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## St. Louis Restaurant Guide

This guide is heavily biased toward restaurants in the Loop area of University City or downtown Clayton, since these will be the easiest restaurants to get to.

For more on St. Louis restaurants, go to [saucecafe.com](http://saucecafe.com), a local Zagat-like ezine. (I've cut and pasted the basic restaurant info – address, hours – directly from saucecafe.)

### 1 The short version.

Here is a short list of places to eat. More complete descriptions are in Section 4.

- Dinner
  - BARcelona. Tapas. Downtown Clayton.
  - Crossing. French/Italian. Downtown Clayton.
  - Eau Bistro. American contemporary. Central West End.
  - Harvest. American contemporary. Richmond Heights.
  - Pomme. French. Downtown Clayton.
  - Portabella. Mediterranean. Downtown Clayton.
  - Remy's Kitchen and Wine Bar. Mediterranean, wine bar. Downtown Clayton.
  - 609. Asian Fusion. Loop.
- Lunch. I'm listing only places that are in the Loop, an easy walk from WU.
  - Blueberry Hill. American rock 'n roll pub.
  - Brandts. Eclectic.
  - Chinese Noodle Cafe. Chinese.
  - Cicero's. American pub.
  - Q'doba. Mexican fast food.
  - Riddles. Sandwiches and other.
  - Seki. Japanese.
  - Thai Gai Yang Cafe. Thai. A bit slow.
  - Thai Pizza Co. Thai pizza.
  - U City Grill. Korean. (NOTE: Incredibly small.)

## 2 Food areas.

There are a number of quality restaurants in downtown Clayton. Many are in a handful of short, parallel streets that run north/south between Forsyth and Maryland. Central, in particular, has a very large number of good restaurants crowded into a single block. Clayton is the obvious place to go for dinner.

Restaurants in the Loop, on Delmar about five blocks north of WU, tend to be funkier and more casual than restaurants in Clayton. (There used to be a trolley that ran through the Loop, hence the name. Remember “Meet Me In St. Louis?” Clang, clang went the Trolley . . .) The Loop is the obvious place to go for lunch. The Loop is not entirely “tame.” It is safe for lunch and probably for dinner, too, but if you are at all nervous, go to Clayton for dinner.

Other areas in which restaurants are concentrated include South Grand, the Central West End, and the Hill.

South Grand in South St. Louis, on Grand south of Arsenal, is St. Louis’s Little Saigon, with a large number of Vietnamese restaurants, some of them very good. Other restaurants of interest include Mangia Italiano and the pizza/bar Black Thorn. After Clayton, this area is the best bet for dinner (and maybe better than Clayton, depending on your tastes). But, as with the U City loop, this area is not entirely “tame.”

The Central West End is the commercial/residential area immediately north of the WU medical school. It is roughly two miles east of the WU main campus. Restaurants are concentrated along Euclid at the intersections with Laclede, Maryland, McPherson, and a few other streets.

The Hill (maybe a foot higher than the surrounding area, but I’m not even sure about that), is St. Louis’s Italian district. It has a number of Italian restaurants that are quite formal (jacket and tie) and cater to business people. Giovanni’s is an example. It is a good restaurant, maybe even an excellent restaurant, but not my style. But ringing the Hill are a number of other restaurants of interest, notably O’Connell’s Pub and Modesto Tapas.

## 3 A few remarks about food indigenous to St. Louis.

Although St. Louis is a good restaurant city, there isn’t much food that is actually indigenous to St. Louis. It’s Kansas City that famous for steaks, not St. Louis. And it’s Kansas City (or Memphis or . . .) that’s famous for barbecue. Fried catfish *is* a specialty of the region, but the best places I know of are in small towns outside of St. Louis. St. Louis used to be one of the keepers of the flame for fried chicken. That’s pretty much a thing of the past, but if you’re adventurous you can try Hodaks. And you don’t want to know about St. Louis style pizza or toasted ravioli. Last but not least, there is a local desert called gooey butter cake that I like; it is sweet and heavy so be warned.

