

2night
magazine ●●●●●

WELCOME

TO *Fabulous*

NIGHTS OUT

VENUE GUIDE 2011



Welcome

to 2night's 2011 guide. Over a year of publishing this magazine, we've seen plenty of venues appearing on the Dublin scene, some old favourites changing with the times as others shut their doors, and even the odd rebirth or two - witness the reappearance of both Bang and Renard's. Against so much uncertainty, one thing has held true: passionate, hard-working restaurateurs and venue owners are working their socks off to make going out in Dublin better than ever.

That's why we've decided to celebrate their efforts in this guide, rounding up 40 of the best venues in the city and explaining why they're a little bit special. You'll find all manner of places here, from the high-end eateries to distinctly old school bars, and that's part of what makes Dublin a great city: for such a small city, we have unparalleled variety to offer foodies and party animals alike.

Indeed, these reviews are just the tip of the iceberg - we've dug up information of hundreds of places for our website, www.2night.ie. If you're finding this guide helpful, check out 2night online or download our iPhone app for the inside track on eating out, clubbing, drinking, films, gigs and more in Dublin.

2night
www.2night.ie

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contents

04

After work

Get the party started with these great spots for early birds.

15

Dinner

Need to refuel? You can't go wrong with these top restaurants.

29

After Dinner

You're well-fed and raring to go - grab a few drinks here when it gets dark.

39

Late night

When things are really kicking off, these late-night places will amp up the action even more.

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AFTER WORK



Bowes Bar

31, Fleet Street - Dublin 2
Tel: 016714038

The phrase 'old world charm', for several years now, has been seriously overused; by now, many people just see it as a euphemism for 'decrepit'. This is a shame, because few words better describe this sister pub to Doyle's around the corner better than 'old world' or 'charming'. Beautifully crafted furniture and panelling, leather cushions and even

a chandelier would make the place feel a little bit like a gentleman's club or library if it weren't reassuringly unpretentious – you're more likely to hear people discussing football than Foucault here, which is no bad thing. They do allow a certain nod to luxury, however, by serving a huge variety of high-quality whiskey. There's also a selection of light snacks offered through the day, and even nice music to enjoy: the after-

noon barmen in particular seem to have a great taste in old jazz. If trad is more your bag, though, you're in luck – Sunday nights see renowned Uilleann Piper Eoin Dillon entertaining the crowd from around 21:00. The bar is deceptively roomy, and there's usually a table or two free, which makes Bowes ideal for whiling away a few hours. Be warned, though – you'll be sorely tempted to stay for the evening.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week, from 16:00 to 23:30.

Getting there: From the front gates of Trinity College (facing onto Dame Street), turn right and head down Westmoreland Street. Take a right turn onto Fleet Street, and Bowes will be on your right.



GET CLOSER TO THE STARS IN 2011 RIDE THE DUBLIN WHEEL

A striking addition to the new Point Village, the Dublin Wheel has been delighting docklanders and visitors from across the city since opening this summer. The massive wheel offers stunning views over the city, along with the Dublin and Wicklow Mountains, and boasts 42 fully-enclosed pods that seat up to eight people. There are even VIP pods for added luxury on special occasions! Adults can enjoy the Dublin wheel experience for €9, with senior citizens and student tickets available for €7. Children from four to 16 can ride the wheel for €6.50, it's only €1 for a toddler from one to three years old, and babies under 12 months get in free!

For more information, check out www.pointvillage.ie or call (01) 8559204



Gilbert and Wrights Dun Laoghaire

128, Lower George's Street, Dun Laoghaire - Co Dublin
Tel: 016636148

Unlike all too many self-proclaimed retro pubs, the first southside outpost of the Gilbert and Wright's night-life empire benefits from a genuine effort having gone into both the presentation and substance. The décor is distinctly 70s, and not in the sense that somebody's half-heartedly installed an old lamp in and

called it funky; this place is saturated with furniture from the decade, plus plenty of vintage records and other artefacts from a far cooler time. There's a stack of magazines we normally only see in Mad Men (they even take The New Yorker, which is well worth a read) giving people a compelling reason to stay a while. The charm is more than superficial too: service, without breaking the easy-going vibe, is remarkably effi-

cient, and the cocktail menu is also impressive – frequent two for one deals and good value pints make their drinks great value too. Overall, it feels like a cross between the pad your cool uncle swears he had in his youth and a rather more mature set from Austin Powers – and no, that's no bad thing at all.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week, from 17:00 (16:00 Friday, 12:00 Saturday and Sunday) to 23:30 (00:30 Friday and Saturday, 23:00 Sunday).

Getting there: From Dun Laoghaire Shopping Centre (facing onto George's Street), turn right and keep walking down the street for about 10 minutes. You will see Gilbert and Wright's on your right.



Cosmopolitan Events - social, personal & professional networking

Would you like to meet new contacts? Friends, business or perhaps that special someone in a relaxed, social environment? We organise a variety of events each month, in some of the most salubrious venues around Dublin! All you have to do is check out the calendar on www.cosmopolitanevents.ie and see what suits you, let us know which one/s are of interest, & book your ticket on the site by the date indicated. Then simply attend and benefit!

Our research found that even if you are involved to perhaps promote your business, if you're relaxed and having an enjoyable time that will facilitate a more beneficial event in terms of networking & talking to lots of people. We're there to meet & greet you, and will introduce you to the other attendees at each event. We are aware that everyone is different and therefore if you prefer to work at your own pace, that's ok - whatever is most comfortable for you!

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Please see www.cosmopolitanevents.ie for further information and also to see some testimonials/recommendations from other members, or contact Katharine Crawford who founded the company in February 2008.



Cosmopolitan Events

Tel: 00 353 (0) 87 9508376
Email: katharine@cosmopolitanevents.ie



The Bank on College Green

20-22, College Green - Dublin 2
Tel: 016770677

This sprawling bar and restaurant sits in a beautifully-restored Victorian building, originally designed in 1893 as a branch of the Belfast Bank (well duh). Massive sandstone walls and a stained-glass ceiling create interesting natural light by day, while the place has a surprisingly cosy feel in the evenings that belies the vast floorspace. Even if the setting wasn't

so striking, this place would be well worth a look for the range of continental beers – we love the Erdinger on tap – and more traditional Irish drinks. Prices tend to reflect the upscale setting, but the whole venue is a cut above the competition: even the bar food includes some dishes worth savouring, including creative sandwiches from €8.50 at lunch, and a strong evening menu with everything from a Waldorf salad and

roast pork belly to a platter of deep-fried guilty pleasures. This place fills up quickly after work – you'll probably have to wait for a seat after 18:00 – but reservations are possible for dinner at the bar and mezzanine restaurant upstairs. For small parties of eight or less, you can also hire out the intimate snug.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week, from 11:00 (10:00 Sunday) to 00:00 (01:30 Friday and Saturday, 23:00 Sunday) Breakfast served from opening time, Lunch from 12:00, and dinner from 16:00.

