

Best of Seattle: Food & Drink Winners

As chosen by our readers.

By SW Staff Tue., Aug 4 2015 at 07:59PM

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Best New Restaurant

Lark

Diners were practically salivating with anticipation as Lark chef John Sundstrom prepared to open his new and expanded location on Capitol Hill last winter. As we wrote back in March, “From the moment you walk into the soaring space... you know you’re in for something special.” Indeed Sundstrom’s laser-like focus on every element of a plate is quite extraordinary. The menu is contemporary Pacific Northwest in tone, serving dishes like lamb, beef, sweetbreads, and duck in thoughtful preparations. The pasta here too is exceptional, a favorite the agnolotti with smoked ricotta, rosemary, dates, and brown butter. *952 E. Seneca St., 323-5275, larkseattle.com*

Runner-Up: Stateside

Best Chef

Renee Erickson

Read our long-distance conversation with the restaurateur responsible for The Walrus and the Carpenter [here](#).

Runner-Up: Tom Douglas

Best BBQ

Jack’s BBQ

In a city where barbecue joints don’t tend to stick to regional styles, Jack’s large, no-frills space stands out as a Central Texan tribute, on a lonely strip of Airport Way in Georgetown. The key differentiator is its smoked meats (brisket, pork ribs, sausage, pulled pork, half chicken) with a salt-and-pepper dry rub and no sauce (unless requested). The meats come in a variety of combos, or can be ordered a la carte. Pickles and white bread come with everything, but you’ll want to add sides like Texas Caviar (black-eyed-pea salad), ranch beans, and remoulade cole slaw, among others. Save room for 1996 Texas State Fair



The Walrus and the Carpenter

Now Trending



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Is Sending a



The Tough



Can a Persi...
Put Maple V



Discover the Jo

Enroll for Fall!



Champion Pecan Pie. 3924 Airport Way S., 467-4038; jacksbbq.com

Runner-Up: Bitterroot

Best Mexican

Poquitos

All tile and curly wrought iron, Poquitos does not possess the homey feel one might expect from a restaurant serving the city's best Mexican food. The best judge, though, of what's really important about a Mexican restaurant is the food, and on a recent visit with an El Paso native, hugely picky about his cuisine, we put it to the test. Our guest pronounced the pork carnitas "pretty good," which counts as a manic, ecstatic rave, and we both went ape over the flan: rich, dense, uncommonly creamy, served with pistachio brittle and thick whipped cream. 1000 E. Pike St., 453-4216, vivapoquitos.com

Runner-Up: El Camion

Best Italian

The Pink Door

Only a bubblegum-pink door marks this restaurant's entrance. Delivering superb Italian cuisine with dishes like Dungeness crab risotto or housemade lasagna, what The Pink Door has perfected is the art of the meal. Rosy lighting sets a romantic aura for the journey down the steep flight of stairs into the dining room. Inside, a fortune teller predicts diners' futures while a trapeze act dangles above. Outside, a patio allows diners to eat with Puget Sound as the backdrop—all part of the whimsy that sets this Italian spot apart. 1919 Post Alley, 443-3241, thepinkdoor.net

Runner-Up: Machiavelli

Best Dim Sum

Din Tai Fung

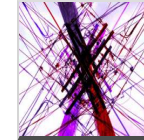
Dim sum was a rather ho-hum affair in the Seattle area until this much-lauded Taiwanese chain came to Bellevue Square Mall in 2010, followed by another outpost at University Village at the very end of 2013. Both locations draw huge weekend crowds, in particular for their xiaolongbao (soup dumplings) that come with a basic pork filling. But dim sum is all about variety, so no need to stick with just these—they have plenty of other offerings including dumplings, noodles, buns, rice cakes, and soups. And while you're pining for your table, watch workers make the dumplings through a window. University Village Shopping Center, 2621 N.E. 46th St., 525-0958; Lincoln Square, 700 Bellevue Way N.E. #280, Bellevue, 425-698-1095. dintaifungusa.com

Runner-Up: Jade Garden

Best Ramen

Samurai Noodle

This popular ramen house offers a rich menu of superior savory broth and noodle combinations (including pork, chicken, and miso-based soups). Try a dipping ramen here: cold-rinsed noodles with a side of broth or any of dozens of toppings, like "hell-fire" sauce or naruto, a cured fish slice