St. Louis claims the ice cream cone, the hot dog on a bun, and the hamburger on a bun, all of which are supposed to have originated at the 1904 World's Fair, of "Meet me in St. Louis" fame. Of these, the ice cream cone is the best documented. Unfortunately, the St. Louis of today isn't good for hot dogs; the best place, Woofies, sells Chicago style hot dogs. St. Louis does have a number of places that are good for hamburgers, but what city of its size doesn't? And ice cream isn't particularly good here, with two exceptions. There is a very good ice cream place called Serendipity in Webster Groves. And St. Louis has a fondness, shared with some other cities in the midwest, for frozen custard. See the listing for Ted Drewes.

## 4 Detailed listings.

For what it's worth, I think the best St. Louis restaurants are very good, and generally a solid value, but several notches below the best in New York or Chicago. Food tends to be a bit heavy, a bit over salted, portions are typically a bit too large, and so on. Execution even at good restaurants is sometimes variable.

I've organized restaurants by location. First comes downtown Clayton. Then comes the University City Loop, about 5 blocks north of Washington University. Then comes "elsewhere." Upscale refers both to the ambition of the kitchen and to prices. For an upscale restaurant, think \$30 a person and up (possibly way up for places like Tony's), not counting wine. Formal means that jackets are required for men. Somewhat formal means that men can probably get by without a jacket. Informal means dress nicely. Very informal means don't be naked. I list signature dishes where relevant. For many restaurants, the menu changes so frequently that listing dishes is pointless. I've listed number of restaurants that I haven't been to but that I think are of interest for one reason or another.

### 4.1 Downtown Clayton.

- *Almonds*. 8127 Maryland, Clayton. 725-1019.  
American contemporary, with a cajun bias. Upscale but informal. Good food and cheaper than some of the other Clayton area competitors. Plain room that is fun and noisy if the place is crowded but stark otherwise. Have not been recently.
- *BARcelona Tapas* 34 North Central Ave, Clayton. 863-9909.  
Tapas. Good, pleasant, lively rooms; somewhat slow service. Get the sausages. The owner also owns Momos.
- *Blue Elephant*. 7816 Forsyth Boulevard, Clayton. 862-0500. Saturday Lunch: 11-2:30. Friday-Saturday Dinner: 5-10.  
Somewhat upscale but informal. Pleasant but very mild. Have not been recently.

- *Cafe de France*. 7515 Forsyth, Clayton. Open Friday and Saturday 5 - 10:30 678-0200

French. Upscale and somewhat formal to formal. My one meal here was not good (of three lambchops, one was raw and two were over done; some other dishes were badly conceived, like grilled foie gras on sherbert). People whose taste I respect have had better experience. Service is leisurely: you can stay at the restaurant forever, which is a good thing since the wait between courses may be very long. If you go you may be the only one there.

- *Cafe Napoli*. 7754 Forsyth, Clayton. Open Friday and Saturday 5:30 - 11:00 p.m. Closed Sunday. 863-5731.

Italian. Upscale but informal. Have not been in years. Good but pricey for what you get. Some reports of recent service lapses. I Fratellini and Dominic's Trattoria, also in Clayton (but not as conveniently located) are better bets.

- *Cardwells*. 8100 Maryland, Clayton, MO 63105. Open Friday and Saturday, 11:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. and 5:45 - 10:30 p.m. Closed Sunday. 726-5055.

Contemporary. Good for lunch. For dinner not good. Used to be one of the best restaurants in St. Louis but no more. It's sister restaurant in Plaza Frontenac (a mall in the west) may be better, but I have not been.

- *The Crossing*. 7823 Forsyth, Clayton, MO 63105. Open Friday and Saturday 11:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m., and 5:30 - 9:30 p.m. Sunday 5:30 - 10:00 p.m. 721-7375.

French/Italian. Upscale and somewhat formal. Food is well conceived and well prepared. Very good but not showy. One of the best restaurants in St. Louis. Seating is a bit cramped.

- *Il Vicino Wood Oven Pizza*. 41 North Central Avenue, Clayton. 727-1333.

Pizza. Very informal (you order at a counter). A good place, the kind of place you go to frequently if you lived in the neighborhood.