Getting there: From the front gates of Trinity College Dublin, cross Grafton Street to get onto College Green and Dame Street. Walk up the street for three minutes, and the Bank should be on your left.



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2night on the go!

Download our free iPhone app for up-to-the-minute advice on restaurants, venues, events and everything happening in Dublin. You can search our comprehensive database by venue type, cuisine and more, or even find venues near you: read our reviews, find out what other users think, and check out the pictures.

The 2night app is absolutely free.





The Dark Horse Inn

1, George's Quay - Dublin 2
Tel: 016751862

Even as it retains the early license that made it a popular spot for sea dogs, this venue has seen major changes, from the name (the bar was formerly known as the White Horse Inn) to new management and a major refurbishment. The Dark Horse Inn is distinctly spiffier than its predecessor, with a multi-level layout adding breathing room and plenty of modern

design features all catching the eye. It's still got a distinctive – if gentler – atmosphere when they turn down the lights in the evenings. The Dark Horse Inn has become a cool evening jazz venue, with regular live entertainment supplemented by some one-off gigs and interesting events too. A regular 'arty party', showcasing the work of talented young Dubliners, runs on the last Thursday of every month, while a free 'knitty woolly fun

club' teaches us the esoteric joys of drinking and knitting every first and third Tuesday. New chefs have come in to revamp the food, introducing a strong lunch menu of bar favourites – the place is great for a pie and a pint – along with a continental buffet breakfast, which is particularly handy when you've rushed out the door in the morning. Even if you don't want to grab a pint before most people start work, then, it's well worth a visit.

Opening hours: Open Monday to Saturday, from 07:30 (19:30 Wednesday and Thursday) to 23:30 (00:30 Friday and Saturday).

Getting there: From Tara Street DART Station (facing onto the Liffey), turn right and start walking down the quays. You'll soon see the White Horse Inn on your right.



The Hut

159, Phibsborough Road - Dublin 7
Tel: 018302238

It's rare to find an authentic Victorian-era pub still standing (with original fittings and all) in this fine city – it's even rarer to find one this welcoming. Staff and locals are noticeably friendly in this place, which helps explain why it's a popular spot for students or nurses in need of a change from plastic superpubs or overpriced clubs. If you enjoy a Guinness, so much the better – The Hut's been known for a fine pint of the black stuff since it opened some 150 years ago. Their pub grub is also a cut above the competition, with home-made dishes served from 12:00 to 15:00 – a mean bacon and cabbage (€8.50) brings back memories of home, though the Irish Stew is also worth a shout. There's a private function room upstairs for parties, and the little secluded lounge is nice, but we'd heartily recommend joining in the fun with everyone else: the place has a fantastic atmosphere on GAA match days and anytime Bohemians F.C. are playing down the road. If the younger crowd here is more your thing, drop down on Sunday, when a fine covers outfit (Hard Candy) rock out the venue.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week, from 10:30 (12:30 Sunday) to 23:30 (00:30 Friday and Saturday, 23:00 Sunday).
Getting there: The Hut is on Phibsboro Road, which can be reached from the city centre by walking up Church Street, via Constitution Hill – the pub will be on your right. You can also travel by bus: the 4, 19 and 19A all stop nearby. Once you get off the bus at Phibsboro Road, The Hut will be across the street.



The Market Bar

16a, Fade Street - Dublin 2
Tel: 016139094

As bars to enjoy a chat with your drink go, this place has a key advantage: no music. Rather than the latest chart hits, the Market Bar simply hums with conversation - a sophisticated little twist for a place that looks like a converted warehouse. That conversion, we should add, has been great: the warm brickwork and wood, dramatic pillars and subtle lighting helps create a good atmosphere. And no, we've

no idea what's behind the massive display of wooden shoes either. We can confirm, however, that they do a mean selection of tapas, from a mojo chicken salad to beautiful chicken and chorizo skewers. Small plates are offered for €8, with more substantial dishes going for €12, and there are sharing platters of cheese and meats available from €10. Desserts are dominated by Irish and English staples, though there's a nice crema Catalana on offer for €6.50. If you eat

before 19:00, you can enjoy any two small dishes and a glass of water or a soft drink for €14. Reservations are possible if you're booking for a big party, and you won't be left waiting too long for a table anyway. It might take a while to get a drink at the bar (they've table service, thankfully) and you'll have to watch out for the grazing if you're in high heels, but the Market Bar is great fun nonetheless. Opening hours: Open seven days a week from 12:00 (15:00 Sunday) to

23:30 (01:00 Friday and Saturday, 23:00 Sunday). Tapas served until 21:30 (22:30 Friday to Saturday) Getting there: From the Central Bank (facing onto Dame Street), turn right and start walking away from Trinity College. Turn left onto George's Street, take the second left off South Great George's Street onto Fade Street, and the Market bar will be on your left towards the end of the street.



The Old Stand

37, Exchequer Street - Dublin 2
Tel: 016777220

The Old Stand has a rich history dating back some 300 years, but its most famous fan was probably War of Independence and Civil War hero Michael Collins. Collins, who reportedly made it his lunchtime base, also organised I.R.B. (Irish Republican Brotherhood) meetings there. Still sporting a Victorian-era look, it's become home in recent

years to the more sedate crowd of horse-racing and rugby lovers - on match days, though, the small pub can't be beaten for atmosphere. In general, a mature crowd leads to an easy-going vibe throughout the day, and The Old Stand is also worth visiting for a hearty, honest lunch or pre-theatre dinner. The gammon ham steak (€12), the sirloin (€16 or €20) and the beef and Guinness casserole (€10) are all hard to beat.

Try and grab a couch if you can - balancing on a barstool, however authentic, isn't really the best way to enjoy the good food and excellent atmosphere. If you're just hopping in for a quick after-work pint, though, the main bar is the place to be. Make sure to chat to the staff too - they're a lovely bunch, with plenty of stories to tell.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week. Lunch served from 12:00 to 14:30. Evening menu from 14:30 to 20:45. Getting there: From the Molly Malone statue, head up Grafton Street before taking a right onto Wicklow Street. Head down the street for about ten minutes, and you'll see The Old Stand on your right just as you cross onto Exchequer Street.



