

TOP 2011 Of the TOWN

We can't believe it's been a year since our last lovefest with the Mile High City. But we've finally wrapped up months and months of super-secret investigating (read: a dizzying splurge on the finest meals, cocktails, shops, spa treatments, and entertainment our city has to offer) to bring you our 15th annual Top of the Town issue, and boy, are we exhausted—in the greatest kind of way. The more Denver grows, the trickier it becomes to identify the best of the best. However, we're equal to the task, and this year we've even added more categories, just to make our jobs that much more difficult. (We know, we know: Woe is us.) But with record-breaking input from our readers, who submitted nearly 170,000 votes, we've narrowed it down to a stellar list of Denver's best stuff. And let us tell you: The Mile High City has never looked so good.

EDITED BY JULIE DUGDALE

REPORTING BY: SARA ABOULAFIA, GEORGIA ALEXIA BENJOU, PATRICK DOYLE, JULIE DUGDALE, AMANDA M. FAISON, NATASHA GARDNER, LUC HATLESTAD, SARAH HAUGHEY, LINDSEY B. KOEHLER, ERIN MCMILLIN, MAXIMILLIAN POTTER, SARAH RUMPLE, ROBERT SANCHEZ, DALIAH SINGER, ALLISON TONINI & GEOFF VAN DYKE

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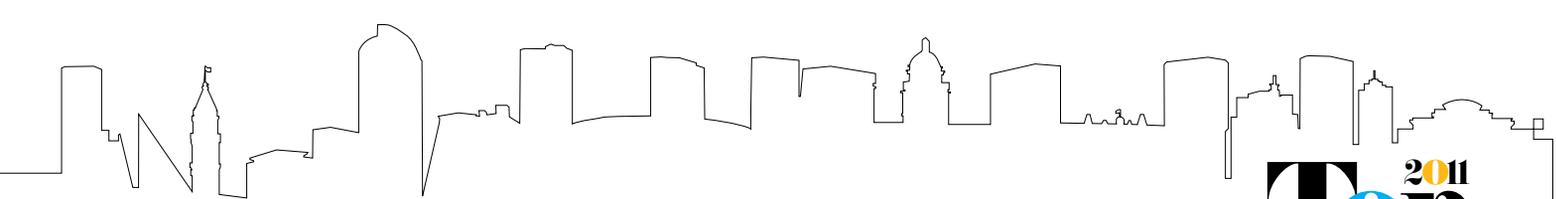
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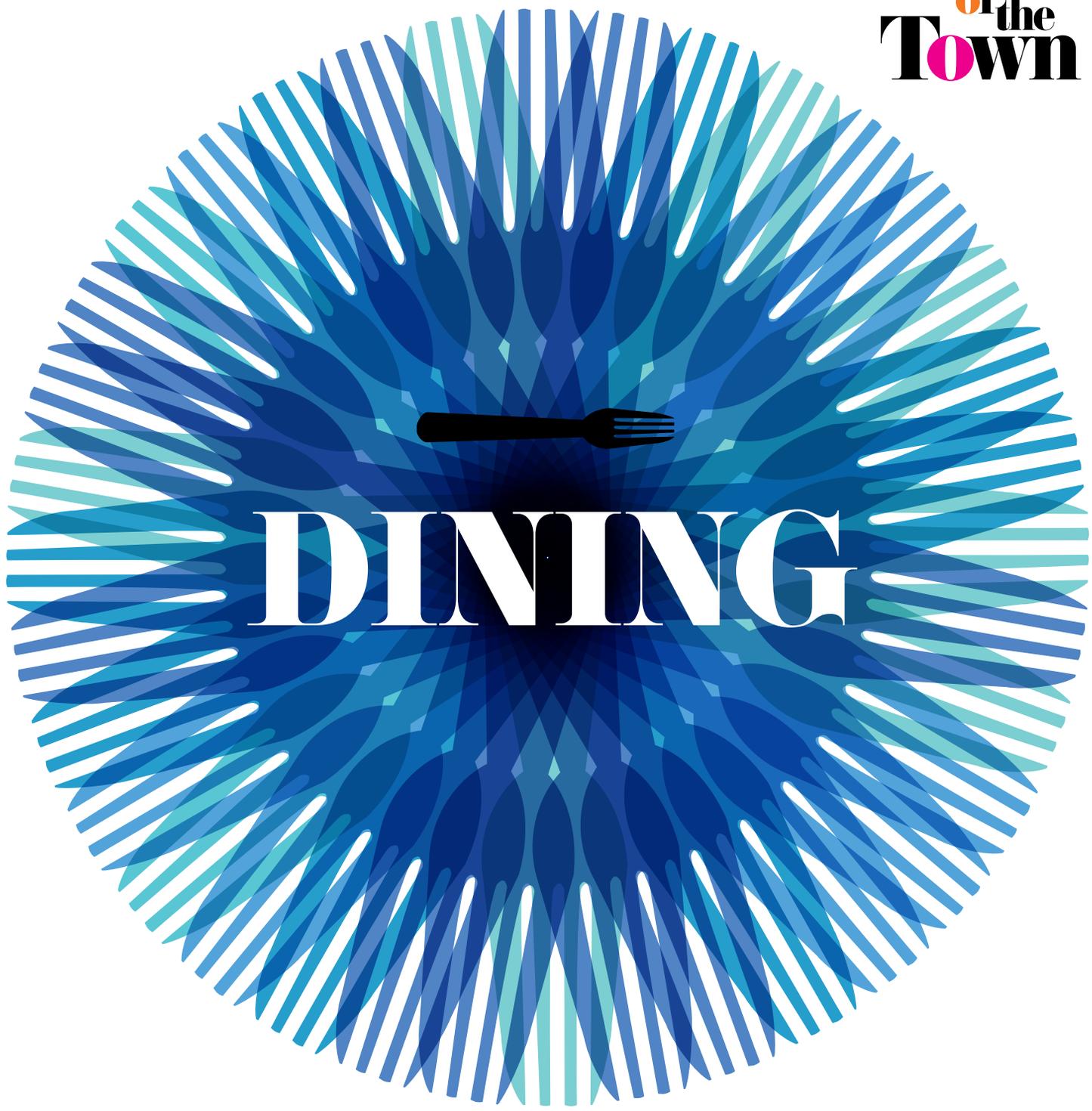
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARC PISCOTTY / ILLUSTRATIONS BY SEAN PARSONS

PIE IN THE SKY Boulder's Pizzeria
Locale woos patrons with Neapolitan-
style eats as authentic as they come.





2011
Top
of
Town



MARC PISCOTTY



/MARGARITA**EDITORS' CHOICE EL DIABLO**

It's rare to find a balance between watered down and lip-puckeringly tart when ordering a margarita in Denver (we've conducted extensive postwork research on the subject). But at this year-old authentic Mexican

spot on South Broadway, sour mix is nowhere to be found—only fresh squeezed lime juice shaken with your choice of more than 200 tequilas, served coin-style on the rocks. Pure and simple, just how a margarita should be. *101 S. Broadway, 303-954-0324, www.eldiablorestaurant.com*

EDITORS' CHOICE OLIVÉA

We can't think of a better way to start the day than with the basket of freshly baked, assorted pastries at Olivéa in Uptown. Order it with a cup of coffee, and relax while you browse the rest of the menu. The breakfast flatbread (crème fraîche, applewood-smoked bacon, onions, and sunny-side ups) and the eggs Olivéa (fried eggs over creamy polenta with sage, pine nuts, and San Marzano tomato sauce) should be morning staples. Time it right and you might nab a coveted table on the sunny patio. *719 E. 17th Ave., 303-861-5050, www.olivearestaurant.com*

BRUNCH

Olivéa's breakfast flatbread.

/SUSHI**EDITORS' CHOICE SUSHI SASA**

We just keep coming back to Sasa. The enlightened sushi options (try the dragon roll with strawberries for a little tang, or the poki hama for a crisp, summery combo of Granny Smith apples and sprouts) are zippy on the palate—as are the inventive cocktails (ever tried a pomegranate saketini?). Add to that a Zen-like ambience, and you've got the ideal see-and-be-seen spot for young professionals and neighborhood regulars. With last year's addition of 70 seats—including closed-off private dining areas—there are even more reason to love the place. But, be forewarned, you'll still need a reservation. *2401 15th St., 303-433-7272, www.sushisasadenver.com*

/BAKERY**EDITORS' CHOICE TROMPEAU****BAKERY**

From perfectly flaky stuffed croissants (try the ham and cheese) and crusty baguettes to the blueberry-almond chaussons, every bite of pastry chef/owner Pascal Trompeau's treats whisks you away to France. We're excited about the bakery's recent move from East Evans Avenue to South Broadway: With three times the space, there's plenty of additional baking room, which means we can pick up an individual-size feta-and-artichoke quiche to eat on our way to the office *and* a full-size creation to take home for a week's worth of snacking. Au revoir, frozen mini-quiches—we'll take the real thing. *2950 S. Broadway, 303-777-7222*

/CUPCAKE**EDITORS' CHOICE LOVELY****CONFECTIONS**

How do you determine the best cupcake joint in a cupcake-crazed city? We consulted friends and fellow dessert-aholics; watched social gatherings fissure into two camps (cake and frosting); engaged in debates about consumption techniques (giant, face-mussing bites or fork-and-knife dissection). In the end, our nod goes to Lovely's creations for the perfectly proportioned icing-to-

INSIDE SCOOP

People often ask how Top of the Town really works. Here, we answer your most common questions.

How does 5280 choose the Top of the Town winners? Our intrepid reporters and editors pick winners for every category on the ballot (cocktail, salon, dog groomer, and so on) based on months of research. During this process, we do our research anonymously and pay for all meals and services.

What's new in 2011? In past years, every category had an editors' choice and a readers' choice—a winner chosen democratically according to whichever received the most votes in our online ballot. This year, we mixed it up: We included readers' choice winners for select categories—which allows us to share more of your input by including your second and third picks for each of these as well.