- *India's Rasoi*. 7923 Forsyth, Clayton. Open for lunch Monday-Saturday 11:00am-2:30pm, dinner Monday-Saturday 5-10pm, Sunday 5-9pm. 727-1414

Indian. Informal. Decor is borderline stark but the menu is relatively extensive and the food is good.

- *Miso on Meramec*. 16 North Meramec, Clayton. 863-7888. Friday, Saturday, 5:30-10:30.

Sushi, Asian fusion. Hip casual. Expensive. Small balls of rice and large pieces of fish, fresh. But, somewhat lacking in flavor, too much wasabi, and a tempura shrimp head was oily. The bar downstairs (open until 1:30) is reported to be a hot spot in Clayton.

- *Pomme*. 40 North Central, Clayton, MO 63105. 5:30 p.m.-? Tues.-Sat. Closed Sun. & Mon. 727-4141.  
French. Upscale. Relatively expensive. Relatively small portions. One of my favorite restaurants in Clayton.
- *Portabella*. 15 N. Central, Clayton, MO 63105. Open Friday and Saturday 5:30 - 11:00 p.m. Closed Sunday. 725-6588.  
Mediterranean. Upscale and somewhat formal. Especially good for lunch. Large portions, can be somewhat heavy.
- *Remy's Kitchen and Wine Bar*. 222 S. Bemiston, Clayton, MO 63105. Open Friday 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. - 12:00 a.m., Saturday 5:30 - 11:00 p.m. Closed Sunday. 726-5757.  
Mediterranean. Upscale but informal. Crowded, lively but not oppressively so. For a light meal, try the cheese plate, which will take all of dinner to chew through. Remy's offers several wine flights, which are three half glasses. One of my favorite restaurants in Clayton.
- *Sekisui Pan Pacific*. 7443 Forsyth, Clayton, MO 63105. 314-726-0033. Mon.-Fri. 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Mon.-Thurs. 5 p.m.-12 a.m. Fri. & Sat. 5 p.m.-1 a.m.  
Pan-Asian. It's good to very good but always seems to be empty and the service is slow.

## 4.2 U City Loop.

As noted above, the U City loop area is not completely "tamed." Lunch will be fine. Dinner should be as well, especially if you're with a crowd. But if you are nervous, stick to Clayton for dinner. Generally speaking, things get rougher as you move either north of Delmar or east of Skinker.

- *Blueberry Hill*. 6504 Delmar, University City, MO 63130. Open Friday and Saturday 11:00 a.m. - 11:30 p.m., Sunday 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 a.m. 727-2277.  
American bar. Claims to have the most extensive jukebox in the world. Chuck Berry (a St. Louis native) plays once a month in the Duck Room downstairs. Vies with O'Connell's Pub for best hamburger in St. Louis. It's a good burger, sometimes a very good burger, with one qualification: if you order a cheddar burger, the cheddar comes as a ball of soft cheese spread. What are they thinking? Rest of the menu not as successful. Can be somewhat smoky. Fairly extensive beer selection, some of it on tap. Some of the waiters have impressive tattoos and piercings. Service brusque but usually efficient. Every college town has one or more places kind of like this. But this one's a good example of type. A U City institution.