The Tea Garden

7 Lower Ormond Quay - Dublin 1
Tel: 0862191010

A peculiar little addition to the Dublin scene, The Tea Garden can be considered testament to how (relatively) grown up we've become in our socialising: it doesn't even serve booze, but the venue is all the better for that, a uniquely relaxed, sprawling underground place for enjoying the odd snack, a spot of Shisha, or even a milkshake. The bulk of the menu

here, though, is made up of gourmet teas. There's a huge range of the stuff, and settling on one choice can be a bit intimidating for anyone who's only just moving beyond Barry's, but the staff are remarkably friendly and happy to offer advice on the various brews. For our part, the granny's garden (a relative snip at €5.90) works every time. You can buy the teas and even the teapots to take away, but it's impossible to replicate

the experience of savouring the stuff here: for one, it's a labyrinth of smallish rooms, which means you'll often be left in splendid isolation from any customers or staff. The unusual décor adds to the charm, and plenty of comfy cushions make it a great spot for lolling about for hours in. Thankfully, they don't seem to mind people doing this, and even provide board games to encourage a longer stay – a nice little touch, we think.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week, from 15:00 (13:00 Friday to Sunday) to 23:00.

Getting there: From the north side of O'Connell Bridge (facing north), turn left and head down Bachelor's Walk and the northside quays. After about ten minutes, you will see a sign for The Tea Garden on your right. The venue itself is underground.



DINNER

Bang Restaurant

11, Merrion Row – Dublin 2
Tel: 014004229

Back from the brink after the demise of the Stokes brothers' incarnation, the new Bang restaurant has gained the same following as the original – and then some. Even after a re-tenvamp, the décor has maintained a cosmopolitan-but-relaxed vibe, with understated furnishings and table settings, a rich blue shade on the wall to complement work by major

Irish artists including Patrick Scott, Eamon Coleman and John Cronin – international talents including William Crozier also feature. The mood carries through to two private rooms, including the upstairs 'gallery' and the cellar bar downstairs, which can both be hired out. There's plenty to draw people to the main restaurant though, particularly the high-end Irish fare with continental twists sprinkled across the menu:

both the roast wild venison loin with red cabbage, pumpkin puree and braised celery (€28), and the halibut with a white bean, chorizo and clam cassoulet (€28) are worthy meals, and they do a mean rib-eye too. To start off an evening, the game terrine with celeriac remoulade, cranberries and sourdough toast (€12) is as good a choice as any, while the desserts change regularly.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week. Lunch served Monday to Saturday from 12:30, dinner served Monday to Saturday from 17:30 (16:00 Sunday).

Getting there: From Strephe'n's Green Shopping Centre (facing towards Grafton Street), turn right and head down the Green towards the canal. Cross onto Merrion Row, and you'll see Bang on your right.



Café Carlo

63, O'Connell Street – Dublin 1
Tel: 018880856

So you're headed to a gig on Abbey Street, the theatre or even the 02 – but where can you get good-value, hearty-but-healthy fare on the north-side? Standing out like a beacon on a strip where Supermacs is among the most popular eateries, Café Carlo answers the question in style. It's a friendly little Irish-Italian joint, with a decor that avoids twee pictures

of Rome and instead captures the best essence of eating out in that city: friendliness and simplicity. Of the Italian dishes on the menu, the carbonara (€10.95) and the vegetarian-friendly arrabiatta (€9.90) stand out, though a concise range of pizzas are also worth trying. The Irish food has taken a great leap forward, with a regular roast of the day offered at €11.25, and a fine Irish stew for the same price. There's also a selection

of international dishes, including an interesting Malaysian chicken curry (€13.95) and, for spice lovers, some sizzling chicken fajitas (€11.95). The atmosphere here is warm and laid-back – a rare thing among restaurants in the area – while the service is snappy without rushing people through their meals. For added value, check out the pre-theatre menu, giving two courses for €12.95 and three courses for €16.50.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week, from 12:00 to 23:00.

Getting there: From the Spire, head north up O'Connell Street. You will see Café Carlo very shortly on your left.



Chez Max Palace Street

1, Palace Street – Dublin 2
Tel: 016337215

Max Deleloubie has opened up another French Bistro on Baggot Street, but we're committed fans of the cosy original nestling in the shadow of Dublin Castle's gates. You can venture in for strong coffee and croissants from 8:00, and there's a lunch menu on offer too, featuring many of the restaurant's most popular dishes. However, the French din-

ing experience is best enjoyed when they dim their lights in the evening. There are safe options throughout the menu, including a luxurious French onion soup (€5.90) to start and steak frite (a striploin and chips costing €19.50) as a main course, along with plenty to excite food adventurers: foie gras, pan-fried frog legs and snails in garlic butter are all executed perfectly when they're in season. The boeuf Bourguignon

(€15.50), with a burgundy red wine sauce and baby potatoes, is Chez Max's speciality and falls somewhere in the middle. It's the little extras that make this place particularly special, though, and your night won't be complete without sampling the crème brûlée (perfectly seared on top with a cool centre) or enjoying a martini blanc as an aperitif.

Opening hours: Open for breakfast from 08:00, Monday to Friday (11:00 Saturday and Sunday). Lunch served from 12:00, dinner from 17:30 to 22:00 (23:00 Friday and Saturday). Getting there: From the gates of Trinity College, cross onto Dame Street and walk along it for roughly 10 minutes. You will see Dublin Castle on your left. As you walk towards it (on Palace Street) Chez Max will be on your right.





Dada Restaurant

44, South William Street - Dublin 2
Tel: 016170777
Husband and wife team Aziz & Eva Nouhi have done a good job in turning this South William Street premises into a regular little oasis. For starters, they've borrowed heavily from the Moorish architecture of North Africa and Southern Spain, filling the restaurant with unusually shaped arches and warm tones on the walls. It helps generate an exotic,

intimate atmosphere that sets the scene perfectly for authentic Moroccan cuisine. From the couscous to rich and interesting meat dishes, the menu in the main restaurant is loaded with novel flavours, with the spicy kofta meatballs tangine (€16.50) and the slow-roasted lamb shoulder with Ras el Hanout (€23.90) particular highlights. There's more of a western feel in the wine bar, where they serve tapas bringing to mind the old Moor-

ish kingdom of Andalusia: alongside min-koftas and kebabs, you'll find items like grilled merquez sausages with a spicy tomato sauce (€5.50) and an oven baked squid stuffed with mince meat, couscous and harissa (€7.90). It makes sense to have an initial bite here, particularly when there's a packed charcuterie platter on offer for €12.90. A generous early bird menu costing €19.90 is actually served all night from Monday to

Wednesday, from 17:00 to 19:00 on Thursday and Friday, and from 16:00 to 19:00 on Saturday and Sunday. Opening hours: Open seven days a week. Lunch served Thursday to Sunday from 12:00 to 16:00 (17:00 Saturday and Sunday), dinner from 17:00 to late. Getting there: From Stephen's Green Shopping Centre, walk down South King Street and take a right turn on to South William Street.