Don't your advertisers automatically win?

Absolutely not. Top of the Town results are entirely based on our research and your ballots; there is no connection between advertisers and winners. Period. The fact that some winners happen to be advertisers, or later choose to advertise in the magazine, does not influence our selection of winners. Sure, we could make a few folks happy by "selling" winners, but in the long run we'd lose a lot more than we'd gain—like our credibility with you, the reader.

How do I get my business on the ballot?

Our ballot is a write-in format, which means that we don't provide predetermined options for which you can vote. Voters are free to suggest whatever business they deem worthy in each category.

I have a business that deserves an award. How can I win?

Tell your customers to vote for you next year. Remember: The ballot goes online in February. To help you spread the word, we can provide you with a Top of the Town "tool kit" during that time, which includes downloadable marketing materials and links to our site and ballot.

How can I vote? Visit www.5280.com (the ballot is online in February and March), create an account, and cast your ballot.

Domo's serene back patio is reminiscent of old Japan.



EDITORS' CHOICE DOMO JAPANESE COUNTRY FOODS RESTAURANT

Imagine yourself in an enchanted Japanese garden where wooden footbridges arc over trickling koi ponds, sculptural trees complement stone pathways, and standing lanterns cast a soft glow over your rustic wooden table. Now imagine this serenity plunked in an out-of-the-way alcove of central Denver, and you'll find yourself at Domo—or rather, just outside the back door of this Japanese eatery on a patio enclosed by the restaurant and its cultural museum. Take your time with the extensive menu—the hefty entrées offer a taste of traditional Japanese countryside—and savor the ambience as much as you do your steaming donburi (rice bowl with sashimi and veggies) or simmering seafood nabemono (stew pot). Bring friends: The round tables are easily big enough for six. *1365 Osage St., 303-595-3666, www.domorerestaurant.com*

PATIO DINING

cake ratio, the commitment to local ingredients such as milk and eggs from Morning Fresh Dairy Farm in Bellvue, Colorado, and, not least, the melt-in-your-mouth chocolate salted caramel cupcake. Rich, savory, sweet—the subtleties are executed flawlessly. And nope, we are sooo not sharing. *1489 Steele St., 720-524-7770, www.lovelyconfectionsbakery.com*

/ITALIAN

EDITORS' CHOICE

THE "FRASCA TRIO"

Frasca is by now a nationally recognized foodie buzzword, but here we're paying homage not only to its exquisite cuisine from

Italy's Friulian region, but also to the newer, less formal members of the Frasca family—all conveniently on the same block. Pizzeria Locale is a contemporary space beside Frasca Food and Wine that dishes out traditional Neapolitan pies with Colorado's first custom-made oven straight from Stefano Ferrara in Napoli. Right next door, Caffè—stocked with handcrafted panini, pastries, and espresso—is the closest thing you'll find to an authentic Italian cafe this side of the Atlantic Ocean. Mosey over to Caffè after a late lunch of mais pizza (sweet corn, crème fraîche, prosciutto, mozzarella) at Locale,

cozy up at a table, and experience the meaning of "when in Rome": Sit, savor, and order a treat. We recommend the tasty esotico (orange/coconut) from the biscotti tradizionali menu. *1738 Pearl St., Boulder, 303-442-6966, www.frascafoodandwine.com; 1730 Pearl St., Boulder, 303-442-3003, www.pizzerialocale.com; 1720 Pearl St., Boulder, 303-442-9364, frascacaffè.com*

/STEAK

EDITORS' CHOICE EDGE

RESTAURANT & BAR

In a town known for its love of all things beef, we are pleasantly surprised that one of the city's

READERS' CHOICES

PIZZA

READERS' CHOICE

1. MARCO'S COAL-FIRED PIZZERIA

The flavors of the Toscana pie—mozzarella, San Marzano tomato sauce, arugula, grape tomatoes, prosciutto di Parma, and Gran Cru—keep us, and our readers, coming back for more. *2129 Larimer St., 303-296-7000; 10111 Inverness Main St., Englewood, www.marcocoal-firedpizza.com*

2. ANTHONY'S PIZZA & PASTA
Multiple locations, www.anthonypizzaandpasta.com

3. PASQUINI'S PIZZERIA
Multiple locations, www.pasquinis.com

STEAK

READERS' CHOICE

1. ELWAY'S

The reliably tasty cuts at this institution and social hub, both downtown and in Cherry Creek, are still making Denverites swoon as much as of number seven once did. *1881 Curtis St., 303-312-3107; 2500 E. First Ave., 303-399-5353; www.elways.com*

2. CAPITAL GRILLE
1450 Larimer St., 303-539-2500, www.thecapitalgrille.com

3. DEL FRISCO'S DOUBLE EAGLE STEAK HOUSE
8100 E. Orchard Road, Greenwood Village, 303-796-0100, www.delfriscos.com

DESSERT

READERS' CHOICE

1. D BAR DESSERTS

It's impossible to argue with our readers on this one: D Bar does old decadent treats, like the tried-and-true cake and shake combo—but the milk and cookies has a Grandma's-kitchen nostalgia we adore. *1475 E. 17th Ave., 303-861-4710, www.dbardesserts.com*

2. LOLA'S SUGAR RUSH
2490 W. Main St., Littleton, 303-797-7874, www.lolasugarrush.com

3. LOVELY CONFECTIONS
1489 Steele St., 720-524-7770, www.lovelyconfectionsbakery.com

BAKERY

READERS' CHOICE

1. HAPPY CAKES BAKESHOP
Gourmet cupcakes in crazy-delicious flavors like peanut butter—banana, rum and Coke, and peppermint patty are perennial crowd pleasers. *3434 W. 32nd Ave., 303-477-3556, www.happycakes.com*

2. PIERRE MICHEL – FRENCH BAKERY
3624 E. Highlands Ranch Parkway, Ste. 205, Highlands Ranch, 303-471-4828, www.pierremichel.org

3. CAKE CRUMBS
2216 Kearney St., 303-861-4912, www.cake-crumbs.com

The Steuben's Food Truck targets office buildings with 400-plus people on Mondays and Fridays; find it at Civic Center Park Tuesdays through Thursdays.



EDITORS' CHOICE STEUBEN'S FOOD TRUCK

We're not sure why Denver's other successful restaurants haven't followed Steuben's lead and branched out into the mobile (as in, on wheels) market, because it's genius. Hosting an abbreviated menu from the down-home restaurant, the Steuben's truck (dubbed "Pearl") leans heavily on burgers—including the kick-ass green chile cheeseburger—but also features standbys like the pulled pork sandwich, BLT, and cheese fries. (Mmm, cheese fries.) Our only complaint: There's only one truck. When we need cheese fries, we need cheese fries. *Multiple locations (follow on Facebook or Twitter: @SteubensTruck), 303-475-9636, www.stubens.com*

STREET VENDOR



newest high-end eateries is giving the good ol' boys a run for their money. In just a few short months, the Four Seasons' flagship restaurant (see page 169 for a review) has established itself as one of Denver's winning and dining hot spots, thanks largely to its exquisitely prepared, Colorado-raised steaks. The secret is the pecan wood-

burning grill that chef Simon Purvis uses to give his mouthwatering cuts—indulge in the perfectly seasoned and buttery-tender filet, no sauce needed—a vaguely sweet, mildly nutty flavor that will leave you wondering why all beef can't be this good. *1111 14th St., 303-389-3343, www.edgerestaurantdenver.com*

/DESSERT

EDITORS' CHOICE TAG

At his namesake restaurant, chef Troy Guard has proven himself to be a master of juxtaposition, playing with flavors and textures to create thought-provoking, memorable dishes. Order dessert and you find the same imagination; in other words, don't expect traditional. Take the banana cream pie: This deconstructed sweet draws you in with a cloud of Tahitian-vanilla whipped cream, drizzles of burnt-orange syrup, slices of fresh banana, and shavings of decadent chocolate. All the more impressive: TAG does not employ a pastry chef. Instead, Guard himself oversees the restaurant's sugary side. *1441 Larimer St., 303-996-9985, www.tag-restaurant.com*

/CHINESE

EDITORS' CHOICE STAR KITCHEN

For the second consecu-

tive year, this joint off Federal Boulevard gets our nod for best Chinese because of its simple, authentic eats. We suggest dining in, warming up with some dim sum, putting down a couple of won tons, then sliding into a main course as diverse as the clientele. The spicy lobster is the tastiest east of San Francisco, and staples such as the kung pao chicken and sweet-and-sour pork can hold their own against any in the country. Bottom line: There's no way you could be disappointed with a dish from the Star. *2917 W. Mississippi Ave., 303-936-0089, www.starkitchendenver.com*



TAG's deconstructed banana cream pie.