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Uwajimaya, I

Aloha! Today we kick off Hawaii
specials in all departments! Join
(Uwajimaya | Week



that's white with a pink swirl in the middle that pays homage to the whirlpools off the coast of Naruto, Japan. *Multiple locations, samurainoodle.com*

Runner-Up: Boom Noodle

Best Thai

Araya's Place

We know what you're thinking. There's no such thing as a gourmet all-you-can-eat Thai buffet anywhere. Enter Araya's Place on University Way, which boasts a robust 11:30 a.m.–3 p.m. (vegan) buffet complete with crispy spring rolls, luscious pad thai, a crisp salad bar, and more for \$10.99. And this is no sad display. The peanut sauce is free from errant debris, the spring rolls are fresh, and the pad thai is steaming. And if you're not in the mood for its buffet, Araya's also has a full menu to choose from. We suggest the rich, brown-gravy rad na with steamed vegetables and toothsome wide rice noodles (\$10.95). *5240 University Way N.E., 524-4332, arayasplace.com*

Runner-Up: Thai Tom

Best Sushi

Momiji

At first you might miss this spot, marked only with a small Japanese maple leaf on the front, in an inconspicuous building on 12th Avenue, neighboring Eltana. This Capitol Hill favorite has a penchant for James Bond-themed rolls, beautiful kaiseki dishes, and a line out the door at 7 p.m. on any given night, which betrays its secrecy. Its best-kept secret, though, is the Japanese garden in the back. On a drizzly date night with some miso soup and sashimi omakase (chef's choice), nuzzled up to the window of the garden, it can't be beat. *1522 12th Ave., 457-4068, momijiseattle.com*

Runner-Up: Mashiko

Best Pho

Than Brothers

Read about our love for the Than Brothers' [here](#).

Runner-Up: Pho Bac

Best Seafood

The Walrus and the Carpenter

Oddly, Seattle's oyster-bar culture didn't really take off until the past few years, and credit frequently goes to Renee Erickson's The Walrus and the Carpenter for kicking it off in a big way. (Check out our Q&A with Erickson, voted Best Chef, on page 31.) At the tiny Ballard Avenue spot that once housed a marine-supply shop, constantly revolving obscure local oysters on the half-shell marry ingeniously with Erickson's no-frills, casual interpretation of French food with Pacific Northwest ingredients. Perhaps the first place in town to command two-hour waits, it's officially become a Seattle institution. *4739 Ballard Ave. N.W., 395-9227, thewalrusbar.com*

Runner-Up: Salty's on Alki



Flyerboard



Best Vegetarian

Café Flora

As more vegetarian and vegan options populate Seattle's dining scene, Café Flora in sleepy Madison Valley continues to charm. Regulars tout items like yam fries and avocado toast, as well as an elegant menu that changes with the seasons (beet gnocchi with pesto and walnut chevre or Vietnamese rice crepes with baby bok choy, marinated tofu, carrot-raisin salad, curry sauce, and peanuts.) The pizzas also get accolades, with toppings like squash blossoms and roasted pineapple. Desserts are surprisingly delicious too. Who would guess that their vegan coconut cake is one of the best in town? *2901 E. Madison St., 325-9100, cafe flora.com*

Runner-Up: Wayward Vegan Cafe

Best 24-Hour Eats

The Five Point Cafe

Read about the folks that hang out at the Five Point at the witching hour [here](#).

Runner-Up: Lost Lake

Best Kid-Friendly Restaurant

Tutta Bella

Tutta Bella shows how effortless being kid-friendly can be. Forget kids' menus (they don't have them), play areas (who can afford the space in Seattle?), and waiters dressed like pirates or train conductors (we've seen it!). All you really need is food the whole family can enjoy, an atmosphere laid-back enough that a crying kid won't be a huge embarrassment, and a big-ass wood-fired oven to distract the kiddos when they get bored. That the food is actually enjoyable for the people paying the bill is a huge plus. Another bonus? They have Wikki Stix. If you don't know what those are, we question why you're even reading this blurb. *Multiple locations, tuttabella.com*