Harry's Cafe and Wine Bar

22, Dawson Street - Dublin 2
Tel: 016394889
Nestling just off Stephen's Green, Harry's offers a somewhat more laid-back dining experience than many other places that dot the so-called 'golden mile'. In fact, everything about the place, from the relaxed, informal décor to the similarly relaxed and informal staff, seems calculated to relax diners. The tempting dinner menu has an al-

most playful quality: for all the fresh ingredients and interesting combinations, the cooking style is simple, with lots of zing. The spicy Italian sausage pasta (€16.95), and the lobster linguini (€18.95) are prime examples of this, though there are hearty traditionally Irish dishes on offer too: try their mouth-watering lamb shank (€19.75) or a creamy Harry's Fish Pie (€17.95). There's a lively buzz about the place

that usually carries through from the early afternoon to late at night, especially at weekends. As you'd expect, they've gone to considerable trouble on the grape juice, and there's never less than 160 world class wines on offer. Among the 40 red and white wines offered by the glass, we've yet to encounter a dud. The place has recently introduced a special value dinner, offering two courses and a bottle of wine for two at €60.

Opening hours: Open Tuesday to Sunday, from 12:00 to late. Getting there: From the Grafton Street end of Stephen's Green, walk along the north side of the green towards Merrion Row. Turn left at Dawson Street, and you'll see Harry's on your right.



Il Posto

10, Stephen's Green - Dublin 2
Tel: 016794769

Once upon a time, a high -end spot along Dublin's 'golden mile' from the Green down to Baggot Street was seen as a license to print money. Those days are gone, and we've seen a number of high-profile casualties in the area. However, under the stewardship of the Jackson sisters, this charming Italian restaurant has continued to thrive through its thirteenth year. It helps, of course, that they've moved with the times, introducing great value market lunch and early dinner menus – you can grab two courses from a selection of the place's most popular dishes for only €16 between 12:00 and 14:30, or for €20 from 17:30 to 19:00. The deals are striking, but they wouldn't be quite as impressive if Il Posto hadn't already earned itself a reputation for authentic, tasty fare – the fegato (lamb's liver) and polpetta (beef meatballs with a spicy pepper sauce) come highly recommended – and extremely attentive service. The list of Italian wines is also well-chosen. You can either dine al fresco, a rare treat in these parts, or enjoy the candlelit atmosphere in the cellar dining room downstairs. If you like being thoroughly pampered and stuffed with good food (who doesn't?) drop in here, whether you're feeling flush or fancy a bargain.

Opening hours: Open Monday to Saturday. Lunch served from 12:00 to 14.30, early dinner from 17:30 to 19:00, dinner from 17:30.

Getting there: From the Stephen's Green end of Grafton Street (facing towards the Green's main entrance), turn left and start walking towards Merrion Row. Il Posto will be on your left after about a minute.



L'Ecrivain

109a, Lower Baggot Street - Dublin 2
Tel: 016661919

For years, going to L'Ecrivain was something that only RTE presenters and bankers could afford on a regular basis. However, Michelin-starred chef Derry Clarke has moved with the times in style. His latest cookbook is suitably entitled *Keeping it Simple*, and dwells on old-fashioned, seasonal fare, an approach he follows in L'Ecrivain's kitchen. The restaurant has started to pull in the cash-strapped lunchtime crowd by introducing a fixed price lunchtime menu, charging €35 for two courses and €45 for three. Fortunately, these concessions to the recession haven't diminished the sense of luxury from enjoying a superlative meal here. The airy and elegantly decorated dining room adds to this considerably, even though you may imagine that the sheep in a large painting overlooking the tables are silently judging you as you munch through your lamb. Fortunately the waiters, for all their eerie efficiency and unflinching politeness, don't make diners feel so self-conscious. Two elegantly laid-out dining rooms are great for private parties (the Malt room, seating 12, has a distinctly modern feel).

Opening hours: Open from Monday to Saturday, from 10:00 (15:00 Saturday) to 23:00 (01:00 Saturday).

Getting there: From Stephen's Green Shopping Centre (facing towards Grafton Street), turn right and walk down Merrion Row towards the canal. You will pass onto Lower Baggot Street. After roughly ten minutes, L'Ecrivain will be on your right.



La Paloma

17b, Adskill's Row – Dublin 2
Tel: 016777392

You can't judge a book by its cover, or a restaurant solely by its location – otherwise, few people would go near this delightful Spanish restaurant. Temple Bar may better known for its fast food and sometimes-two Irish places, but La Paloma helps redress the balance by offering a distinctly Iberian sanctuary just off Fleet Street. Yellow dominates the

visual palate without being obnoxious – and yes, that's a rare balancing act – while the cosy dining room is nice and intimate when the lights go down in the evening. The menu makes a nod to the Irish love of tapas by featuring a huge range of sides, including the ubiquitous patatas bravas, croquettes and rustic dishes. However, heartier, more substantial courses are the culinary mainstay of the place: a seabass fillet with

a chorizo crust (€18.50), a rolled pork fillet (€18.50) and the Zarzuela (19.95), a Catalan fish stew, stand out. They've gone for quality over quantity in the wine list – the Arbadillo, an Andalusian white, is particularly enjoyable – and also have a lengthy menu of cocktails, with most drinks weighing in at about the €8 mark. Service is friendly, and the waiters are very helpful if you need more information on a dish.

Opening hours: Open Tuesday to Sunday, from 18:00 to 00:30.
Getting there: From the Central Bank (facing on to Dame Street), turn around and start walking down towards the Liffey. Just before you reach Merchant's Arch, take a right turn onto Fleet Street, and a left onto Adskill's Row. You will see La Paloma on your left.