FRONT TOP: MARC PISCOTTY; COURTESY OF TAG

/UN-BEEF BURGER **EDITORS' CHOICE ENCORE** **ON COLFAX**

Every burger shop in town offers some vegetarian riff on the all-American sandwich. But among the proliferation

of squash-and-bean, tofu, and mushroom patties, our nod goes to the falafel variation at Encore. This huge sammy, served with hummus, cucumbers, and yogurt dressing, is satisfyingly messy. We like it so much, it's

our go-to order—plus a side of fries with mustard drizzle. 2550 E. Colfax Ave., 303-355-1112, www.encoreoncolfax.com

/BARGAIN BITE **EDITORS' CHOICE CIVIC CENTER** **EATS OUTDOOR CAFÉ**

Thank you, Civic Center Eats, for rescuing us this summer from lunch doldrums and \$20 sit-down affairs. It's like a gourmet food truck convention in Civic Center Park—complete with outdoor cafe tables and live music—that gives us reason to escape our cubicles and soak up some sunshine while gorging ourselves on cheap food. We're addicted to Gastro Cart's lamb gyros and dream about Pinche Tacos' Cotija-stuffed eats, but the Biscuit Bus—in particular the \$3 buttermilk-fried chicken biscuit—is our go-to, wallet-saving fave. *Tuesdays and Thursdays through September 29, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Civic Center Park,*

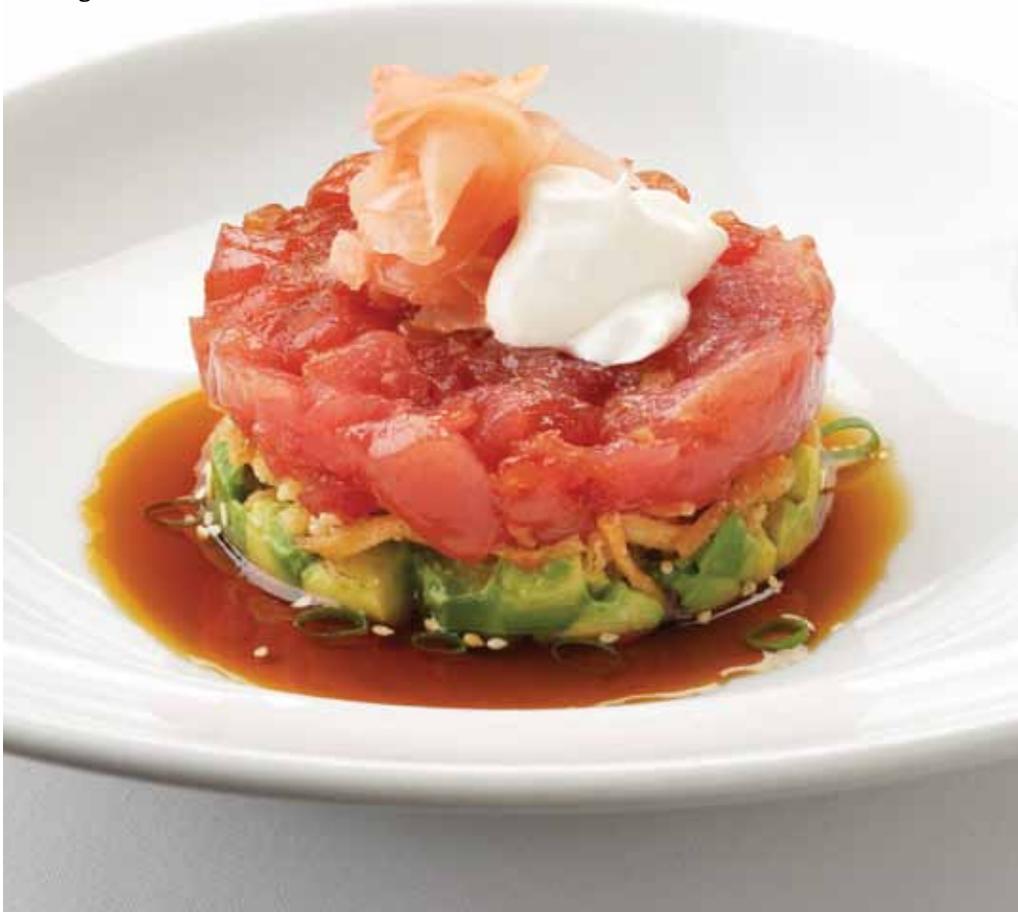
EDITORS' CHOICE OCEAN PRIME

We initially pegged Ocean Prime as “solid” when the colossal shrimp cocktail arrived at our table artfully engulfed in cloudlike dry-ice vapors rising from the glass dish. We changed our review to “great” when the jumbo lump crab cakes proved more crab than cake. And we upped the praise to “excellent” when we sliced into the salt 'n' pepper tuna like it was butter. Never mind the wild mushroom and green pepper-corn trappings that came alongside it; with an outside seared and seasoned to perfection and an inside so smooth it might as well have been silk, this piece of fish was, hands down, the best tuna we've had in Denver.

1465 Larimer St., 303-825-3663, www.oceanprimedenver.com

SEAFOOD

Ocean Prime's ahi tuna tartare is a tangy, melt-in-your-mouth way to begin a meal.



COURTESY OF OCEAN PRIME

READERS' CHOICES

TAPAS

READERS' CHOICE

1. THE 9TH DOOR

A robust menu of old- and new-style tapas (try the fried goat cheese with honey) makes for a delicious beginning—or end—to any night out. 1808 Blake St., 303-292-2229, www.theninthdoor.com

2. ONDO'S SPANISH TAPAS BAR
250 Steele St., Ste. 100, 303-975-6514, www.ondos.com

3. THE MEDITERRANEAN RESTAURANT
1002 Walnut St., Boulder, 303-444-5335, www.themedboulder.com

VIETNAMESE/PHO

READERS' CHOICE

1. PHO 95 NOODLE HOUSE
This pho palace has a rich family history and even richer bowls of steamy, fragrant broth. 1002 S. Federal Blvd., 303-936-3322; the Streets at South-Glenn, 6879 S. Vine St., Ste. 714, Centennial, 303-797-9535; www.pho95noodlehouse.com

2. PARALLEL 17
1600 E. 17th Ave., 303-399-0988, www.parallelseventeen.com

3. NEW SAIGON
630 S. Federal Blvd., 303-936-4954, www.newsaiigon.com

VEGETARIAN DISH

READERS' CHOICE

1. WATERCOURSE FOODS (EVERYTHING)
For herbivores, there's no competing with this Uptown mainstay; with an all-veggie menu to die for, we can't settle on just one dish, either. 837 E. 17th Ave., 303-832-7313, www.watercoursefoods.com

2. ROOT DOWN (VEGGIE SLIDERS, CARROT SOUP, SAMOSAS, BEET GNOCCHI)
1600 W. 33rd Ave., 303-993-4200, www.rootdowndenver.com

3. CITY O' CITY (SEITAN WINGS)
206 E. 13th Ave., 303-831-6443, www.citycitydenver.com

WINE LIST

READERS' CHOICE

1. LALA'S WINE BAR + PIZZERIA
Our readers dig the user-friendly “More Than a Glass” menu—categorized into tastes such as “luscious,” “soft,” and “fresh” for whites and “juicy,” “smooth,” and “rich,” for reds—as much as we do. 410 E. Seventh Ave., 303-861-9463, www.lalawinebar.com

2. BAROLO GRILL
3030 E. Sixth Ave., 303-393-1040, www.barologrilldenver.com

3. CRÚ FOOD & WINE BAR
1442 Larimer St., 303-893-9463; 8433 Park Meadows Center Drive, Ste. D-155, Lone Tree; www.cruwinebar.com/cru-denver.htm



Chef Elise Wiggins delivers her gluten-free food in Panzano's stately dining room.

EDITORS' CHOICE PANZANO

What kind of restaurant has a gluten-free menu so scrumptious that even patrons who aren't suffering from celiac disease (gluten intolerance) or a wheat allergy order from it? Short answer: one whose chef has a wheat allergy herself. "Those who eat well, live well," says executive chef Elise Wiggins, and her allergy hasn't stopped her from living up to this motto. Whether you order the grilled eggplant with rustic pomodoro and basil or the pan-seared sea scallops over risotto and grilled asparagus, your dinner date will be eyeing your entrée with envy—and that's saying something when most gluten-free creations we've sampled taste just a bit too much like cardboard. 909 17th St., 303-296-3525, www.panzano-denver.com

GLUTEN-FREE MENU

Colfax Avenue and Bannock Street, www.civiccenter-conservancy.org

/INDIAN

EDITORS' CHOICE INDIA'S PEARL

After eating at a dozen different Indian restaurants in the greater Denver-Boulder area, we've decided there's a problem with consistency at our local Indian eateries. Each time we

dined, we found unsatisfactory fluctuations in the experience and the food. But not at India's Pearl. The atmosphere is always pleasant, even if the noise from the upstairs bar sometimes floats downstairs. Without fail, the cuisine is flavorful and well spiced (try the veggie samosas, the navratan korma, and the lamb biryani), the

temperature correct, and the service reliably accommodating. Not only does it look good beside its competition—but it's also just very, very good.

1475 S. Pearl St., 303-777-1533, www.indiaspearl.com

/WINE LIST

EDITORS' CHOICE ROW 14 BISTRO & WINE BAR

When we sit down and scope out a wine list, there are a couple of things in particular we're looking for: The first is to be surprised. The second is a price range that won't force us to take out a second mortgage for a bottle of grape juice. Row 14 in downtown's Spire hits the sweet spot with its constantly changing list. When we visited not long ago, we found a fantastic bottle of Pinot Noir from Germany (Germany!) and had a killer Grüner Veltliner from Austria. Both bottles were under \$50. And for those of you not into lesser-known wines from lesser-known regions, fear not: There's plenty from France, Italy, California, and New Zealand here. The list, in fact, is so diverse and so reasonably priced that

everyone—from the wine novice to the hard-core oenophile—will find something to enjoy. 891 14th St., Ste. 100, 303-825-0100, www.row14denver.com

/DELI

EDITORS' CHOICE MENDELSON'S NEW YORK DELI

A lot of delis try to lay claim to a New York heritage; Mendelson's actually delivers the authentic experience. Yes, the sandwiches are expensive: The triple-decker lineup goes for between \$9 and \$12. They're also bigger—worthy heirs to their actual NYC roots—and tastier than most, thanks to Boar's Head meats and a staff that assembles each order with genuine care. Combine this with friendly, upbeat service and a fresh array of salads and desserts, and you've found a Denver deli that does Gotham proud. 600 17th St., Ste. 100, 303-996-5555

/COOKIE

EDITORS' CHOICE TRES JOLIE

We didn't go to Tres Jolie looking for the best cookie—instead, it found us. The Sunny, as the treat is called, brightens the traditional chocolate-chip cookie with its chewy oatmeal base, copious amounts of mini chips, and the just-detectable hint of salt. But the addition of sunflower seeds, which adds both nuttiness and an element of surprise, is the kicker. The goodie is large enough to share (if you're feeling generous), or perfectly suited for one. 2399 W. Main St., Littleton, 303-795-0156, www.tresjoliestyle.com