Runner-Up: Skillet Diner

Best Pizza

Pagliacci

Let's talk about the Agog Primo. You got your mushrooms from Ostrom's down by Olympia; you got your artisanal goat cheese up from Sonoma, Calif.; then there are the kalamata olives, the fontina, the mozzarella, the parsley. And the roasted garlic. You can't forget about the garlic. Garlic makes the Agog Primo. Plus the other stuff. That goat cheese is from the first goat-cheese maker in the U.S. Goat cheese before it was goat cheese. This is perfection in a pizza. *24 locations, with famously amazing delivery. pagliacci.com.*

Runner-Up: Serious Pie

Best Sandwich

The Honey Hole

Read about the story behind this sandwich shop's name [here](#).

Runner-Up: Salumi



Best Hot Dog

Po Dog

So the winner of this category is Po Dog. Which is awkward because Po Dog closed in early July, after our polling opened. No problem, we thought. We'll just give the award to the runner-up, dear-to-our-heart Cyber Dogs. No dice: It closed on July 1. Well, shit. Where are you supposed to get a hot dog in this town? In our quest for a more precious duck egg or smoother foie gras, did we forget about the humble street meat? Don't freak out yet. You can still drunk-maul a dog outside Chop Suey, and Occidental by the stadiums is rife with options. Or if you find yourself in Ballard, there's always Dante's Inferno Dog, which received our Best of Seattle staff pick in 2012 and which the Reader Poll this year placed third—which is to say, first. *Outside King's Hardware, 5225 Ballard Ave. N.W., 11 p.m.– 2 a.m. Fri.–Sat. 283-DOGS, dantesinfernodogs.com*

Best Burger

Red Mill

Read about Red Mill's bacon stack [here](#).

Runner-Up: *Li'l Woody's*

Best Food Cart

No Bones About It

Food trucks with vegan fare feel oxymoronic; we tend to associate the former with pork-filled tacos, heaping plates of barbecue, and other carnivorous delights. But perhaps it should come as no surprise that in Seattle a vegan food truck would take first place among our readers. Based in Ballard, No Bones About It can most often be found parked in front of the neighborhood's breweries, as well as at places like Chuck's Hop Shop. Conversely, the truck can be found at Trupanion pet insurance, keeping with the owners' commitment to animal-welfare groups. A portion of proceeds of its sales for bites like crispy cauliflower wings and coconut buffalo seitan wraps go to nonprofits such as the Seattle Animal Shelter and the Seattle Humane Society. So hold the cheese and feel good about supporting cuddly critters. *Nobonestruck.com*

Runner-Up: *Marination Mobile*

Best Ice Cream

Molly Moon's

While to Molly Moon's adoring legions of fans, its secret is no secret at all—dishing up consistently fantastic ice cream—the shop has always had an environmental and social ethic that makes it a particularly fitting cornerstone of Seattle commerce. To cite just a few examples: The company sources ingredients locally, and organically if possible. Founder and CEO Molly Moon Neitzel began offering paid sick leave before the city began requiring it. And she has always had an optimistic word to share about Seattle's minimum-wage increase, committing to upping the company minimum wage to \$15 an hour ahead of schedule. There are many reasons to feel guilty about eating ice cream. But Molly Moon's cuts down on them considerably. *Multiple locations, mollymoonicecream.com*

Runner-Up: Full Tilt

Best Chocolatier

Theo Chocolate

Read the little-known history of Theo Chocolate's founders [here](#).

Runner-Up: Fran's Chocolate

Best Patio

Salty's on Alki

Although Seattle is surrounded by water, there actually aren't as many restaurants with outdoor seating *and* a view as one would expect. But over at Alki Beach in West Seattle, Salty's is a seafood destination to flock to for Elliott Bay and Seattle-skyline eye candy, particularly in summer when its waterfront patio comes alive. While it's a tourist favorite, locals love it too, as evidenced by its win here. From brunch to happy hour to dinner, these coveted seats let you enjoy the full glory of a perfect Seattle August as you dine on items like blackened-salmon Caesar salad, or Manila clams with hazelnut pesto and crispy pork belly. *1936 Harbor Ave. S.W., 937-1600, saltys.com*