Nyonya Malaysian Restaurant

76, Dame Street - Dublin 2
Tel: 016707200

Food puritans, once upon a time, smiled sadly when they thought of Dame Street. Sure, there's the odd decent place, they mused through a mouthful of foie gras, but those restaurants are grossly outnumbered by greasy burger and pizza joints. Step forward, Nyonya, a restaurant on a mission to offer high-quality Malaysian fare. The dining room is a

cut above the rest, stimulating as it is with plenty of rich browns and interesting Malaysian art. More importantly, there's a strong commitment to authenticity, with a menu that celebrates the diversity at the heart of Malay cuisine. Many ethnicities and a rich tradition of trade with other nations have made Malaysia a true melting pot of tastes, and the sheer breadth of choice would be intimidating if Nyonya's menu and staff

didn't helpfully explain the make-up of and traditions behind each type of dish. Prices are very keen for the high quality too: noodle dishes start at €8 and the 'hawker's food', echoing the unpretentious fare eaten by the vast majority of the Malaysian people, is very tasty too. We recommend splashing out a little, though, for more substantial dishes that are on offer from €11.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week, from 12:30 (14:30 Saturday and Sunday) to 23:30.

Getting there: From the Central Bank (facing towards Dame Street), turn right and start walking towards Christ Church Cathedral. You should see Nyonya on your right after about five minutes.



Pacinos

18, Suffolk Street – Dublin 2
Tel: 016775651

This already-popular Italian eatery continues to reinvent itself and draw more people in to its excellent location just off Grafton Street.

In the space of a year, they've begun hosting regular nights featuring salsa dancing, comedy, live rock'n'roll and even theatre at a weekly supper club. They've also started offering great food on the go, with a rustic

special of soup and panini for €5. Also, in conjunction with the charity Aware and the "Make it Better Campaign", Pacino's have launched a range of sauces and oils that can be found in most good Dublin Spar and Londis outlets. Pacinos has successfully hosted many private parties and high-profile events already and, with 16 years under its belt, don't be surprised if this revitalised venue adds many more.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week, from 08am (09:00 Saturday, 10:00 Sunday) to 23:00 (22:00 Monday & Tuesday). Late club Friday and Saturday from 23:00.

Getting there: From the Molly Malone statue, take a right turn onto Suffolk Street. You'll see Pacinos on your left.



One Pico

5-6, Molesworth Place - Dublin 2
Tel: 01676030

When a place names a private dining area The Polo Room, it gives us a hint of the kind of diners it's looking to get through the doors. Luckily, chef-owner Eamon O'Reilly's flagship restaurant is as welcoming to regular smartly-dressed folk in search of good food as it is to followers of peculiar sports. More importantly, he can provide a high-end experience from the kitchen, having

worked before with three-Michelin-starred chefs and snagged several awards in his own right. In the last year, moreover, his name has kept coming up on the awards circuit for his work at One Pico. The menu here is focused on Irish and French food prepared with more than a little panache. The menu changes with the seasons but, on our last visit, the venison carpaccio (€16) stood out from a range of ambitious starters, and not just for the raspberry

and beetroot puree that went with it. The steaks – from a 28-day dry aged rib-eye (€32) to a fillet of black Angus beef (€34) – are also impressive, along with the seared scallops: together weigh with a crisp pork belly, they weigh in at €32. The top-drawer cuisine is supplemented by an elegant dining room with silver service. Set menus – including a €25 set lunch offer - help take the sting out of the prices too.

Opening hours: Open Monday to Saturday. Lunch served from 12:30 to 14:30, dinner from 18:00 to 23:00.

Getting there: From the Molly Malone statue, head down Nassau Street towards Merriown Square. Turn right at South Frederick Street, and keep walking as you cross Molesworth Street onto Molesworth Lane. Turn left onto Schoolhouse Lane, and you should see One Pico.



Sabor Brazil

50, Pleasants Street - Dublin 2

Tel: 014750304

Believe it or not, this place started life with a cheery but functional café-style décor. However, in contrast to the restaurateurs who desperately scrambled their way downmarket when trouble hit in 2008, Sabor Brazil's owners decided to go upscale, and dramatically so. Now, the word 'lavish' seems strangely inadequate for describing the small space: two dining rooms seating 20 people between them are enlivened by plush furnishings, and all the trappings of colonial-era Brazil. The menu, too, has been transformed into a veritable homage to the eating experience of the South American elite; while prices are surprisingly reasonable, starters like the pastel (delicious savoury Brazilian pastries with a choice of filling and chillies on the side, €6) set a tone of indulgence that goes down well. Beef and red meat figures strongly in the mains, with the Feijoada (a hearty black bean stew with Brazilian sausage, bacon and pork meat costing €25) standing out amongst a concise selection of hearty dishes. The attentive service hits the spot too – of course, that's not too difficult with such a small number of diners to care for, and we'd recommend booking well in advance if you want to be sure of a table.

Opening hours: Open Tuesday to Sunday from 18:00 until late.

Getting there: From Stephen's Green, walk up Cuffe Street. Turn left onto Wexford Street at the first junction, and walk for five minutes, crossing onto Camden Street. Pleasants Street is a right turn off Camden Street, and Sabor Brazil will be on your right.



The Blackboard Bistro

4, Clare Street – Dublin 2

Tel: 016766839

Sometimes, we wonder what possesses people to open up high-end restaurants in this time, in this city. Breathtaking hubris? A sweet, innocent ignorance of economic reality? Or simply genuine confidence that good food served in an ideal setting will never go out of fashion? The final factor seems to have inspired The Blackboard Bistro, which boldly

set up shop opposite the National Gallery and proceeded to wow both reviewers and regular punters with their French-influenced fare. The menu changes with the seasons, though there's a reliable emphasis on the rustic with a good spread of game, farm fare and fish (their poulet Basquaise, a traditional hot pot from the Basque country, is great when it's on). More importantly, the team in the kitchen have the flare to pull off

the varied menu, and superb attention to detail. They've also kept prices manageable with set dinner menus offering two courses for €18.50 and a three-course meal for €22.50. The experience is enhanced by a cosy, chilled-out and perfectly lit dining room – even the background music is pretty enjoyable – and The Blackboard Bistro has the kind of warm, friendly service that makes diners comfortable lingering for an evening,

Opening hours: Open Tuesday to Saturday. Lunch served Tuesday to Friday, dinner from 18:00 to 22:00. Getting there: From the front gates of Trinity College (facing onto College Green), turn left and walk along the gates down Nassau Street. When you come to a fork in the road, take the right turn to cross onto Clare Street. The Blackboard Bistro will be on your left.