/BARBECUE

EDITORS' CHOICE JABO'S BAR-BE-Q

Finding the perfect barbecue joint in bona fide steak country can be a challenge, but we've stumbled upon a haunt in a southern 'burbs strip mall that doles out huge (seriously: five pounds) rib racks and enough house-made sauces to make your mouth water just reading the options. Slow-smoked by Jabo himself—who looks like he might've wrestled a gator or two in his lifetime—the pork, beef, and chicken can improve only

with a hefty bite of the gooey, hoof-size Utah scones (doughy confections more like beignets or sopaipillas) for dessert. 9682 E. Arapahoe Road, Greenwood Village, 303-799-4432

/HOT DOG

EDITORS' CHOICE BIKER JIM'S GOURMET DOGS

On any given day, you'll likely find us (and, well, everyone else in the greater downtown area) in line at Biker Jim's street cart. Among the enticingly offbeat sausages he offers, the 100-percent-beef dog, a subtly spicy concoction served on a soft, toasty bun, is a



Gourmet dogs at Biker Jim's new eatery.

standout. The wide range of condiments—from cream cheese to an enticing DIY selection (think jalapeños and barbecue sauce)—will suit any taste. And unlike (too) many other local hot doggeries, Jim's is grilled, not just boiled. And guess what? Now that he's opened an actual restaurant, you no longer have to rely

on good weather to enjoy Jim's wiener-ly goodness. The menu is more extensive than he can pull off with a street cart, and we're obsessed: Try the rattlesnake and pheasant dog topped with harissa-roasted cactus, Malaysian curry jam, scallions, cilantro, and onions. Seriously. We'll see you there. 2148 Larimer St. (restaurant), 720-746-9355; 16th and Arapahoe streets and Auraria Campus (outdoor stands); www.bikerjimsgods.com

/KID-FRIENDLY RESTAURANT

EDITORS' CHOICE LOU'S FOOD BAR

It takes a parent to understand the nuances of a truly kid-friendly spot. And the fact that Frank and Jacqueline Bonanno have two children is evident in the way their six-month-old Lou's Food Bar seamlessly welcomes the short set. We spied malleable Wikki Stix to play with and crayons and coloring sheets; plus, entrées can be ordered as a half portion for half the price. No-brainers include spaghetti with meatballs or the roasted organic chicken. All this, while you're enjoying house-made pâté, duck confit à l'orange, and a nice glass of Pinot Noir. So civilized. 1851 W. 38th Ave., 303-458-0336, www.lousfoodbar.com

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EDITORS' CHOICE CAFÉ AION

In Spain, eating tapas is about the experience—a languid mix of hanging out with friends and appreciating good food—and that's precisely what you get at Boulder's Café Aion. Chef-owner Dakota Soifer's simple, rustic menu changes on a whim, but when available, go for any of the house-cured meats; the roast beets with feta, mint, and almonds; or the fried cauliflower with saffron-infused yogurt (which was singled out by *Bon Appétit* in its October 2010 issue). Better yet: Order all three and a glass (or two) of the not-too-sweet sangría. Salud! 1235 Pennsylvania Ave., Boulder, 303-993-8131, www.cafeaion.com

TAPAS



A small-plate feast at Café Aion.

FROM TOP: SEAN PARSONS; LAURE SMITH

PACK IT IN
Summertime is in full swing, and nothing says Fourth of July like a scrumptious outdoor spread. We're not talking any old store-bought 'tater salad, though. If we could load up the perfect picnic basket, it would look something like this. —JD

Fried chicken: Steuben's

Accompanied by mashers, a biscuit, and gravy, Steuben's take on crispy, battered goodness is deliciously, yet simply, seasoned. www.steubens.com/take-out

Potato salad: Tony's Market

It's a classic, but mayo on a hot, sunny day can feel a little heavy—which is why we bypass the premade dishes and ask the deli to whip us up a German potato salad (Yukon potatoes, bacon, mustard seed, green onion) or a sweet potato salad with cranberries, red onions, and Parmesan. Make sure to call the day before you need your order. www.tonymarket.com

Watermelon: Interstate

Kitchen & Bar Nothing beats a giant, juicy slice of watermelon, but for a grown-up twist to your fruit, Interstate's watermelon, arugula, feta, and pistachio salad is a tangy treat. www.interstaterestaurant.com

Chips: Biker Jim's Gourmet

Dogs These ain't your mama's Ruffles: Jim's house-made crispy-golden chips are an addictively salty-fresh snack to munch after the mains have been devoured. www.bikerjimsgods.com

Apple pie: Wednesday's Pie

This caramel-apple version with almond-flour crust is one of only three varieties on tap each week, and there's a good reason: It's irresistible. Pre-order a whole pie and pick it up on Wednesday—the only day the tiny space doles 'em out. www.wednesdayspie.com

Old-fashioned soda: Hutch

& Spoon Sure, lemonade always does the trick when the sun is shining, but Hutch & Spoon's cool and refreshing cucumber soda ups the refreshment ante. www.hutchandspoon.com

Chocolate-chip cookies:

Buzz Cafe This drive-up, family-owned coffeeshop on Sixth Avenue and Marion Street bakes giant, made-from-scratch confections daily. They go quick, so stock up: You'll want more than one. www.buzzcafedenver.webs.com



Stephanie Brown, Denim One

Edgy & Eclectic



Sasha Mora, Arabella Boutique

The fit of Designer Denim. The finishing touch of one-of-a-kind jewelry. A complete style that fits your life from Denim One and Arabella. Found only in The Walkway of Larimer Square. The boutique niche of Downtown Denver's most historic block. The proud home of the city's most unique and inspiring shops, restaurants and bars. Find your style at Larimer Square.

Meet the people behind the place.

LARIMER SQUARE

On Larimer St., between 14th & 15th
LarimerSquare.com

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/MEXICAN

EDITORS' CHOICE PATZCUARO'S

This city is teeming with Mexican joints, but Patzcuaro's, a 33-year-old Highland landmark, hits all the right taste buds. From the chips and salsa verde to any number of burrito and taco combos, there's no wrong way to do a meal here—which is why this place is packed most every day of the week. Patzcuaro's prepares its Mexican staples well: simple and unpretentious chorizo and carne asada, addictive corn tortillas, and savory shredded beef. The servers are friendly, fast, and surprisingly happy to help a gringo who asks questions about the menu. *2616 W. 32nd Ave., 303-455-4389, www.patzcuaros.com*

/PIZZA

EDITORS' CHOICE BRAVA! PIZZERIA DELLA STRADA

Ever since David Bravdica rolled out his mobile pizza wagon on the 16th Street Mall beside the D & F Clock Tower last April, we've lined up for his wood-fired pies. The chalkboard menu is small—just six pizzas, including one weekly special—but it's packed with quality and flavor. Ingredients are often local (mushrooms from Hazel Dell Mushrooms in Windsor, cheese from Jumpin' Good Goat Dairy in Buena Vista, sausage from Il Mondo Vecchio on South Cherokee Street), but ultimately, the charred crusts keep us coming back—smoky, chewy, and addictive. The price is right, too: \$6.50 to \$7.50 for an individual-size pie. Bonus: Waiting in line is so much better when it comes with a dose of much-needed sunshine. *16th and Arapahoe streets, 303-619-0802, www.bravapizza.com*

/TACOS

EDITORS' CHOICE PINCHE TACOS

We pine over Pinche's queso a la plancha—street tacos stuffed with griddled Cotija cheese, avocado, and roasted tomatillo salsa. Beyond that, it's hard to choose between the lengua (triple-cooked, crispy Colorado beef tongue) and the carnitas with tangy pickled red onions and avocado crema. Happily, the tacos coming off this truck are conveniently small, so you can order all three. Wash 'em down with a cool, crisp Mexican Coke. *Locations vary, www.pinchetacos.com*

/THAI

EDITORS' CHOICE THAI POT CAFE

Let's get one thing straight: We don't go to Thai Pot Cafe for efficient service; we go for the food. Sometimes that means waiting for a table or waiting at the table, but once the dishes arrive,

all is forgiven. The secret to Thai Pot's success is in the kitchen, where you'll find Tui Promsomsri, a native of northern Thailand. When she came to the States, she brought her time-tested family recipes with her and continues to make her dishes from scratch. Try the sultry pad see-ewe and the tart tom yum soup, delivered to the table by Promsomsri's husband and owner Charlie Brown, and you'll see why some folks dine here twice a week—or more. *1550 S. Colorado Blvd., No. 113, 303-639-6200, www.thaipotcafe.com*

/NOODLE BOWL

EDITORS' CHOICE BONES

Even if you think you're not a ramen-lover, we suggest trying Bones' poached lobster, edamame, and miso lobster broth bowl. If the words decadent, indulgent, and luscious don't enter your brain immediately,



Chef Frank Bonanno on the line at Bones.

it will only be because the sounds coming from your mouth—mmmmms, uuuhhs, and ooooohs—will drown out your ability to think. If you can stand more extravagance, add a local farm-fresh egg to your bowl and relish the extra texture. *701 Grant St., 303-860-2929, www.bonesdenver.com*

/ICE CREAM/GELATO

EDITORS' CHOICE SWEET COW ICE CREAM

The first thing owner Drew Honness asked as we walked in was, "What flavors do you want to try?" No need to ask twice. The menu board lists inventive flavors like kung pao cashew, sweet corn, and Pop-Tarts (yes please!), and nearly everything in the shop is fresh, homemade, and delicious (try the homemade hot

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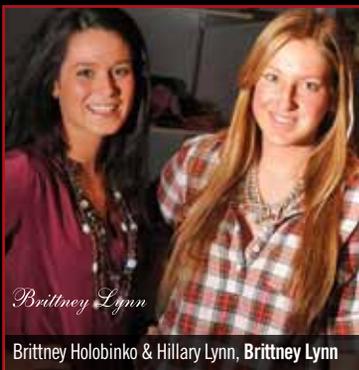
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LarimerSquare.com

fudge—heavenly). Stop in this summer for a cool cup of fresh peach ice cream, made with Palisade peaches from Munson Farms. It's only served for three weeks in August when the fruit is in season, so time it right. (Psst: We've heard rumors of a Sweet Cow ice cream truck debut...keep an eye out.) 637 Front St., Barn Door B, Louisville, 303-666-4269, www.sweetcowicecream.com