- *Brandts*. 6525 Delmar, University City, MO 63130. Open Friday and Saturday 11:00 a.m. - 1:30 a.m., Sunday 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 a.m. 727-3663.  
Eclectic. Informal (partly a market). I've mainly been for lunch or for before dinner appetizers. Some dishes work better than others. Good overall. Fairly extensive beer selection. Limited seating. Service can be slow.
- *Cicero's*. 6691 Delmar, University City Loop. Open Friday and Saturday 11:00 a.m. - 12:45 a.m., Sunday 11:00 a.m. - 11:45 p.m. 862-0009.  
American bar, menu has more variety than Blueberry hill. Informal. I like the half pound burger on garlic bread. Stark room. Fairly extensive beer selection.
- *Chinese Noodle Bar*. 6138 Delmar, University City Loop. Mon.-Thurs. lunch 11 a.m.-3 p.m., dinner 5-9:30 p.m. Fri. lunch 11 a.m.-3 p.m., dinner 5-10:30 p.m. Sat. and Sun. dinner 5-10:30 p.m. 725-9889.  
American Chinese. About what you'd expect, but good for this type, and very friendly. Located on the wrong side of Skinker, in a new development.
- *Fitz's*. 6605 Delmar, University City, MO 63130. Open Friday and Saturday 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 a.m., Sunday 11:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m. 726-9555.  
A brew pub, except the brew is root beer. (Oddly, though, they also sell beer and liquor.) Menu is hamburgers and a bit more, roughly comparable to Blueberry Hill. Informal. Service and execution has been consistently inconsistent for years. A shame because the root beer is very good; it could be a fabulous place if it were managed properly.
- *Melting Pot, The*. 6683 Delmar, University City, MO 63130. Open Friday and Saturday 5:00 - 11:00 p.m., Sunday 5:00 - 9:00 p.m. 725-4141.  
Fondue. Borderline upscale but informal. Food is expensive and bland. Part of a chain.
- *Mirasol*. 144 Delmar Blvd. St. Louis, MO 63112. Lunch: Tues. - Fri. 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Dinner: Tues. - Thurs. 5-10 p.m. Fri. and Sat. 5-11:30 p.m. Sun: 5-10 p.m. 721-690.  
Central and South American. Informal. Have not been. Early reports were that food is good but service is bad. Recent reports are that both food and service have improved. Probably worth checking out. Located on the wrong side of Skinker, in a new development.
- *Panera*. 6630 Delmar, University City, MO 63130. 721-7995.  
Bread, soup, sandwiches. Yes, I know, you have them, too. But did you know that Panera was originally St. Louis Bread Co? Does that make this one especially good? Well, no, actually. Still, one of the better places to go for a

sandwich. And can you get gooey butter danish outside of St. Louis? (Really, can you? I have no idea).

- *Q'Doba*. 6625 Delmar, University City, MO 63130. Mon.-Thurs. 11 a.m.-10:30 p.m. Fri. & Sat. 10:30 a.m.-12 a.m. Sun. 10:30 a.m.-10 p.m. 862-3320.

Mexican fast food. Informal. Assembly line and everything is precooked but it tastes good. Part of chain of varying quality. This seems to be one of the better branches.

- *Riddles Penultimate Cafe and Wine Bar*. 6307 Delmar, University City, MO 63130. Open Friday and Saturday 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 a.m., Sunday 5:00 - 10:00 p.m. 725-6985.

Eclectic. Borderline upscale but informal, almost very informal. Dinner is merely OK, some dishes are good, some not so good. For lunch has a nice range of sandwiches. Unusually extensive wine cellar, one of the largest in St. Louis.

- *Saleems*. 6501 Delmar, University City, MO 63130. Open Friday and Saturday 5:00 p.m. - ?, Closed Sunday. 721-7947.

Middle eastern. Informal. I haven't been in years. Recent reports are bad so best to avoid. A pity because you've got to love any place festooned with garlic.

- *Seki*. 6335 Delmar, University City Loop. Open Friday Lunch 11:30 - 2:00; Saturday Lunch 12:00 - 2:30 p.m., Friday and Saturday Dinner 5:30 - 10:00 p.m. 726-6477.

Japanese. Informal. Out of favor relative to I Love Mr. Sushi, Nobu, Sansui, Sekisui and so on but OK and convenient. The staff can be wonderfully brusque.

- *609*. 609 Eastgate, University City Loop. Sun.-Sat.-Lunch 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Dinner: Sun.-Thurs. 5 p.m.-9:30 p.m. Fri.-Sat. 5-10 p.m. 721-9168

Asian fusion. Informal. Arguably the best restaurant of this type in St. Louis. The creme brulee sampler was fun.

- *Thai Country Cafe*. 6223 Delmar, University City, MO 63130. Open Friday 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. and 5:00 - 10:00 p.m., Saturday 10:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. and 5:00 - 10:00 p.m., Sunday 5:00 - 9:30 p.m. 862-0787.

Thai. Informal. Good, fairly typical Thai.

- *Thai Gai Yang Cafe*. 6250 Delmar St. Louis, MO 63130. 314-862-4400. Tues.-Sat. 12-9:30 p.m. Sun. 11:30 a.m.-9:30 p.m.