Thornton's

128, Stephens Green - Dublin 2
Tel: 014787008

Kevin Thornton may be as well-known for his prickly public personality as he is for his culinary skill, but the latter remains as formidable as ever. The first Irishman to win two Michelin stars (one was taken away a few years ago; he didn't take the setback too well) has a kind of grace in the kitchen that blends well with his fiery flare, breathing new life into

staples of Irish cuisine like duck, salmon or Dublin bay prawns. Crucially, he's moved his restaurant into the (relatively) affordable end of the market in recent years – a set dinner menu, for example, will set you back €79. The dishes change seasonally, and so offering particular recommendations seems strangely futile: it's all good. If you're really looking to get the maximum Thornton's experience from a single visit, check out the

taster menu, giving a little bit of everything from the slow-cooked lobster to the chocolate crème brûlée. It can only be ordered by the table, with five courses offered for €95 a head, and a mighty eight-course feast costing €125. Lunchtime and pre-theatre menus let diners sample Thornton's most popular creations for a more manageable €49 a head. Still cheaper is the canapé menu served at lunchtime, allowing any-

one stuck for time to enjoy smaller bites for €38.

Opening hours: Open Tuesday to Saturday. Lunch served from 12:30 to 13:45, Thursday through Saturday, dinner from 19:00 to 21:30. Getting there: From the Grafton Street end of Stephen's Green, head towards Harcourt Street. Thornton's will be on your right.

AFTER DINNER



Doyles

9, College Street - Dublin 2
Tel: 016710616

To the untrained eye, Doyles looks like a particularly pleasant incarnation of the Victorian-era pub, a common sight in Dublin – there's the traditional fittings, an easy-going atmosphere and plenty of quiet conversation. But take a look around and you'll see precious few middle-aged nursing their pints. Indeed, most folks know Doyles for its humming student scene: whether it's the old-school downstairs bar, or the heaving upstairs and basement rooms, this place draws indie kids like moths to a flame. The location – within a stone's throw of Trinity College – plays its part, of course, as do the goings-on upstairs: the club hosts late events all through the week, including the Ruby Sessions (a great singer-songwriter night) on Tuesdays, and the Ha Ha Comedy Club on Sundays. Most of the time, of course, it's packed with early-twentysomethings dancing to alternative and indie rock spun by DJs who know their Decembrists from their Death Cab For Cutie – imagine Phantom FM's playlist with the odd poppier tune deftly thrown into the mix. If the action upstairs or below ground is a little overwhelming, the ground floor somehow retains its laid-back feel even when it's full to the brim. If you're dropping in before the late-night rush, they've also started serving good pub grub in the evenings to match an already-popular lunch menu, and there's a spacious room available to hire for private functions.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week, from 12:00 to 02:30 (23:00 Sunday).

Getting there: From the front gates of Trinity College (facing onto Dame Street), turn right and follow the railings of the college as you turn onto College Street. After about two minutes, you should see Doyles across the street on your left.



JJ Smyth's

12, Aungier Street – Dublin 2
Tel: 014752565

Jazz is a dish best served hot – ideally in an intimate, hopping venue with lots of appreciative music-lovers crammed in. Unfortunately, Dublin's small-but-dedicated jazz community lacked such a place for many a year. Step forward JJ Smyth's, a Dublin pub with a long and distinguished history behind it: acclaimed Irish poet Thomas Moore, in fact, was

born here in 1779, and the bar holds one of the longest continuous liquor licenses in the city. We can only imagine what Moore would make of the action here these days: artists who play this premier jazz and blues venue include international stars and Mercury nominees (The Kit Downes Trio), domestic veterans and promising new talents. Isotope, one of the city's longest running jazz sessions, is a reliable Thursday night draw, and

a great way to dip your toe into the scene, though there's live music on six nights of the week. The décor – quietly stylish on the outside, cool and moody on the inside – fits the role of hip jazz den perfectly, with the service and quality pints also adding to the experience.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week, from 10:30 (12:00 Sunday) to 23:30 (00:30 Friday and Saturday, 23:00 Sunday). Check www.2night.ie for live listings.

Getting there: From Stephen's Green Shopping Centre, walk away from the green down South King Street. Cross onto Stephen's Street and take a left onto Aungier Street. JJ Smyth's will be five minute's walk up the street on your left.



Kennedy's

31-32, Westland Row – Dublin 2
Tel: 016799077

We're finding more and more of these two-in-one establishments about and, for people who like a quiet-enough drink followed by a busier late-night dance, that's no bad thing. On its ground floor, Kennedy's is a pleasant, old-school bar – good Guinness, plenty of wooden furniture, a relaxed vibe, and even the odd link to a historical figure (Oscar Wilde once worked in the building when it was a grocery store). You'll also find hearty pub grub, including a particularly warming bangers and mash, along with friendly service too. Lunchtimes see the place consistently packed, as it's known to serve the best pub grub in town. Downstairs, however, there's an altogether different feel: 'the underground' is a positively hopping club with an industrial-chic look that couldn't contrast more wildly with the bar upstairs, but definitely works. No cover charge, DJs with eclectic tastes, and a lively atmosphere make this aspect of Kennedy's a winner too.

Opening hours: Open Monday to Saturday from 12:00 to late. Nightclub open Friday and Saturday from 23:00 to 02:30.

Getting there: From Pearse Street DART station (facing onto Westland Row), turn left and head up the street towards Merrion Square. Kennedy's will be on your right.



Solas

31, Wexford Street - Dublin 2
Tel: 014780583

It's high time that this cocktail bar got some recognition – few places in Dublin blend slickness and substance quite so comprehensively – so we were delighted to see it land the 2010 Hospitality Ireland award for Best Cocktail bar. Drop in at a busy time to see why: aside from the sheer range of drinks on offer (they do classics well, along with some novel drinks of their own) the quality of service is admirably high regardless of what's happening: there's something strangely special about seeing a barman bent over your drink, with the intense expression of a Trappist monk, even as the full force of a Saturday night crush hits the bar. Well, it makes us feel pampered anyway. In recent years, they've added a new focus on food, mixing good quality pub grub and pizzas to get in the lunchtime crowd, and it's worked a treat. The linguini and chilli burger are reliable favourites, as is the €12.50 two course offer, which is available all week time aside from weekday lunchtimes. As an added bonus, the pizzas are served into the wee hours. Throw in live DJ sets, and you have a very fun little spot for a group of friends to get together for the evening – either before or after grabbing that bite to eat.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week, from 12:00 to 01:00 (03:00 Thursday to Saturday).

Getting there: From the Harcourt Street end of Stephen's Green, walk down Cuffe Street away from the Green. Turn left at Wexford Street, and Solas should be on your right.



