



## **Excerpted Reviews from *AtNight Chicago***

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**By Craig McGuire**

### **Alcock's Inn**

411 S Wells Street  
A W Van Buren Street  
312.922.1778

### **Alumni Club**

150 N Michigan Avenue  
@ E Randolph Street  
312.345.1400

### **Andy's Lounge**

11 E Hubbard Street  
@ N State Street  
312.642.6805

### **Aura**

640 N Dearborn St.  
(312) 266-2114

This funky little club nestled off Dearborn Street continues to flourish beneath the loud neon glare of neighbor Excalibur. Inhabiting the space formerly occupied by the Dome Room, Aura's vibe draws a mix of trendy club kids and chic hipsters. However, the occasional packs of grip-and-grinning tourists have been known to sneak in. With three levels, including two floors of balconies, Aura gives you plenty of room to wander. The first, and most spacious floor, includes a large dance floor complete with matching DJ booth. Dark booths, plush seats and warm-glowing fireplaces beckon you from the second, more laid-back floor. Don't get too comfortable. Sooner or later you know you'll have to put in an appearance up on the third floor. No, really--that's where the restrooms are. Don't worry, the retro-style overstuffed couches provide a great backdrop for some Chicago-style lounging.

### **Berghoff**

**17 W Adams Street**  
**@ S State Street**  
**312.427.3170**

Berghoff is a rich and hearty slice of old-style Chicago. Located in the heart of the Loop, this family-owned and operated institution was established way back in 1898 by German immigrant and brewmeister Herman Berghoff. Surviving the dark days of Prohibition, Berghoff obtained Illinois' Liquor License NO.1 in 1933 (which they've got on display) and the rest is history. Today, you'll find no better spot in all of Chicago to enjoy a lazy evening over sauerbraten and beer. The beers may no longer cost a nickel, but the prices are still reasonable. They've opened another location in O'Hare International Airport-but we'll stick with the original.

### **Big Chicks**

5024 N Sheridan Rd, Chicago  
**(773) 728-5511**



One of the most popular gay and lesbian bars in all of Chicago, Big Chicks is a bar with nothing to prove. From the friendly management, to the even friendlier patrons, you won't find much of an attitude here. Owner Michelle Fire has crafted a relaxed atmosphere, that's also high-energy--not to mention inclusive. Make sure to take a moment to review Big Chick's most famous feature--countless paintings, drawings and photos of big chicks from the owner's private collection. But it's the long, spacious room next to the main bar area where you'll find most of the action weekends on the crowded dance floor, with a Top 40 soundtrack spun by a local DJ. There's a beer garden out back, popular in the summertime--especially during the Sunday afternoon free Bar-B-Qs. The rest of the time there's no food available, so you might want to stop for a bit first. Free parking is also available.

**Big Downtown** (Palmer House Hilton)  
124 S Wabash Avenue  
@ E Adams Street  
312.917.7399

**The Billy Goat Tavern**  
430 N Michigan Avenue  
@ E Hubbard Street  
312.222.1525

You just don't get any more Chicago than The Billy Goat Tavern. Legend has it that original owner Sam Siannis jinxed the Chicago Cubs forever-more in 1945 when he wasn't allowed to bring his goat with him into Wrigley Field for a World Series game. This spot was later immortalized on Saturday Night Live for the "Cheezborger, cheezborger, cheezborger" skit. With the Times Building located just to the west, and the Tribune Tower east, it's only natural this spot became neutral stomping ground for reporters and editors from the Chicago Tribune and the Chicago Sun-Times. The aged walls are spattered with countless photos and reprinted columns. There's even a "Wall of Fame" for deceased writers--though famed columnist Mike Royko obviously commands his own, separate wall. Relocated from Madison Avenue in 1963, the Goat draws a steady crowd of grizzled journalists, anxious white-collar types and plenty of tourists. But, the burgers and the conversation alone make it worth the visit.

**Biology Bar**  
1520 N Fremont St.  
(312) 266-1234

**Boss Bar**  
420 N Clark Street  
@ W Hubbard Street  
312.527.1203

**Brehon Pub**  
731 N Wells Street  
@ W Superior Street  
312.642.1071

**Buddy Guy's Legends**  
754 S Wabash Avenue



@ E Balbo Drive  
312.427.0333

**Butch McGuire's**  
20 W Division Street  
@ N State Street  
312.337.9080

**Cactus**  
404 S Wells Street  
@ W Van Buren Street  
312.922.3830

**Cardozo's Pub**  
170 W Washington Street  
@ N LaSalle Street  
312.236.1573

**Circus**  
901 W Weed St.  
**(312) 266-1200**

Never had the nerve to run away and join the circus? Well then, close your eyes and imagine you followed through at this popular Weed Street club. Though there's a definite three-ring motif, including an immense ceramic clown face and a colorful cast of fire-breathers, stilt-strollers and beautiful women spinning down from the ceiling, the Circus vibe isn't over-powering at all. Not only does the young hip crowd look great, but they know it, adding a certain subtle pretentious subtext to the party. The first room in this 18,000 square foot club is outfitted for lounging, but you'll want to be on the crowded dance floor next door when beats come down. There's a comfortable VIP section located in the back next to the DJ booth, that is, if you've got the pull. Located close to Joe's and Crobar, there's ample opportunity for club crawling.