Runner-Up: Ray's Boathouse

Best Brunch

Wayward Vegan Cafe

You might think it'd be hard to get a strong customer base if your restaurant name has the word "vegan" in it, but Wayward Vegan Café has tons of regulars and all the treats to entice diners, including a brunch with dozens of options fit for the choosiest. Your stomach will growl at the sight of Belgian-style waffles (\$9.50) with fried "chiggen" (a breaded faux-chicken signature dish) or the biscuit breakfast with "cheezy" Mexican-spiced tofu with hash browns and a side of cilantro-lime sour cream (\$9). WVC has all the regular comforts, just with a meatless twist. *801 N.E. 65th St., 524-0204, waywardvegancafe.com*

Runner-Up: Portage Bay Cafe

Best Coffee House &

Best Coffee Roaster

Caffe Vita

When *Seattle Weekly* moved to Pioneer Square, we became a quick study in what the funky spaces around Occidental Park had to offer, and set about firming up our International District geography. So it took us longer than it should have to discover what's become one of our favorite near-the-office spot: The Caffe Vita in the no-man's-land that is Prefontaine and Washington. The coffee is what you expect—fantastic—but the smart beer choices and wood-fired pizza oven operated by Pizza Napolitano make this corner space a gem. *Multiple locations, 652-8331, caffevita.com*

Runners-Up: Vivace (house), Lighthouse Roasters (roaster)

Best Donut

Top Pot Donuts

Top Pot has grown tremendously since its creation in 2002, and while it's no Voodoo Doughnut, it is Seattle's most beloved. Bury your face in a soft, fluffy feather boa: a white cake doughnut topped with pink frosting and feathered in coconut shavings. Pair this with a rich, woody cup of cold brew. For best results, come in early and nab a doughnut while it's still warm and fresh. *2124 Fifth Ave., 728-1966, and other locations, toppotdoughnuts.com*

Runner-Up: Mighty-O Donuts

Best Bloody Mary

Sam's Tavern

A bloody mary absolutely qualifies as a meal, and Sam's "Bakon Bloody Masterpiece" is a meal and a half. It's never short on accompaniments, with celery, pickles, pickled asparagus, cheese cubes, li'l smokies, and a mini-burger on a stick. Located on the Pike-Pine corridor, Sam's is a packed, boozy bar by night and a quaint burger spot by day. Bring your brunch cult to worship at its Bloody Mary altar. *1024 E. Pike St., 397-3344, samstavernseattle.com*

Runner-Up: Hattie's Hat

Best Distillery

Sun Liquors

Its union of distillery and bar goes a long way in explaining why Sun Liquor earned this honor. While other local distilleries rely on area bars to utilize and promote their spirits, Sun Liquor is able to seamlessly integrate them into their two Capitol Hill locations, putting fan favorites like Hedge Trimmer and Gun Club (both gins) to use in a broad range of cocktails. Seeing the staff at work also inspires legions of would-be home bartenders to play around with their own concoctions. *607 Summit Ave. E, 860-1130; 512 E. Pike St., 720 1600, sunliquor.com*

Runner-Up: Woodinville Distillery

Best Winery

Chateau Ste. Michelle

Read about Chateau Ste. Michelle's influential history [here](#).

Runner-Up: Robert Ramsay Cellars

Best Brewery

Georgetown Brewing Company

There are really two Georgetown Brewing Companies, and they're both great. The first is the ubiquitous one, the one that ensures that even the skimpiest Seattle beer lists have a cool, crisp Manny's on tap for when all else fails. The other Georgetown is found in the tap room on Denver Avenue South. There you'll find a full roster of small-batch brews that exemplify Georgetown's craft-beer bona fides. Among the favorites: the Lovely Reida, an imperial IPA boasting, gulp, 100 IBUs. *Georgetown Brewing Company. 5200 Denver Ave. S., 766-8055, georgetownbeer.com. Monday–Friday.*

Runner-Up : Fremont Brewing

Best Bottle Shop

Chuck's Hop Shop

Read about Chuck's four favorite labels [here](#).