Thai. Very informal. Sister restaurant to the Thai Country Cafe. Unusual, extensive menu. Some portions are huge.

- *Thai Pizza Co.* 608 Eastgate, University City Loop. Sun.-Thurs. 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m. Fri. & Sat. 11:30 a.m.-12 a.m. 862-4429

Thai Pizza. Informal. If California Pizza Kitchen can do it why not an actual Thai restaurant? I don't think it really comes together but I enjoy it all the same.

- *U City Grill.* 6696 Enright, University City, MO 63130. Mon. 9 a.m.-7:30 p.m. Tues.-Fri. 8 a.m.-7:30 p.m. Sat. 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Korean in an American diner that also serves scrambled eggs and hamburgers. Very informal. Run by an elderly Korean couple. Tiny and cramped. Don't even think of going in a big group. My favorite is the Bibimbob. This restaurant would be a very strange choice for dinner.

### 4.3 Elsewhere.

This list is not exhaustive. I've restricted attention to restaurants that are, more or less, an easy drive from Washington University.

- *American Place.* 800 Washington Ave. St. Louis, MO 63101 Map It 314-418-5800. An American Place is open Tue. to Fri. 5 to 10 p.m. weeknights and 5 to 11 p.m. Sat. Indigo Lounge is open Mon. to Sat. from 5 p.m. to midnight.

The restaurant, which is used to be in Manhattan, is located in a cavernous room in a restored building downtown. The room is impressive but I find it impersonal. My meal ordered a la carte was OK. A second meal, from the tasting menu, was much better, perhaps as good as I've had in St. Louis. This is the place where four of us spent \$70 on water.

- *Balaban's.* 405 North Euclid, Central West End. 361-8085.

Contemporary. Upscale and somewhat formal. One of the original new contemporary restaurants in St. Louis. I've never been, because 10 years ago our real estate agent recommended it. It's probably fine, however. I'm listing it here because it is well known and in one of the restaurant hot spots.

- *Banh Mi So 1.* 4071 South Grand Blvd. St. Louis, MO. 63118. 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Mon.-Sun. 353-054.

Vietnamese. Informal. New, haven't been. Supposed to be very good.

- *Bar Italia.* 13 Maryland Plaza. Central West End. Open Friday and Saturday 11:30 a.m. - 10:30 p.m., Sunday 11:30 a.m. 361-7010.

Italian. Borderline upscale but informal. Used to be one of the more appealing Italian restaurants in St. Louis, but I have not been in years.

- *Black Thorn Pub and Pizza.* 3735 Wyoming. South St. Louis. 776-0534. 6PM-1:30AM.  
A bar with pizza. Haven't been but some St. Louis native friends swear to me that this is good stuff. Winner of the local independent paper's poll for best thick crust pizza in St. Louis. (Not to be confused with St. Louis pizza, which is offensive.) A high priority for my wife and me, but we need to find a babysitter first.
- *Broadway Oyster Bar.* 736 S. Broadway, Downtown St. Louis. Open Friday, Saturday, and Sunday 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 a.m. 621-8811.  
Cajun. Very informal (think "dive"). Get the barbecued shrimp, not as good as in New Orleans, but good all the same.
- *Cafe Manhattan.* 511 S. Hanley, Clayton. Open Friday and Saturday 11:00 a.m. - 11:00 p.m., Sunday 12:00 - 9:00 p.m. 863-5695.  
American: pizza, hamburgers, milk shakes. Very informal. Retro chic diner. A fun place.
- *Cafe Natasha.* 3200 S. Grand St. Louis, MO 63118. Sun -Thurs: 11:30 a.m. - 9 p.m. Fri & Sat: 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m. 314-771-3411  
Persian. Borderline upscale but informal. I haven't been here in years but I liked it the last time I was there.
- *Chez Leon* 4580 Laclede, Central West End. 361-1589.  
French. Upscale but informal. A good, but pricy, wine list. Some people swear by this place but my one experience was mediocre.
- *Crown Candy Kitchen.* 1401 St. Louis Avenue, North St. Louis. Open Friday and Saturday 10:30 a.m. - 10:00 p.m., Sunday 12:00 - 9:00 p.m. 621-9650.  
A true old fashioned ice cream and soda palace. Very informal. A St. Louis institution. Even highlighted in Bon Appetit. But located in an unsafe part of town. Have not been in years.
- *Cunetto's House of Pasta.* 5453 Magnolia at Southwest, the Hill. Open for lunch Monday-Friday 11-2, dinner Monday-Thursday 5-10, Friday and Saturday 5-11. 781-1135.  
Italian. Informal. Classic St. Louis Italian/American. A St. Louis tradition. Big portions. Expect to wait in line.
- *Dominic's Trattoria.* 200 South Brentwood Clayton, MO 63105. Lunch, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Mon.-Fri. Dinner, 5 p.m. - 10 p.m. Mon.- Thurs. and 5 - 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday Closed Sunday. 863-4567.