**Crobar**  
1543 N Kingsbury St , Chicago  
**(312) 413-7000**

If you were waiting for an excuse to dye your hair, get that rude tattoo and pierce those nipples, have we found the place for you--just don't forget the leather. Though slightly less sinister than it seemed a while ago (a victim of its own mainstream popularity), Crobar still offers quite the dark clubland adventure. For ambiance, this spot offers everything it should. There's the exceptional sound and lighting systems bathing the crowds in a dark A/V explosion. Crobar also features a fully functional go-go cage, a catwalk and mock stained-glass windows. As for the sounds, house music dominates Medusa Thursdays. But, the scene is really much more effective during Saturday's Queens of the Nightlife party where Psycho Bitch and sidekick Teri Bristol spin heavy industrial tracks. The Sunday Glee Club party is also a fan favorite. (For the nightlife neophyte, that's Glee as in Gay and Lesbian.) This spot really crowds up by midnight. There is a cover charge (up to \$15), but if you plan to be a regular, ask at the door about the VIP passes.

**Davenport's**

1383 N Milwaukee  
773.278.1830

**Dragon Room Night Club**

809 W Evergreen Ave  
312.751.2900

Enter the Dragon...Room by light of Tiki-torch, and you're immediately met with a stylish space saturated with a distinctly Asian vibe. This 9,000 square foot space inhabits the spot that once held the Aftermath, and later The Tunnel. This time around, it's a more upscale serious experience, with plenty of amenities tossed in (They actually put a full-service bar in the ladies restroom). The Asian motif dominates the space, from the sprinkling about of symbols and rice paper lamps, to the abundant use of red. The main room of this three-story club is divided into three spaces including multiple bar areas, a usually crowded dance floor, and an elevated DJ booth. There are plenty of candle-lit booths and tables to sample assort offerings from the sushi/sake bar. They've even got their own in-house sushi chef to roll you whatever you'd like. Upstairs features an exclusive VIP section, and downstairs offers a more relaxed lounge atmosphere. The only regularly scheduled event so far has been Dragon Thursdays, featuring reggae and drum and bass sounds. Fridays and Saturdays, DJs spin an assortment of house, garage, disco dub and speed garage.

**Dublin's**

1050 N State Street  
@ W Maple Street  
312.266.6340

**ESPN Zone**

43 E Ohio Street  
@ N Dearborn Street  
312.644.3776

**Fado**

100 W Grand Avenue  
@ N Clark Street  
312.836.0066

**Fahrenheit**

695 N Milwaukee Avenue  
@ W Grand Avenue  
312.733.7400

**Fifth Floor**

440 N Halsted St , Chicago  
312.226.4555

**Girlbar**



2625 N Halsted St , Chicago  
773.871.4210

**Govnor's Pub**

207 N State Street  
@ E Lake Street  
312.236.3696

**Green Door Tavern**

678 N Orleans Street  
@ W Huron Street  
312.664.5496

This two-story wooden structure, leaning about five degrees, was built in 1871, the year after the Great Chicago Fire. They first started serving libations at this landmark, which still boasts some of the original fixtures, back in 1921. The décor and ambiance exudes old Chicago, but in a more comfortable and charming manner than the usual cheap and cheesy tourist trap. There are countless little Chicago knick-knacks posted about for you to ponder as you enjoy their decent selection of brews on draught, and the tasty and reasonably priced menu (including no less than 20 varieties of hamburgers). This spot attracts a heavy after-work Loop crowd, young professionals and the occasional celebrity.

**Harry's Velvet Room**

56 W Illinois Street  
@ North Dearborn Street  
312.527.5600

**Hotsie Totsie Yacht Club & Bait Shop**

8 E Division Street  
@ N State Street  
312.337.9128

**Iggy's**

700 N Milwaukee Avenue  
312.829.4449

**Jilly's Bistro & Jilly's Retro Club**

1007 N Rush Street  
@ W Oak Street  
312.664.1001

Jill's Bistro and its neighboring club both have a very definite smoky retro-Rat Packin vibe to them. So grab your girl, a double Jack Daniels, shove a cigar in your mouth and you're all set. The upscale eatery emits an air of Chicago sophistication, which explains the frequent visits from celebs, sports stars and Chi-town sophisticates. The menu, consisting mostly of salads, steaks, chops, and pastas, is well executed. Nearby at the Retro Club, you'll time warp into a circa 1970 Las Vegas underground discotheque. Featured in *Cigar Aficionado* magazine, Jilly's offers an



impressive selection of quality, hand-rolled cigars in its humidor. The club includes a well-stocked bar, a large lighted dance floor, room for lounging and a VIP section in the back. Proper attire is required, and it's best to call ahead to secure reservations for dinner.

