightly charred, the fresh and dried chilies provide enough heat to momentarily suspend your breath. Pad Thai has the right amount of crunch from peanuts, slivers of green onion, and mung sprouts to contrast with the slippery glass noodles, and a few squeezes of fresh lime juice give it a splendid tartness. The crispy tamarind duck is one of the best house specials, the meat almost spreadably soft under the papery skin and perfectly complemented by the sweet-tart bite of tamarind. **→ 8102 Market Place Lane, Montgomery, (513) 794-0057, sukhothaicincy.com. Lunch Mon-Fri, dinner Mon-Sat. DS, MC, V. \$**

THAI NAMTIP

Classic Thai comfort food on the west side from chef/owner Tussanee Leach, who grew up with galangal on her tongue and sriracha sauce in her veins. Her curries reign: pale yellow sweetened with coconut milk and poured over tender chicken breast and chunks of boiled pineapple; red curry the color of new brick, tasting of earth at first bite, then the sharply verdant Thai basil leaves, followed by a distant heat. Tom Kha Gai soup defines the complex interplay of flavors in Thai food: astringent lemongrass gives way to pepper, then Makrut lime, shot through with the gingery, herbaceous galangal, all yielding to the taunting sweetness of coconut. **→ 5461 North Bend Rd., Monfort Heights, (513) 481-3360, thainamtip.com. Lunch and dinner Mon-Sat, dinner Sun. MC, V. \$**

WILD GINGER

Wild Ginger Asian Bistro's ability to satisfy a deep desire for Vietnamese and Thai fusion cuisine is evidenced by their signature Hee Ma roll—a fortress of seaweed-wrapped rolls filled with shrimp tempura, asparagus, avocado, and topped with red tuna, pulled crab stick, tempura flakes, a bit of masago, scallions, and of course, spicy mayo. It's tasty, even though the sweet fried floodwall of tempura and spicy mayo overpowered the tuna completely. The spicy pad char entrée was a solid seven out of 10: broccoli, carrots, cabbage, succulent red bell peppers, green beans, and beef, accented with basil and lime leaves in a peppercorn-and-chili brown sauce. → 3655 Edwards Rd., Hyde Park, (513) 533-9500, wildgingercincy.com. Lunch and dinner Mon-Sun. MCC, DS. \$\$

VIETNAMESE

PHO LANG THANG

Owners Duy and Bao Nguyen and David Le have created a greatest hits playlist of Vietnamese cuisine: elegant, brothy pho made from poultry, beef, or vegan stocks poured over rice noodles and adrift with slices of onions, meats, or vegetables (the vegan pho chay is by far the most flavorful); fresh julienned vegetables, crunchy sprouts, and herbs served over vermicelli rice noodles (again, the vegan version, bun chay, is the standout); and bánh mì. Be sure to end with a cup of Vietnamese coffee, a devilish jolt of dark roast and sweetened condensed milk that should make canned energy drinks obsolete. → 114 W. Elder St., Over-the-Rhine, (513) 376-9177. Lunch Tues-Sun, dinner Tues-Sat. MCC, DS, DC. \$

QUAN HAPA

The Nguyen brothers, Duy and Bao, along with partner David Le, have followed up on Pho Lang Thang's success at Findlay Market by bursting onto the OTR scene with some of the boldest flavors in the city. A tuna ceviche makes use of the fiery sweetness of Malaysian sambal oelek and a banh mi steakburger gains crunch from pickled daikon and a side of Indonesian shrimp chips. Or try the okonomiyaki, a traditional Japanese pancake topped with a choice of bacon, prawns, or vegetables. The Vietnamese coffee, a complex, chicory-forward blend, is an ideal way to end the meal. → 1331 Vine St., Over-the-Rhine, (513) 421-7826, quanhapa.com. Dinner Tues-Sat. MCC, DS. \$

SONG LONG

Fine Vietnamese specialties cooked and served by the Le family. Begin with the goi cuon, the cold rolls of moistened rice paper wrapped around vermicelli noodles, julienned cucumbers, lettuce, cilantro, and mung bean sprouts. Or try the banh xeo, a platter-sized pan-fried rice crepe folded over substantial nuggets of chicken and shrimp, mushrooms, and wilted mung sprouts. The phos, meal-sized soups eaten for breakfast, are good, but the pho dac biet is Song Long's best. Crisp-tender vegetables, slices of beef, herbs, and scallions glide through the noodle-streaked broth. Be careful: Mr. Le has a much heavier chili hand than Mrs. Le. Ask who is cooking and order accordingly. → 1737 Section Rd., Roselawn, (513) 351-7631, songlong.net. Lunch and dinner Mon-Sat. MCC, DC, DS. \$ ☺

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Glory Bound

➔ **AN ORDINARY PACK** rat might have a couple decades'-worth of *National Geographics*. But in Cincinnati, ecclesiastical hoarding includes treasures such as bound copies of *The Catholic Telegraph* dating back to 1831. The chancery archives of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati ensure that the centuries-old records have a future. Archivist Sarah Patterson handles the collection, which includes bishops' correspondence, church blueprints, sacramental registers, the records of closed parishes, and more. So much more, in fact, that the basement of the Civil War-era building behind St. Louis Church is filled with concrete to support the weight of it all. The collection encompasses a few material artifacts, including the vestments worn by Bishop Fenwick. But many of the most interesting bits are ordinary correspondence, such as a rural priest's kvetching letter to his bishop, complaining that parishioners weren't chopping enough wood for his stove. Marriage and baptism records are especially useful for people researching family history. Genealogists can't use the archives themselves, but Patterson is happy to dive into the collection for them. It's a fruitful endeavor for her, too: "That's how archivists find out what they have," she says. —LINDA VACCARIELLO

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