/GREEN CHILE

EDITORS' CHOICE LA LOMA RESTAURANT

Other than its location in a historic 19th-century house just north of Jefferson Park, there's nothing obscure about the bold flavors coming out of La Loma. Grandma Mendoza's recipes, especially her green chile, are beloved throughout Denver. Simmering with chunks of tender pork, a zesty blend of spices, and fresh green chiles, this chile verde is too addictive to order as a side. We suggest the bowl—you can sop up the leftovers with one (or two) of La Loma's warm, homemade flour tortillas. 2527 W. 26th Ave., 303-433-8300, www.restaurantur.com/laloma

/VEGETARIAN DISH

EDITORS' CHOICE UDI'S SUPPER CLUB

While Denver's eateries are expanding their veggie menus, we've been a bit disappointed in the sampling of carb-heavy, unimaginative offerings. Enter Udi's Supper Club, a monthly, four-course vegan feast at Udi's Pizza Café Bar in Olde Town Arvada that combines the talents of Udi Baron (a recent convert to veganism) and his daughter, executive chef Robin Bar-On. At a recent feast, the menu included eggplant caponata, carrot and jicama slaw, and the standout: kabocha squash and bok choy braised in coconut milk. The subtly sweet squash was well balanced by the mildly spicy, curry-like sauce, and the bok choy—used like a spoon—offered a light, refreshing crunch. The dishes change each month, which gives you the perfect excuse to return again and again (Udi's hosts the dinner every last Monday). 7600 Grandview Ave., Arvada, 303-421-8000, www.udisfood.com

/BURGER

EDITORS' CHOICE CITYGRILLE

It's been a few years since we dropped by for burgers at CityGrille, but we're glad we went back. Lately, it seems like more patties than not are topped with every glamorous—and, dare we say, borderline overindulgent—ingredient possible, from Brie and truffle oil to sundried tomato pesto and artichokes. CityGrille's cooked-to-order steak burger—layered with nothing more than cheddar, tomato, lettuce, onions, and pickles—is the simple comfort-food throwback we so often crave. Long live Americana on a plate. 321 E. Colfax Ave., 303-861-0726, www.citygrille.com

/VIETNAMESE/PHO

EDITORS' CHOICE PHO-NATIC

We've long been trawling the pho circuit in Denver, but we craved something less expensive than the high-end joints and less dive-y than the almost-too-fast pho places. Which is why we were ecstatic when Pho-natic opened on Colfax Avenue last summer. The space is sunny, the service is speedy, and the bill is palatable. Order the spring rolls, a bowl of steaming pho, and a slow-drip Vietnamese coffee. We are unabashed regulars. 229 E. Colfax Ave., 303-832-3154, www.phodenver.com

/FRENCH FRIES

EDITORS' CHOICE BIG GAME RESTAURANT AND LOUNGE

It's not that we have anything against your average naked fry. But if it were up to us, French fries would nearly always come



British-style fries at Big Game.

dressed up like they do at Big Game. Whether you order the poutine (fries covered in white gravy and topped with cheese curds), the Thanksgiving version (sweet potato fries fancied up with marshmallow and candied pecans) or the British style (fries with malt vinegar and horseradish-caper mayo) you'll be pleased with your choice. Yes, the toppings are, well, tops, but it's the tangled base of salty, hand-cut, fresh-made-daily fries that make these dishes so special. 1631 Wazee St., 303-623-1630, www.biggamerestaurant.com

/BLOODY MARY

EDITORS' CHOICE TAVERN DOWNTOWN

For \$5.50 on weekend mornings, you can make the Bloody of your dreams. The bartenders fill your glass with a shot of Absolut Peppar and guide you to a Bloody Mary bar that has no equal in Denver (well, outside of the other Tavern-group Bloody bars). Rare but crave-worthy ingredients like hard-boiled eggs, pickled asparagus, and cheese-stuffed olives rest alongside nearly 40 other spices and fixin's. Sure, you could leave your Sunday morning beverage-making to some hungover waiter at any old eatery, or you could please your palate as only you know how, with a little help from the Tavern. Cheers. 1949 Market St., 303-299-0100, www.tavernhg.com

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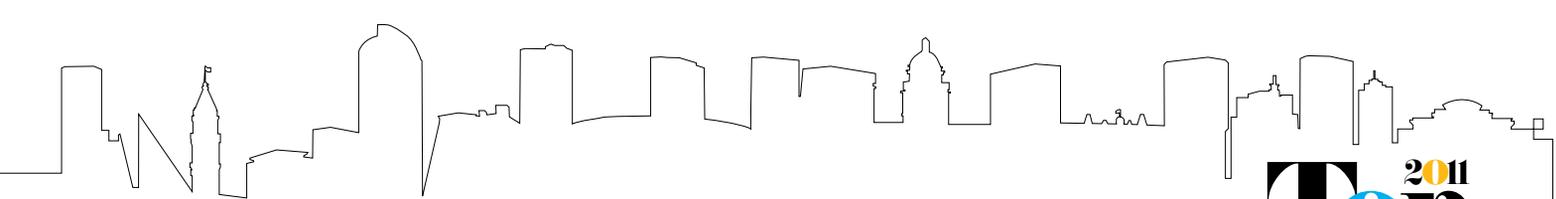


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SERVICE



/PILATES**EDITORS' CHOICE PILATES****ALIGNED**

Pilates studios have popped up all over town, but when we want the best instruction, we head to Pilates Aligned. Owner Cara Reeser is one of the only “master teachers” in the country, having trained under a descendant of Joseph H. Pilates, the founder of the exercise method. Now with two locations—Golden Triangle and RiNo—we have no excuses. The studios offer everything from straightforward mat instruction to reformer (machine) courses and even prenatal options, for as little as \$15 per class. But what we really enjoy are the extras: The RiNo studio has a gym and steam room that are available (for free!) to anyone who takes a class, and both locations offer massage services. 1110 Acoma St.; 3457 Ringsby

Court, Unit 101B; 303-886-6925, www.pilatesaligned.com

/FACIAL**EDITORS' CHOICE THE RITZ-CARLTON SPA, DENVER**

It seems to us that spa-ing shouldn't always require a full day and a wallet's worth of dough. While the spa at the Ritz offers a smorgasbord of decadent (and expensive!) facials, we recommend the 25-minute express version. Depending on the client's needs, it has most of the trappings of its big sister Ritz-Carlton signature facial—exfoliation, deep cleansing, masks—but it's lighter on the MasterCard (\$75—a bargain at the Ritz) and is way less time-consuming. You get a perfectly lovely, skin-rejuvenating pick-me-up, and you can still get on with your afternoon. 1881 Curtis St., 303-312-3830, www.ritzcarlton.com/denver

/BARBER**EDITORS' CHOICE METROBOOM**

You love it and we love it, but for those who are still squeamish about the idea of a barber-slash-men's-boutique, fear not: Jung

Park's funky little men's salon in the Riverfront 'hood will ease you into the experience—and morph you into a return customer. From the friendly staff to the complimentary scalp massage,

**EDITORS' CHOICE SALVAGETTI BICYCLE WORKSHOP**

Last year, Salvagetti was our pick for best bike shop because of the knowledgeable, hip staff, the cool policy on test rides—and the in-house espresso machine. So this year, we decided to test their mechanics out and have them build a bike for us. Putting a bike together—from scratch—is a big deal, especially a pro-race-worthy, time-trial rig. We were not disappointed. Our ride was dialed in from day one, and the shop's team of “wrenches” has earned our eternal respect as one of the best—if not *the* best—in the Mile High City. 1611 Platte St., 303-691-5595, www.salvagetti.com

BIKE SHOP

Salvagetti owner Scott Taylor with a Surly ride.

MetroBoom's 45-minute male pampering session will fly by. And, as far as salons go, it won't break the bank. Shampooing, a killer cut, and styling will run you about \$35, and first-time customers receive 10 percent off. 1550 Platte St., Ste. A/B, 303-477-9700, www.metroboom.com

/EYEBROW WAX

EDITORS' CHOICE STUDIO URBAN WAX

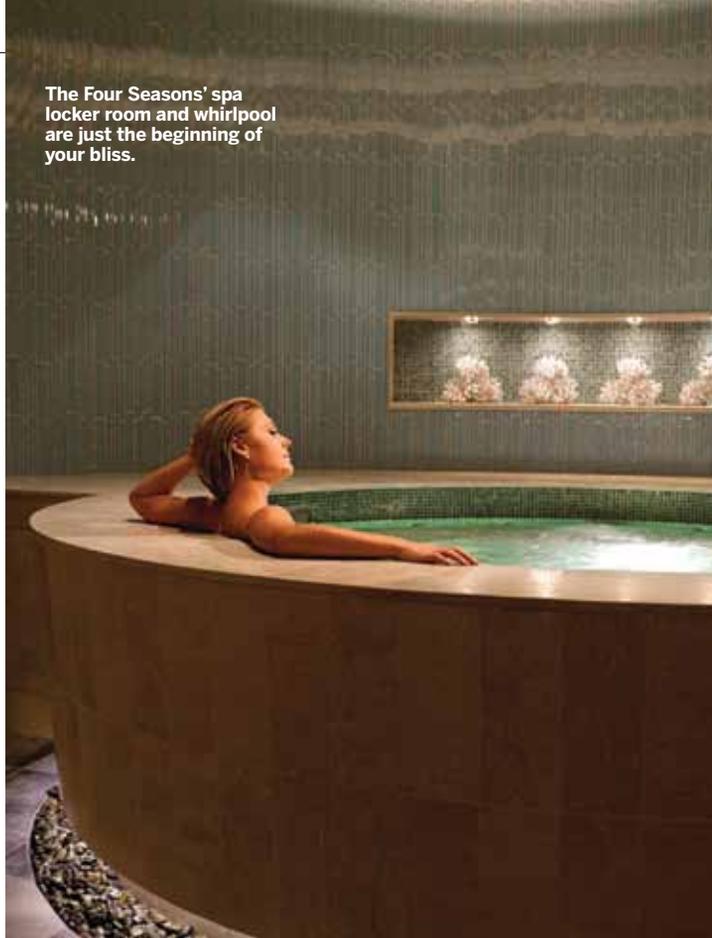
With easy-to-use online appointment booking and plenty of parking, Studio Urban Wax makes being beautiful convenient every day of the week. With a tiered pricing system and no-tipping policy, it's affordable, too. We booked with tier-two senior aesthetician Misty Henderson, and within minutes our brows were transformed from never-been-tweezed Neanderthal fixtures to Audrey Hepburn's shapely arches. Now our only problem is finding sunglasses that let us show off our new look. 40 S. Broadway, 303-325-3479, www.studiourbanwax.com