Italian. Downtown Clayton but not close to the other restaurants, which is why I have listed it under “elsewhere.” Old school Italian American but well prepared and pleasant with good service.

- *Duffs*. 392 North Euclid, Central West End. 11 to midnight.  
Contemporary. Upscale but informal. Like Balaban’s, which is close by, a restaurant that is (a) well known, (b) been around for a while, but (c) I have never visited. Not sure why. Probably fine. I’ve listed it because it is in a restaurant hot spot.
- *Eau Bistro*. 212 North Kingshighway, Central West End. In the Chase Plaza Hotel. 454-9000.  
Upscale and somewhat formal. Been twice recently and enjoyed both meals. Very good steak. Currently one of my favorite places.
- *Giovanni’s*. 5201 Shaw, the Hill. Open Friday and Saturday 5:30 - 11:00 p.m. Closed Sunday. 772-5958.  
Italian. Upscale and formal. A competitor for Tony’s. I haven’t been in years. Tends to get a business crowd. Trattoria Marcella is more my style.
- *Harvest*. 1059 S. Big Bend, Richmond Heights (a short cab ride from WU). Open Friday, Saturday, and Sunday 5:30 - 9:30 p.m. 645-3522.  
Contemporary. Upscale and somewhat formal. Relatively ambitious. Had a fabulous pork once, one of my best meals in St. Louis. Recent meals have been good but not spectacular. But one of the better restaurants in St. Louis. Very nice room.
- *Hodaks*. 2100 Gravois. Open Friday and Saturday 10:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m., Sunday 11:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m. 776-7292.  
Fried Chicken. Very informal. The coating for the chicken is hard and smooth. And the chicken comes with barbecue sauce, if you want. But it is nicely cooked. If you wanted to know where the St. Louis City police department eats, now you know. A St. Louis institution.
- *House of India*. 8501 Delmar at I-170 and Delmar. Open for lunch 11:20-2:30, dinner Monday-Friday 5-10, Sunday 5-9. 567-6850.  
Indian. Informal. I like it but what do I know? I’ve been told that it is inauthentic.
- *I Fratellini*. 7624 Wydown Blvd. Clayton, MO 63105. Mon.-Fri. 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Mon.-Thurs. 5:30-10 p.m. Fri. & Sat. 5-11 p.m. Closed Sun. 727-7901.  
Italian. Upscale. Very pretty room. Food is a bit heavy and oily. Haven’t been in several years. Reports indicate that it may have slipped.

- *In Soo*. 8423 Olive in University City. 997-7473. Lunch 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Mon., Wed., Thurs., Fri. Dinner: 5 p.m.-10 p.m. Mon.-Sat. 5 p.m.-9 p.m. Sun. Closed Tues

Chinese/Korean. Frequent winner of polls for best Chinese or best Asian. I've never understood the devotion of its admirers. It's OK.
- *Kemoll's Italian Restaurant*. 1 Metropolitan Square in Downtown St. Louis. Open Friday and Saturday 5:00 - 9:00 p.m., Sunday 5:00 - 8:30 p.m. 421-0555.