Runner-Up: Beer Junction

Best Bar

Twilight Exit

Some of us are old enough to remember when the Twilight was on Madison, with playing cards stuck to the ceiling, pickled eggs behind the bar, and stories of Jimi Hendrix and his family circulating the air. Well, the bar has since moved to Cherry Street and gotten gussied up, and it's somehow more welcoming. With its darkened wood booths and arcade-style video games, the Central District gem has Seattle history permeating through its refurbished walls. *2514 E. Cherry St., 324-7462, twilightexit.com*

Runner-Up: Montana

Best New Bar

Damn the Weather

Since its opening, Damn the Weather has put the focus on the bar—and given the prodigious talent behind said bar, that's proven to be a wise choice. The specialty cocktails, well-chosen and creative, explore a range of spirits not often seen on most lists. Even more, though, Damn the Weather aims to help reclaim Seattle's oldest neighborhood and move it into the modern day. *116 First Ave. S., 946-1283, damntheweather.com*

Runner-Up: Hotel Albatross

Best Happy Hour

Toulouse Petit

If you're someone who finds a lot of choices overwhelming, the Toulouse Petit happy hour is not for you: Boasting dozens of options, most with a Cajun bent, the menu demands some serious scrutiny. Yet within that menu are a whole host of gems, from excellent charcuterie to fried-chicken gumbo to something as simple as a roasted beet salad. It's a menu that rewards exploration and return visits, and that's surely not an accident. *601 Queen Anne Ave. N., 432-9069, toulousepetit.com*

Runner-Up: The Bridge

Best Sports Bar

The Westy

Nobody likes the loud, in-your-face sports fan who won't shut up. This is why Westy is great: There's something tonally understated about the place; a sense that, yes, sports are great, but deep-seated aggression is not. In an era when Seattle sports seem to be more and more important, it's good to know that Westy has its sports head on straight. Oh, and they have whiskey and pints

of local beer too. *7908 35th Ave. S.W., 937-8977, thewestyseattle.com*

Runner-Up: 95 Slide

Best LGBTQ Bar

Pony

Dark, wood-clad, and complete with a stripper pole stuck in the bar top, this place just might have more fun than any other in town. The phrase “If these walls could talk” comes to mind. And if they could, many might blush at their midnight monologues. What’s great, too, is that Pony is more than a bar; it’s a place where people can feel safe in a time when that’s sometimes hard to find.

1221 E. Madison St., 324-2854, ponyseattle.com

Runner-Up: Wildrose

Best Bartender

Jack at Pony

An Emerald City DJ and the brain behind many of Pony’s themed events, including Hero Worship—a night honoring pop idols of the underground—this electric-haired bartender with a kind face and a trim beard was, as lore would have it, also an extra in the video for the B-52s’ “Love Shack.”

Runner-Up: Brandon at The Bridge

Best Marijuana Product

Juju Joint

A black cigarette-sized cylinder with silver lettering and a cherry that glows when you take a pull, the Juju Joint is the most fashionable marijuana device on the market. That counts for something as a new, more commercial kind of marijuana lifestyle emerges in the legal markets where the product is sold (usually for around \$60 at recreational shops). The no-fuss vaporizer promises 150 pulls—though reports from consumers vary—as well as a more mellow, slow-onset high. *Available in Seattle at Uncle Ike’s, Grass, Ocean Greens, Cannabis City, and Ganja Goddess.*

Runner-Up: Goodship Cookies

Best Recreational Store

Uncle Ike’s Pot Shop

It’s been a while since a business has been able to hold down the Northeast corner of 23rd Avenue and Union Street in Seattle’s Central District, but Uncle Ike’s Pot Shop appears to be shaking the curse of that particular spot with a robust business in legal marijuana. Since opening last September, Ike’s has delivered a refined buying experience that recalls the Apple store more than the back alley. And they have a rotating daily food-truck schedule. What more could you want?

2310 E. Union St., 844-420-4537, uncleikespotshop.com

Runner-Up: Dockside Cannabis

Best Strain

Girl Scout Cookies

The name says sweet and innocent, but this Bay Area strain means business. Originated by the famed Cookie Family, and likely bootlegged by the guy who grew what you're smoking, Girl Scout Cookies blends OG Kush and Durban Poison to create a high that stimulates the mind and numbs the body. Medicinal users report success in battling depression, while the recreational crowd who can handle it is able to tap into a powerful euphoria. Some say it tastes like Thin Mints. But they're probably just high.

Runner-Up: Blue Dream

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