/PERSONAL TRAINER

EDITORS' CHOICE JAMIE ATLAS, Bonza Bodies

When Aussie-turned-Denverite Jamie Atlas watched his "mum" reverse her heart condition by morphing from a couch potato into a marathon runner, he decided to devote his life to helping others get into shape. Since 1992, Atlas has worked for several gyms—including the Athletic Club at Denver Place (now Forza Fitness & Performance Club), which awarded him the "Top Trainer" title in 2003. Gigs with international athletic equipment and fitness education companies broadened his knowledge and experience, and in 2008, Atlas opened his own fitness studio in downtown Denver. Bonza Bodies provides one-on-one training, nutrition and weight-loss counseling, and group boot camps here at 5,280 feet. But Atlas hasn't forgotten his Down Under roots: "Bonza" is Australian slang for "awesome," which is exactly how we feel after a workout with Atlas.

The Four Seasons' spa locker room and whirlpool are just the beginning of your bliss.



EDITORS' CHOICE THE SPA AT THE FOUR SEASONS HOTEL DENVER

This 10,000-square-foot mecca of pampering has 10 treatment rooms, a steam room, an indoor whirlpool, decked-out locker rooms, and experienced therapists. It's gorgeous. But what really sets it apart from other four-star urban spas is this: Spa-goers who book a \$110 treatment have full access to the hotel's rooftop pool and bar, Level 3. In a town where pool access is limited, that's the icing on the spa cake. Our advice: Take a day off this summer and book a 60-minute Swedish massage (\$120) at 10 a.m. Enjoy the long, gliding strokes and hydrating shea butter and then pull on the swimsuit for a few hours of sunbathing. It's the closest thing to a vacation you'll find on a random Tuesday morning. 1111 14th St., Third Floor, 303-389-3020, www.fourseasons.com/denver/spa



1800 Glenarm Place, 720-257-9328, www.bonzabodies.com

/FLOWER SHOP

EDITORS' CHOICE LITTLE FLOWER MARKET

Time after time, we find ourselves strolling into this quaint Bonnie Brae flower shop just to lose ourselves for a few minutes. Surrounded by the scent of

exotic blooms and the vibrant colors of peonies, delphinium, and sunflowers freshly cut from the backyards of Denver growers, it's impossible not to feel your spirits rise. If you're lucky, one of the four DeLine sisters, who have owned and operated the shop since 1997, will cheerfully sort through stems with you to create just the

READERS' CHOICES

MANI/PEDI

READERS' CHOICE

1. TOOTSIES THE NAIL SHOPPE

Three locations in adorable neighborhoods and an emphasis on cleanliness and hygiene means our readers have that much more opportunity to book a little extra TLC for their deserving tootsies. Multiple locations, www.tootsiesnailshoppe.com

2. POSH NAILS

3000 E. First Ave., 303-399-6245, www.poshnailscc.com

3. THE WOODHOUSE DAY SPA

941 E. 17th Ave., 303-813-8488, www.denver.woodhousespas.com

YOGA

READERS' CHOICE

1. COREPOWER YOGA

With six locations in Denver proper and nearly double that many in the surrounding suburbs, there's a CorePower on nearly every corner to feed your daily Zen habit. Multiple locations, www.corepoweryoga.com

2. DENVER ATHLETIC CLUB

1325 Glenarm Place, 303-534-1211, www.denverathleticclub.cc

3. QI

Multiple locations, www.qidenver.com

PET GROOMER

READERS' CHOICE

1. THE WAG SHOP

Whether your pooch needs a quick rinse—try the self-service dog wash to give Fido a good scrub yourself—or a full-blown beauty day at the doggie spa, he'll leave this place with his tail waggin'. 1222 E. Sixth Ave., 303-282-1894, www.thewagshop.com

2. PETSMART

Multiple locations, www.petsmart.com

3. GIDGET'S GROOMING

1083 S. Pearl St., 303-698-0777, www.gidgetsgrooming.net

BOOT CAMP

READERS' CHOICE

1. BONZA BODIES

It's not fancy, but Bonza's goal-based workout—structured differently each time for better whole-body results—gets the job done when you're in need of some emergency toning. 1800 Glenarm Place, 720-257-9328, www.bonzabodies.com

2. GENESIS FITNESS

8000 E. Quincy Ave., Ste. 200; 2373 15th St., Ste. 101; 303-837-1234, www.genesisfitness.com

3. ALTITUDE PEAK FITNESS

2151 Larimer St., 720-771-2079, www.altitudepeakfitness.com



There's nothing more soothing than dipping those weary toes into basins of warm water, like the ones at Sweet Life.

EDITORS' CHOICE SWEET LIFE NAIL BAR & LOUNGE

Ladies: Forget the power lunch and head to this Stapleton nail shop instead. The last time we walked into this comfy primp zone, there were no less than two groups of women holding informal biz meetings while sipping martinis and getting their toes done. Right next to them, curled up in the lounge-y armchairs, were a nine-months-pregnant mom-to-be and *her* mom enjoying a little TLC before the big day. So whether you need some pampering or some on-the-go business planning, order a glass of wine and settle in; you've just found your go-to nail salon. 2373 Central Park Blvd., 720-496-4565, www.sweetlifemilbar.com

MANI/PEDI

arrangement you're looking for. Taking time to smell the roses has never been so sweet. 709 S. University Blvd., 303-765-2008, www.littleflowermarket.com

/AUTO MECHANIC

EDITORS' CHOICE THE MAINTENANCE SHOPPE

One day, on a whim, we forked over \$60 in cash for something like six oil changes at a place called the Maintenance Shoppe.

It was a promotion, it was a screaming deal, and it seemed like a good idea at the time. In fact, it was a great idea, as now the Maintenance Shoppe, which sits on a stretch of Rio Grande Boulevard just north of Alameda Avenue, is our go-to car repair shop. Dealers? No thanks. And we've tried any number of other neighborhood joints that always leave us disappointed in one way or another. We didn't, however,

pick this garage simply by process of elimination. This family-owned business shoots straight, everyone in the shop is kind, and the house Doberman, Alex, will never fail to put a smile on your face while the mechanics keep your ride runnin' smooth. 115 Rio Grande Blvd., 303-893-3247

/INTERIOR DESIGN

EDITORS' CHOICE O INTERIOR DESIGN

Finding the perfect interior

READERS' CHOICES

TAILOR

READERS' CHOICE

1. LARIMER SQUARE DRY CLEANERS

Just like us, our readers appreciate Suki Falbo's genuine smile at this below-street-level storefront in Larimer Square—and also know she's a wiz with a sewing machine. 1423 Larimer St., 303-454-8863

2. EROL'S TAILORING

314 Columbine St., 303-377-2400, www.erolstailoring.com

3. CHERRY CREEK TAILOR & ALTERATIONS

211 Clayton St., 303-321-6278, www.cherrycreektailor.com

SALON

READERS' CHOICE

1. MATTHEW MORRIS SALON AND SKINCARE

Bravo TV's *Shear Genius* star Matthew Morris not only does killer 'dos, but also has recently expanded his salon offerings to include skincare services. 277 Broadway, Ste. D, 303-715-4673, www.matthewmorrissalon.com

2. THOMPSON & CO.

2220 E. Tennessee Ave., 303-733-1110, www.thompsonandcosalon.com

3. SOLERA SALON

8770 E. Arapahoe Road, Centennial, 303-468-1795; 9049 Forsstrom Drive, Lone Tree, 303-708-0006; www.solerasalon.com

HEALTH CLUB/GYM

READERS' CHOICE

1. DENVER ATHLETIC CLUB

Every year, you declare your devotion to this citadel of fitness—we're starting to suspect some of you would move into the DAC if they'd let you. 1325 Glenarm Place, 303-534-1211, www.denverathleticclub.cc

2. Q1

Multiple locations, www.q1denver.com
3. 24 HOUR FITNESS
Multiple locations, www.24hourfitness.com

AUTO MECHANIC

READERS' CHOICE

1. LUBE AND LATTE

Thanks to refreshingly reliable and visionary owners, this cafe-and-cars concept lets you get your brakes done, get a cappuccino, and get on with your day with a smile on your face. 2595 Kipling St., Lakewood, 303-274-0713, www.lubeandlatte.com

2. HOTCHKISS AUTO REPAIR

6918 E. Colfax Ave., 303-780-7747, www.hotchkissautorepair.com

3. ELDER AUTO

4940 E. Asbury Ave., 303-756-2886, www.elderauto.net



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laid-back aesthetic. She's prone to bold colors, but not so much that your bedroom looks like a circus tent. She'll recommend modern pieces that are inviting, not stark. The result is a traditional yet contemporary vibe that melds with virtually any home—and owner: 2406 W. 32nd Ave., Ste.