The Dice Bar

78, Queen Street - Dublin 7
Tel: 018728622

Fun Lovin' Criminal Huey Morgan is, according to reliable reports, an investor in this place – whether the distinct New York theme is down to his involvement or something that drew him to the bar in the first place is one of those 'chicken and egg' questions that will never be answered. In any case, The Dice Bar has done rather better than the ill-fated Voodoo Lounge and even outlasted DiFontaine's pizza in Temple Bar. Perhaps that's because it's neatly captured The Big Apple's seamy but strangely appealing side without getting tacky: black walls, red lighting, and the odd decadent architectural feature all blend in rather well. Aside from The Dice Bar's success in this tricky balancing act, the place also deserves kudos for stocking a range of craft beers from the Big Hand Brewery. 'Phat Tunes' are also promised, and delivered – along with eclectic live DJs, the bar hosts up-and-coming rock'n'roll, garage and rockabilly bands in free gigs. It's well worth the trek if you want to drink somewhere away from the typical city centre crowd, or simply fancy a novel drinking experience.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week, from 16:00 to 23:30 (00:30 Friday and Saturday, 23:00 Sunday).

Getting there: Facing north on O'Connell Bridge, take a left turn onto Bachelor's Walk. Keep walking down Ormond Quay, Inns Quay and Arran Quay, turning right at Queen Street. The Dice Bar will be two minutes walk away, on the corner of Queen Street and Benburb Street.



The Exchequer

3-5, Exchequer Street – Dublin 2
Tel: 016706787

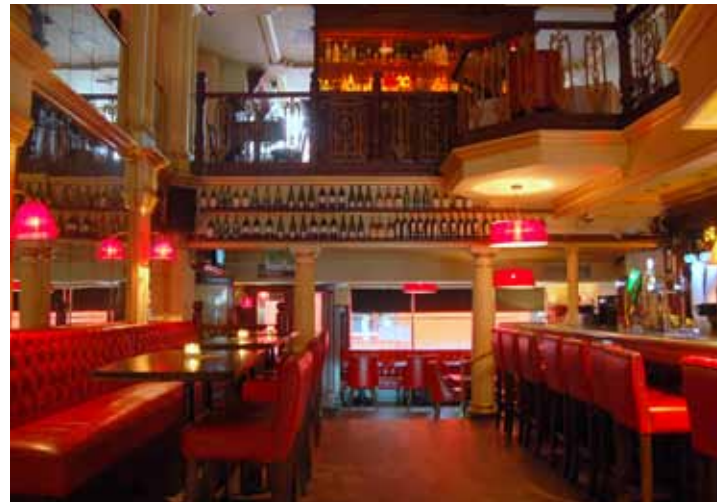
This hip gastropub has led the way for a new batch of classy venues that have opened here to admirably defy prophets of doom in the industry. They're well into their second year of business, and it's easy to see why: there's an intriguing decor featuring bold, contemporary features and even a couple of charmingly well-worn armchairs, and plenty of

substance too. The food is focused on quality Irish dishes with that rare combination of creativity and value – it's pub grub with a creative twist, and it's already piling up accolades: The Exchequer was a deserved winner of the Best Gastropub award at the Irish Restaurant Awards 2010. Their celebrated Sunday roast – a generous traditional meal for four – is a steal at €39.95. The Exchequer has also caught on as a night-time

venue with the help of DJs Marina Diniz and Richie Rock doing a mix of upbeat, summery tunes and darker heavy house. Top mixologist Darren Geraghty has also revamped an already highly-rated menu of cocktails, offering new twists and classic recipes and plenty of signature creations too.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week, from 07:30 (08:00 Saturday and Sunday) to 23:30 (01:00 Thurs-

day, 02:30 Friday and Saturday, 23:00 Sunday)
Getting there: From the bottom of Grafton Street (facing towards Stephen's Green, turn right onto Wicklow Street. Keep following the street as it winds - and becomes Exchequer Street - for roughly eight minutes. You should see The Exchequer on your right.



The Mercantile Bar

28, Dame Street – Dublin 2
Tel: 016707100

Thanks to a few well-judged changes under its new management, the Mercantile is making its mark on the after-work and late night scene, featuring top DJs plus international and up-and-coming Irish acts in its live music venue. As part of a revamp, those old Victorian era features – holdovers from the building's days as home to the Mercantile Credit Corporation – have been given a welcome makeover to bring out their natural class. The Mercantile is still a reliable spot for a great value lunch (we love the braised beef cheeks with Guinness and mash, €9.95), and has a dinner of Irish and international dishes on offer too. Perhaps the biggest change, however, has been the influx of live acts and cool club nights: nowadays, the venue hosts everything from the Monday night residency with its 18 piece Hot House Big Band, Blue grass legends the Special Consensus, Comedy Balladeer, Ding Dong Denny O'Reilly and the Specials' legendary Neville Staple, who recently sold out the venue. They also feature free trad music in the bar on Thursday through Sunday. It's worth checking out what's on at The Mercantile on any given night – particularly if you don't fancy wondering too far for your music fix.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week, from 10:30 (12:00 Sunday) to 01:30 (02:30 Thursday, Friday and Saturday). Lunch served seven days a week, from 12:00 to 16:00, dinner from 16:00 to 22:00. Check www.2night.ie or www.mercantile.ie for listings.

Getting there: From the Central Bank (facing onto Dame Street), turn right and head away from Trinity College. The Mercantile will be on your left



The Morgan Bar

10, Fleet Street - Dublin 2
Tel: 016437000

Most bars set in hotels tend to attract a mixed bunch of plastered wedding revellers and middle-aged couples silently contemplating an escape – or divorce. The Morgan Bar, however, is a very different beast. Sitting on the fringes of Temple Bar, on a street dominated by deep-fried cuisine, this place has attracted an altogether sleeker crowd than one

might expect. So how did they do it? Well, assembling one of the longest (and tastiest) cocktail menus in Dublin 2 helps quite a bit. So too does funky, innovative décor – it's rare to find a place with features that can, by themselves, spark up a conversation. Even if you're hungry, they've got you covered with a tapas menu – we're big fans of the pincho moruno (marinated pork skewers), which are best enjoyed with a glass of wine in the

Parisian-style courtyard on a warm evening. In any weather, though, the DJs get things going as the night moves on, spinning house, soul, and the odd dose of disco late into the night – while a French Martini is a reliable year-round drink. As a post-dinner experience in Temple Bar goes, it's hard to match for sheer class.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week, from 12:00 to late. Lunch served from 12:00 to 15:00, dinner/tapas served from 15:30 to 22:00.

Getting there: From the Central Bank, walk down Dame Street towards Trinity College, but take an immediate left onto Anglessea Street. Take the first right turn onto Fleet Street, and you should see the Morgan Hotel.