Italian. Upscale. Somewhat formal. Classic St. Louis Italian American and a St. Louis institution. Portions are gigantic, even by St. Louis standards. If you eat here you'll be really full. Early bird dinner (which you have to ask for explicitly), is a very good value. Have not been in years, however.
- *The King and I*. 3157 S. Grand. Open for lunch Friday 11:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m., Saturday and Sunday 12:00 - 3:00 p.m. Dinner Friday and Saturday 5:00 - 10:00 p.m., Sunday 5:00 - 9:30 p.m. 771-1777.

Thai. Very informal. Perennial poll winner for best Thai. It's fine but nothing to write home about.
- *King Louie's*. 3800 Chouteau, South St. Louis. 865-3662

Contemporary. Have not been recently. Used to be one of the best restaurants in St. Louis before its chef moved to Savor.
- *La Pizza*. 8137 Delmar, University City. 314-725-1230. Mon. 11 a.m.-8:30 p.m. Tues.-Thurs. 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Fri. & Sat. 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Closed Sun.

East Coast-style (as opposed to St. Louis style) thin crust pizza in a about as sterile a setting as one can image. It's great.
- *La Piazza*. 7401 Pershing, University City. 862-5224

Italian, informal. Food has been very uneven. Mussels were old. A risotto was very nice. Haven't been back recently.
- *Lu Lu's*. 8224 Olive in University City. 997-3108.

Chinese. A large and interesting menu for dinner. Very variable, unfortunately.
- *Mai Lee*. 8440 Delmar in University City. Open Friday, Saturday, and Sunday 11:00 a.m. - 11:00 p.m. 993-3754.

Vietnamese. Good, sometimes very good. Choose one of the dishes that you cook for yourself at your table. Don't even bother with the Chinese menu.

- *Mangia Italiano*. 3145 South Grand Blvd. St. Louis, MO 63118. Sun. 5-10 p.m. Mon.-Thurs. 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m. Fri. & Sat. 11:30 a.m.-10:30 p.m. Lunch Buffet: 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri. Bar open until 3 a.m. Every day. 664-8585.  
Italian. Informal. Have not been but has a good reputation.
- *Modesto*. 5257 Shaw. 772-8272.  
Tapas. A good place. Nothing I've had has knocked my socks off, but it has all been good. BARcelona or Remy's are also good, and more convenient, choices.
- *Momos*. 630 North & South St. Louis, MO 63130. Mon.-Fri. 11 a.m.-11 p.m. Sat. & Sun. 5-11 p.m. 863-3511.  
Mezes. A sister to BARcelona. Both are good. The room in BARcelona is prettier, and BARcelona is more conveniently located (Momos is in U City but you'll need a short cab ride to get to it). Service at Momos is better. At 8pm or so a belly dancer appears; I usually try to leave by then. Not all the dishes are great; an octopus dish once was off.
- *Monarch*. 7401 Manchester Rd. Maplewood, MO 63143. Lunch Tues.-Fri. 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Dinner Mon.-Sat. 5-10:30 p.m. 644-3995  
American contemporary. Upscale. The Bistro is less formal. Thanks to a mention in Bon Appetit, one of the better known St. Louis restaurants outside of St. Louis. When it's good it's very good, when it's not good it's OK. Systematically undercook their vegetables. But I'd rank it roughly on a par with Harvest.
- *Nobu*. 8643 Olive Street, University City. Open M-Tu-Th-F lunch and dinner, Sat-Sun dinner. 997-2303.  
Japanese. Informal. *The Nobu?* Depends on what you mean by "the." This is the only Nobu I know of that's located in a converted International House of Pancakes. Perhaps not what you meant? Most people prefer this to Seki but it's an "angels on the head of a pin" comparison for me (and in general I find arguments about sushi tiresome). Both are OK and Seki is closer.
- *O'Connell's Pub*. 4652 Shaw, St. Louis, the Hill.  
Irish pub. Year after year, vies in the polls with Blueberry Hill for best burger in St. Louis. The O'Connell's version is bigger. A nice place but Blueberry Hill is easier to get to.
- *Pho Grand*. 3191 S. Grand, South St. Louis. 664-7435.  
Vietnamese. Informal. The best known of several Vietnamese restaurants in this area of South Grand. You might want to just check out the area and drop

into whatever restaurant appeals to you. Many are just hole in the walls but Pho Grand is actually quite handsome.