EDITORS' CHOICE VANESSA MARQUEZ, iMessage, Solera Salon & Spa

Three-year-old Solera Salon houses more than 60 beauty businesses in one well-appointed building just off Arapahoe Road in Centennial. But at least one of the companies at Solera is a true standout. Vanessa Marquez's iMessage, a single treatment room where Marquez is the only therapist, is a must if you're jonesing for a full-body rubdown. With nimble fingers and more deep-penetrating techniques than her slight build would suggest, Marquez strikes an exquisite balance between sublime pleasure and therapeutic pain. She's also (thankfully) relentless about checking her use of pressure. To boot, the refreshing mint aromatherapy scent left us feeling delightfully rejuvenated. 8770 E. Arapahoe Road, Centennial, 720-998-3827,

www.imessage.massagetherapy.com; www.solerasalon.com

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D, 303-458-6462, www.ointeriordesign.com

/CUSTOMER SERVICE

EDITORS' CHOICE FASTFRAME OF LODO

Framing isn't cheap, so when you get your diploma, or that prized wedding photo, or that shot of your first child framed, you want it done right. Jarrod Perrott and his team at this LoDo spot deliver. Each time we've been, we've spoken directly with Perrott, who is smart and engaging and knows his frames (no plastic here, thank you very much). The finished products FastFrame puts out are spectacular—and, as a bonus, after picking up your wall-hanging, Perrott will send you a handwritten thank-you note (a wonderful, thoughtful touch) with a discount card for that next bit of memorabilia you want framed. 1528 15th St., 303-623-7263, www.fastframeoflodo.com

/TAILOR

EDITORS' CHOICE LARIMER SQUARE DRY CLEANERS

Yes, it says "Cleaners" on the storefront window in Larimer Square's sub-street-level Walkway—and we're sure the clothes do come out squeaky clean—but the surprise in this shop is the talented proprietress/seamstress, Suki Falbo. We can hardly keep the grins off our faces whenever we walk in with an armful of garments-in-

need because her cheerful greeting is so welcoming. From basic hemming to tricky multilayered dresses, Falbo has gathered, cinched, and stitched countless pieces for us. Even when she's clearly up to her elbows in thread, she takes the time to ensure that our tunic is pinned in exactly the right place to flow like we want it to, or that our skirt is precisely the right length—and not once has she ever said no to our usually-last-minute "must have this by Friday" emergencies. 1423 Larimer St., 303-454-8863

/COBBLER/SHOE REPAIR

EDITORS' CHOICE

COBBLER'S CORNER

When it comes to fixing up our favorite kicks—you know, those go-with-every-outfit leather booties you wore down to the nails schlepping over cracked sidewalks all winter—the requirements are pretty straightforward. We want the work done right, we want it done fast, and we want a splash of feel-good customer service on the side. Happily, you get all three at downtown's Cobbler's Corner, and for a reasonable price. We can't wait to pull on our like-new booties for another season this fall. Bonus: The cobblers can sometimes get the work done while you wait—a godsend in the embarrassing event of an on-the-way-to-work high-heel mishap. 826 17th St., 303-623-3838

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 122

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The groundbreaking, category-shattering trio **Time for Three** will return to the Festival for a week long ensemble-in-residence program (Aug. 1-5) which will include workshops, special talks and concerts including a unique ensemble-only performance, *Happy Hour at the Symphony*. The group will return to the stage with Michael Christie and the Festival Orchestra for the season finale concerts performing a "Shuffle Mode" program that will juxtapose original works written by the Trio with classical works performed by the Orchestra.

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» CONTINUED FROM PAGE 82

/HEALTH CLUB/GYM

EDITORS' CHOICE GREENWOOD ATHLETIC AND TENNIS CLUB

Whether you're a hard-core fitness buff, a competitive athlete, or just a casual calorie-burner, you'll find your groove here. Take your pick from two floors of top-of-the-line cardio and weight training equipment; fitness classes including outdoor boot camps, yoga, Pilates, and spinning; personal trainers; and tennis,



Greenwood Athletic and Tennis Club.

squash, and racquetball courts. This gym has it all—and more. After you've sweated your way to your goal, cool off in the outdoor pool (tri-athletes, welcome to training heaven: a year-round, heated, 25-meter, six-lane lap pool), grab a smoothie at Ink! Coffee, or unwind with a massage at Ethereal Day Spa inside the club. 5801 S. Quebec St., Greenwood Village, 303-770-2582, www.greenwoodathleticclub.com

/YOGA

EDITORS' CHOICE SAMADHI CENTER FOR YOGA & MEDITATION

There's a reason we're addicted to this offbeat yoga practice: We leave every time feeling delightfully "yoga stoned" (a term we picked up from our favorite instructor, Ian Maxwell). With three beautiful studios offering an average of 10 classes a day, from Ashtanga to vinyasa to Anusara flow, plus workshops on meditation, postures, and breathing techniques, yoga at Samadhi will have you contorting, headstand-ing, and om-ing your way to physical and spiritual well-being. We haven't yet found a better stress-buster. 639 E. 19th Ave., 303-860-9642, www.samadhiyoga.net

/COOKING CLASS

EDITORS' CHOICE STIR COOKING SCHOOL
When you've attended as many culinary classes as we have, it takes a lot to impress us. It takes even more to convert us, but that's exactly what Stir Cooking School did.

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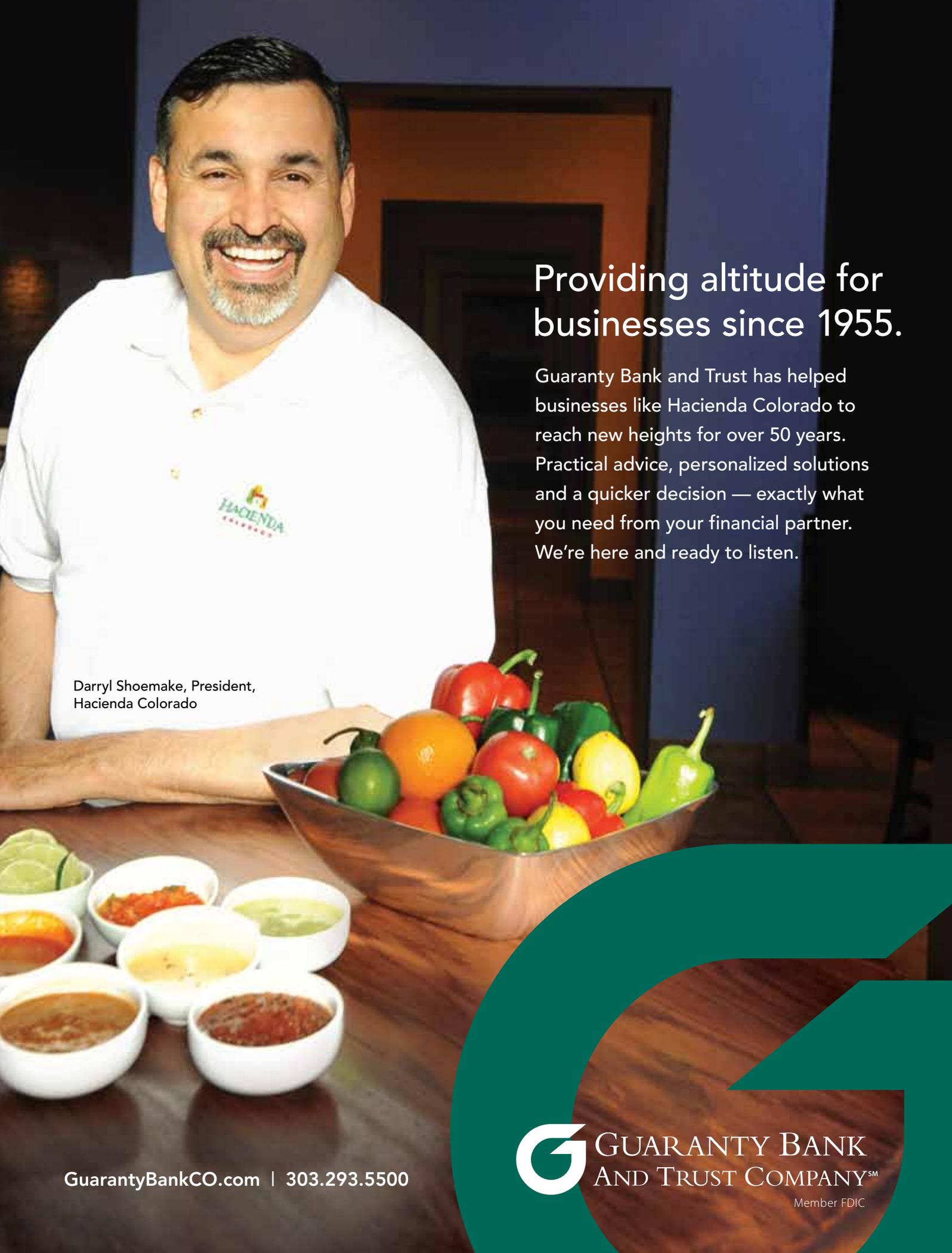
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Launched last November, this Highland joint offers everything from Southern classics to mixology classes to a book club. But what we love most is the vibe: At a recent class on Mexican cuisine, chef/owner Katy Hume dished out tips on properly blistering poblano chiles while cheerfully helping us undo mistakes. Maybe it was the pineapple-chile margaritas, but the three-hour class was over too soon—and we just wanted more, which is why Stir's class calendar is now bookmarked on our Internet browser: 3215 Zuni St., 720-287-4823, www.stirtolearn.com

/PUBLIC PROGRAM

EDITORS' CHOICE DENVER B-CYCLE

If we had a list of the "Top Five Events that have Revolutionized Downtown Denver in the Past 25 Years," it'd look something like this: Wynkoop Brewing Company opened, Coors

Cruising through City Park on a B-cycle.