**Kingston Mines**

2548 N Halsted Street  
773.472.2031

**Kitty O'Shea's** (Chicago Hilton & Towers)

720 S Michigan Avenue  
@ E Balbo Drive  
312.922.4400

**Lizzie McNeil's**

400 N McClurg Street  
@E North Water Street  
312.467.1992

**Metropole** (Fairmont Hotel)

200 N Columbus Drive  
@ East Lake Street  
312.565.7444

**Miller's Pub**

134 S Wabash Avenue  
@ E Adams Street  
312.645.5377

**Narcisse**

710 N Clark Street  
312.787.2675

**Original Mother's Night Club**

26 W Division Street  
312.642.7251

**PJ Clarkes**

1204 N State Street  
@ W Division Street  
312.664.1650

**Pump Room** (Omni Ambassador East Hotel)

1301 N State Street



@ E Goethe Street  
312.266.0360

During the 40s and 50s, dining at “Booth 1” in Chicago’s Pump Room was usually reserved for only A-list celebrities and the crustiest of the upper crust. This Chicago restaurant fell from grace following the 60s, eventually bottoming out in the early 90s. At the time, new owners swooped in, including chef Martial Noguier, pouring \$2 million in for a major renovation project. The spot later re-opened in the summer of 1998. Though not as exclusive as its predecessor, this reincarnation is still a premium dining experiences on Chicago’s competitive restaurant scene. The décor and ambiance is as elegant as the attractive clientele—which includes the occasional celebrity. The magnificent crystal chandeliers hanging over the sunken dining room accentuate the regal blue carpet, with its gold fleur-de-lis. The traditional fine American and European menu succeeds, as does the impressive wine list. And, the service wasn’t nearly as bad as we heard it would be. They offer live music in the evenings and on Sunday brunch, ranging from soft piano to Jazz. The prices, while nothing to sneeze at, are very reasonable considering the setting.

**Red Dog**  
1958 W North Avenue  
773.278.1009

**Redhead Piano Bar**  
16 W Ontario Street  
@ N State Street  
312.640.1000

**Rive Gauche**  
306 N Halsted Street  
312.738.9971

**Rock Bottom Restaurant & Brewery**  
1 W Grand Avenue  
312.755.9339

On most early evenings, this laid-back watering hole is a living, breathing beer commercial, complete with a colorful cast of friendly 20-something professionals and local characters winding down and gearing up. And, just wait until Spring when they open up the rooftop deck overlooking River North. Like the bar, the spacious restaurant downstairs, offering rather good pub fare, has a very strong post-collegiate ambiance. But it’s as a brewery that Rock Bottom truly excels. Order a pint of one of the many distinctive handcrafted beers ranging from bitter to sweet to stout. We suggest the reasonably priced \$5.55 sampler including seven large shots. Hitting Rock Bottom has never felt this good.

**[Editor’s Note: Check the price of the sampler.]**

**Roscoe's**  
3356 N Halsted Street  
773.281.3355

**Signature Lounge**  
875 N Michigan Avenue



312.787.7230

With that special someone on your arm, ascend to this lofty lounge located in Chicago's John Hancock Building. Once inside, fall into a comfortable window-side booth before one of the most spectacular views Chicago has to offer. Surprisingly, this spot draws less out-of-towners than you'd think (at least they looked like Chi-town natives to us). Inhabiting the 96<sup>th</sup> floor of the world's seventh-tallest building, Signature offers breathtaking views from the north, south and west sides. The east side facing the lake is part of the restaurant on the 95th floor. The subtle blackened décor succeeds in not detracting from the stunning eagle-eye views, available through floor-to-ceiling windows. This lounge provides the ideal backdrop for any important late-afternoon/early evening rendezvous, especially the ones involving questions or apologies. The spot becomes a bit crowded on weekends, and the drinks and light fare don't come cheap, but what did you expect? Besides, they don't charge a cover.

### **Spin**

800 W Belmont Avenue  
773.327.7711

### **Streeters Tavern (Hotel St. Benedict Flats)**

50 E Chicago Avenue  
@ N Wabash Street  
312.944.5206

### **Thurston's**

1248 W George Street  
@ N Lincoln Avenue  
773.472.6900

### **Star Bar/Pops for Champagne**

2934 N Sheffield Avenue  
@ W Oakdale Avenue  
773.472.7272

### **Underground Wonder Bar**

10 E Walton Street  
@ N State Street  
312.266.7761

The Underground Wonder Bar has become one of the best places for late-night live jazz and blues, which says a lot considering Chicago's reputation. Nestled in the former home of the Domino Lounge, this small bar/performance space has grown in popularity over the past few years, drawing both serious musicians and listeners alike. The success has everything to do with the dedication and Chi-town charisma of co-owner and frequent performer Lonie Walker. This intimate dimly candlelit lounge is literally one floor underground, enhancing the hidden-treasure vibe. Note: When Lonie Walker unexpectedly shouts "Wonder Bar," act like you're down and throw your hands up with the rest of the patrons and make a "W."



**Zebra Lounge**  
1220 N State Street  
@ W Division Street  
312.642.5140