- *Pueblo Solis*. 5127 Hampton Ave., South St. Louis. Open Friday and Saturday 5:00 - 11:00 p.m., Sunday 5:00 - 9:00 p.m. 351-9000.

Mexican. Informal. The menu is dominated by the usual enchiladas and so on but the specials are another matter. Small and very crowded. Make a reservation or expect to wait. Used to be one of the best Mexican restaurant in St. Louis but I haven't been in years.

- *Royal Chinese Barbecue*. 8406 Olive, University City. 991-1888.

Chinese. Very informal. Roast pork and roast ducks hang in the window. Quality is variable. Look for the board of specials, which are in English. Ask them to hold off on the MSG or you'll be drinking water by the pitcher for the rest of the night

- *Sansui*. 9983 Manchester Rd. St. Louis, MO 63122. 314-966-7786. 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. & 5-9 p.m. Mon.-Thurs. 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. & 5-10 p.m. Fri. 5-10 p.m. Sat. Closed on Sundays.

Japanese. Informal. Along with Sekisui, one of the best Japanese restaurants in St. Louis. There is a sister restaurant, with the same name, in the Central West End; this one on Manchester is the one to go to.

- *Savor*. 4356 Lindell Blvd. St. Louis, MO 63108. 314-531-0220. Tues.-Fri. 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Mon.-Thurs. 5-11 p.m. Fri. & Sat. 5 p.m.-12 a.m. Bar open 5 p.m.-1:30 a.m.

World cooking in a remodeled funeral home. The chef is the former head of King Louie's, which some thought was the best restaurant in St. Louis. Savor is – OK. The menu is silly, with four sub menus devoted to different parts of the world. The quality of the dishes is variable. Savor isn't bad, but it doesn't live up to the huge expectations that some had for it.

- *Schlafty Tap Room*. 2100 Locust St., Downtown St. Louis. Friday and Saturday, 11:00 a.m. -12:00 a.m. Sunday 12:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. 241-2337.

Mainly Northern European bar or pub food. Informal. Specialty is the fish and chips. The sticky toffy pudding is a good desert. Some of the other dishes less successful and the fries could be much better (but you get lots of them ...). Check the chalkboard for the beers of the day. Yes, it's the same Schlafty family as Phillis. But you can't choose your relatives. And yes, every city has brewpubs, but this is a good one, even so.

- *Schlafty Bottleworks*. 7260 Southwest, Maplewood. Friday and Saturday, 4:00 p.m. -12:00 p.m.

Barbecue and the like. Very informal.

- *Serendipity*. 8130 Big Bend Blvd. St. Louis, MO 63119. 314-962-2700. Tues.-Thurs. 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Fri. & Sat. 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Sun. 12-9 p.m. Closed Mon.

In Webster Groves. The best ice cream place in St. Louis, made on premises by the owner. Get the Gold Coast Chocolate. Sold by weight.

- *Ted Drewes*. 3726 Chippewa, South St. Louis. 481-2652.

St. Louis Style frozen custard. A St. Louis tradition, in its original building along what used to be Route 66.

- *Tony's*. 410 Market Street, Downtown St. Louis. Open Friday and Saturday 5:00 - 11:30 p.m., Closed Sunday. 231-7007.

Italian. Upscale and formal. Perennial winner of best restaurant in St. Louis polls. Elaborate service and highly competent old school preparation.

- *Trattoria Marcella*. 3600 Watson Road, South St. Louis. Open Friday and Saturday 5:00 - 11:00 p.m. Closed Sunday. 352-7706.

Italian. Upscale but informal. Was one of the better Italian restaurants in St. Louis, but recent reports of problems. I have not been in several years.

- *Zoë Pan Asian Cafe*. 4753 McPherson Ave in the Central West End. Open Friday Lunch 11:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday Dinner 5:00 - 11:00 p.m. Sunday 5:00 - 10:00 p.m. 361-0013

Asian fusion. Informal. Closer to Vietnamese than anything else. Not everything works but fun. One of the noisiest restaurants in St. Louis.