Field was built, Highland bridges were constructed, Union Station was/is renovated (ongoing), and Denver B-cycle launched. Since last year's bike docking stations went up across the city, have you seen how many people are riding those shiny red cruisers around? Have you seen how happy they look? Get ye to the bicycle stand! *Multiple locations, 303-825-3325, www.denver.bicycle.com*

/BOOT CAMP

EDITORS' CHOICE IT BURNS JOE FITNESS

The name doesn't quite hit home until you attend your first IBJF session—that's a *three-hour* session, folks—and hear the fatigued chorus of "It burns, Joe! It buuuurns!" toward the end of every exercise. And that's just what fitness deity Joe Hendricks wants to hear. With a repertoire of intense cardio (think: stairs and bleachers at Red Rocks), crazy-hard ab and core routines, resis-

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tance band repetitions, plyometrics, and partner workouts, Hendricks is nothing if not extreme—yet somehow, his enthusiasm is infectious. Just about every person there—up to 200 fitness freaks at once—walks away with a smile on his or her face. Best part: Brand-name sponsors like Max Muscle Sports Nutrition and Runners Roost mean IBJF is free. And we promise, you don't have to be made of steel to show up—just don't blame us if you're too sore to walk the next day. *Red Rocks Amphitheatre (Sat–Sun, 8 to 11 a.m.; Wed 6 to 9 p.m.; check website for alternate downtown Denver locations in case of weather or Red Rocks event conflicts), www.itburnsjoefitness.com*

/SALON

EDITORS' CHOICE THOMPSON & CO.

When we called up this year-old Wash Park salon at 4 p.m. on a Tuesday, we were in hair crisis mode. We needed a style fix, and we needed it bad. At 5 p.m.—the same day—we were sitting in a salon chair, strategizing with



Thompson & Co. salon.

stylist Danielle Bird about curing our case of the blahs. After a feel-good scalp massage and shampoo, a complimentary paraffin hand treatment soothed us into complete relaxation while Danielle ventured into uncharted territory—layers (gasp!)—with our stick-straight tresses. Forty minutes later, we stood up with bouncy, sleek locks that looked like an ad in a glossy. And it totally works with our towel-off-and-go routine. First-time customers: Check the website for a 50-percent-off special. *2220 E. Tennessee Ave., 303-733-1110, www.thompsonandcosalon.com*

/PET GROOMER

EDITORS' CHOICE THE WAG SHOP

Gone are the days when you dropped your best bud off for a bath and haircut, only to



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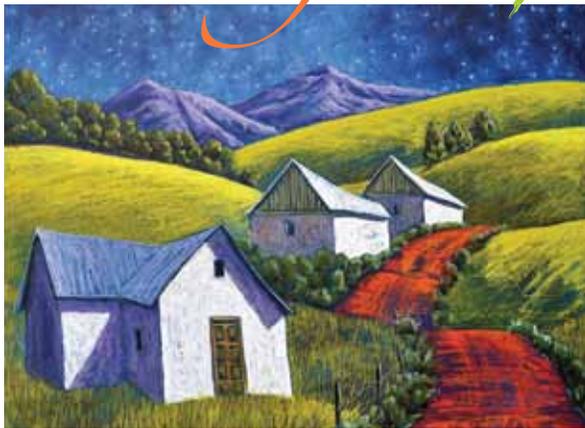
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watch him fearfully disappear behind some secret door and emerge, totally traumatized, a good four hours later. The Wag Shop is completely cage-free, grooms one dog at a time, and has each pup looking pretty in two to three hours. You'll feel at ease leaving Rover with owners Dave and Deidre Hered—and he'll love socializing with the other dogs while he waits his turn for pampering at this sweet little doggie hot spot (look for a second location next month). 1222 E. Sixth Ave., 303-282-1894, www.thewagshop.com

/ DOGGIE DAYCARE

EDITORS' CHOICE FOR THE LOVE OF DOG

Dogs and their humans will dig this home-away-from-home as soon as they walk through the door. Since she opened For the Love of Dog eight years ago, owner Dana Hood has consistently focused on every detail: Whether it's the fresh, non-doglike smell of the lobby, the nonporous floors (which promotes the un-dog fragrance), the crate-free environment, the personal training option (yes—for pooches with...pooches), or the canine tutoring sessions (manners, please!), Hood and her crew of friendly, long-term staffers have thought of everything. 4751 E. Virginia Ave., 303-355-6700, www.fortheloveofdog.com

/ KIDS' HAIRCUT

EDITORS' CHOICE LITTLE B'S: A KIDS' SALON

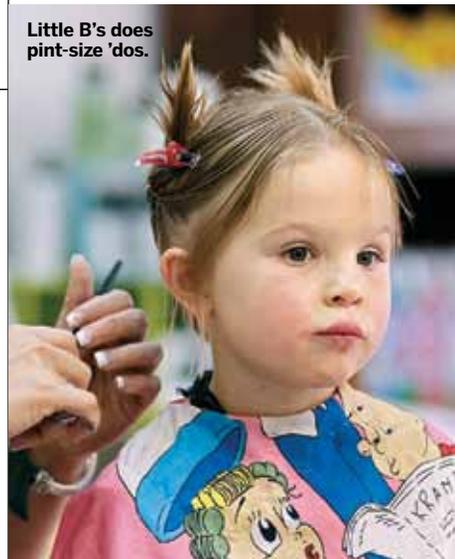
Finding a good kids' haircut is kinda like having a good old-fashioned thunderstorm in Denver. It hardly ever happens, but when it does, it's surprising, wonderful, and refreshing. You, dear readers, picked Little b's last year, so we listened—and were impressed. The stylists actually ask you (what a novel idea!) how you want your child's hair cut, and then make notes about how they pulled it off to file away for next time. And the cuts are really good. (Trust us, our kids have had some bad ones.) Bang Salon, Little b's sister—

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Asian Tropics



Mimi & Dolly Need Your Help! Raise money for their new home—and win great prizes!

Next year, our beloved Asian elephants—and lots of other animals—are moving to Denver Zoo's new Asian Tropics exhibit. To make Asian Tropics a perfect home, we need your help.

Fill your very own "ele bank"

Cooler than piggy banks, ele banks serve a ver special purpose: your coins will help move Mimi and Dolly to Asian Tropics.

It's easy!

- Pick up your ele bank at Denver Zoo or Young Americans Bank (3550 E. 1st Ave.) or visit www.denverzoo.org/kidscampaign to make your bank at home.
- Ask people you know to help you raise money.
- Bring your full ele bank back to Denver Zoo or Young Americans Bank.
- Repeat as many times as you can before Sept. 1 to win great prizes.

Win cool prizes

Turn in your full ele bank and get your own Mimi and Dolly poster. And if you're one of the top fundraisers, you may see your name on Denver Zoo's website or Facebook page! Plus, you'll have a chance to win awesome prizes.



Follow in your grandparents' footsteps

In 1950, Denver's kids donated pennies to bring our first elephant, Cookie, to Denver Zoo. Now you can help Mimi and Dolly—just like your parents and grandparents helped Cookie so many years ago!



For more information visit: www.denverzoo.org/kidscampaign





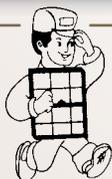
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or should we say *mother*—biz is right around the corner, as is Cake Crumbs, with a tasty selection of sandwiches and treats. Two new 'dos and lunch to boot. Productive afternoon: check. 6107 E. 22nd Ave., 303-333-1378, www.littlebssalon.com

GOOD EYE The Denver Design District: A Newbie's Guide

So you're considering a remodel. Gulp. Where to begin? Enter the Denver Design District (www.denverdesign.com), a home-design megacenter with more than 40 retail and wholesale home-furnishing showrooms spread over three buildings. Intimidating? Sure. But that's no reason to avoid it. Here, we've deconstructed the process so the greenest of home fixer-uppers can head to DDD with confidence. —CHERYL MEYERS

What will I find? Go here for all things furniture, fabric, artwork, light fixture, tile, and carpet. It's located on South Broadway, just north of I-25 in the shadow of the love-it/hate-it geometric yellow sculpture near the highway.

I've heard I can't actually purchase at the Design District. Is this true?

No...and yes. In the building called the Collection, some showrooms sell retail, meaning anyone can buy the furniture. In the east and west buildings, showrooms sell "to the trade" (such as designers and architects) only, but an on-duty designer can facilitate the buying if something catches your eye. Alternatively, you can ask them to set you up with a design professional through the District's free designer referral program.

What else do I need to know to get started?

1. Grab a map and other advice at the information desk. If you know designers, pony up the \$12 for a directory.
2. Remember that each showroom carries several furniture manufacturers (more than 1,000 are represented across the District); you won't see everything on the floor, so ask to see manufacturer catalogues.
3. Prices are going to be more than you'd see at chain and box stores. On a budget? Ask if you can buy floor samples.

Which showrooms should I hit?

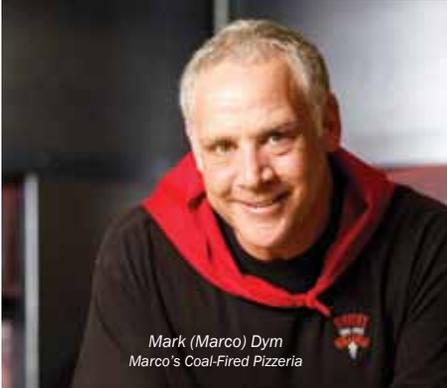
It's difficult to choose, but these are our four favorites:

C.A.I. Designs (595 S. Broadway, 303-282-8100) is perfect for the transitional house: Find a dining table made from reclaimed Mexican hardwood beside a contemporary Cisco Brothers sofa.

Egg & Dart, Ltd. (595 S. Broadway, 303-744-1676) is just plain gorgeous. Wander the showroom for impeccable design ideas, and don't miss the Cowtan & Tout fabrics and arresting sculptures.

Hoff Miller, Ltd. (595 S. Broadway, 303-698-0800) carries Hickory Chair, which we love for sofas and chairs, plus well-edited Pindler & Pindler fabrics.

Town (601 S. Broadway, Suites A, P, and Y, 303-282-8696) is in the Collection, and you can buy there without a designer; look for Barbara Barry, Troscan, and Ralph Lauren among the classic, tailored, and contemporary lines.



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