The Village Venue

26, Wexford Street - Dublin 2
Tel: 014758555

If you were going to set up a live music venue in the heart of Dublin, where would you pick? We reckon that "next door to Whelan's" wouldn't be your first answer. However, this building has pedigree – the much-missed Mean Fiddler used to rule the Camden/Wexford Street strip from here. More importantly, The Village is a very different beast

to its next door neighbour: just as wooden features, an 'old man bar' sensibility and a solid pint define Whelan's, here we find a sleek finish with comfortable furnishings and a respectably-sized cocktail menu. The Vanilla Russian is a popular concoction, and the food – dominated by Irish dishes costing around a tenner – is also worth a gander. Also, more places should offer their text-a-reservation service for lunchtime.

As for live music, the general flavour of artists is also a bit different to Whelan's: past masters such as Suzanne Vega and many bands on the reunion circuit make it their Dublin venue of choice. The warm, intimate atmosphere is ideal for these gigs, and fun club nights like indie karaoke sensation Songs of Praise make The Village worth a look even when there's nobody playing.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week, from 12:00 to late. Check www.2night.ie for live listings and club nights.

Getting there: From the Harcourt Street end of Stephen's Green, walk down Cuffe Street away from the Green. Turn left at Wexford Street, and The Village should be down the street on your right.



Wright's Café Bar

The Plaza, Forster Way, Swords - Co Dublin
Tel: 018406744

Right now, many a one-prosperous publican is marvelling at how this expansive, slick café bar is about to celebrate a decade in business with no sign of looking back. The secret to Wright's Café Bar's success can be summed up in three words: quality, quality and quality. This place's décor still feels lush and

interesting, with everything from patterned walls, metallic surfaces and richly-coloured furniture somehow blending into a cohesive whole, while also offering something new to admire every time we visit. Perhaps it's that interesting look that encourages the unmistakable buzz in the place, though we fancy the cocktails have something to do with it: a mean French martini and their signature drink, a Wright Flirt (which

features Smirnoff, Kiwi Liqueur, Peach Schnapps, orange and cranberry juice) are both exquisite. Food is offered at lunch and throughout the evening, with the focus on Irish dishes and good comfort food – the spicy chicken and chorizo stew is worth a try, however, if you're feeling a bit adventurous. If you fancy something a little less buzzing and a bit cosier, you should check out the Gilbert and Wright's Wine Bar next

door. It's open from 17:00 on Thursday to Sunday.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week, from 12:00 to 02:30 (23:30 Monday, 01:00 Sunday).

Getting there: From the south end of Swords Main Street, head north and take the first right after the Malahide Road. Turn left, and you're inside the Plaza shopping Centre.



LATE NIGHT

Krystle

21-25, Harcourt Street - Dublin 2
Tel: 0863068081

This club may have pitched its tent on Harcourt Street but, from day one, it was obviously gunning for a different clientele to its near-neighbour Coppers. Krystle first attracted Ireland's minor celebrities and those whose night is made if they recognise anyone from a VIP shoot, but has broadened its appeal over the last year. It's still managed to retain

a fairly upmarket vibe, despite all the unkind references to Miami Vice the décor may evoke. Once you see past the tiger-stripes on some chairs – or embrace them – there's a lot to recommend Krystle: a huge rectangular bar to greet customers on entrance, another bar in a fully heated roof garden, plenty of comfortable booths that can be reserved in advance, and even a VIP suite if you feel like isolating yourself off from

the privileged hoi polloi that make it past the club's bouncers. There's an extensive cocktail selection available to everyone, of course, while the music is refreshingly varied. Along with more commercial sounds, you'll hear hip-hop, house, rock and funk, plus the stylings of live percussionists that Krystle have poached from across London's best clubs. The club as a whole also takes bookings for private parties.

Opening hours: Open Thursday, Friday and Saturday, from 22:30 to late.

Getting there: From Stephen's Green Shopping Centre, walk along the west side of the Green (passing the College of Surgeons on your right). Cross onto Harcourt Street, and Krystle will be on your right.



South William

52, South William Street - Dublin 2
Tel: 016725946

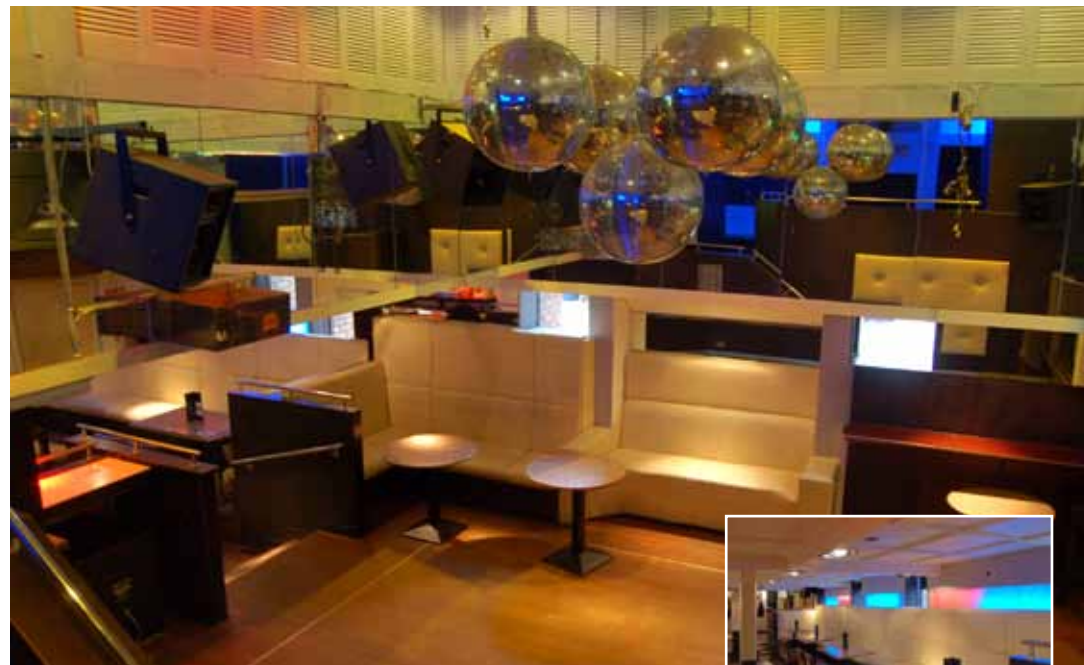
Sometimes, there's no shame in following the crowd, and this is one such moment: we love South William, and can't help applauding the Bereen brothers' efforts to create something rather different to the typical superpub in this spot. Mercifully, though, South William doesn't feel 'worthy' or stuffy in the slightest: it's a fun, unpretentious bar and club with

plenty of events running throughout the week to keep its fans busy. Those fans are also kept well-lubricated: on South William's broad cocktail menu, we've yet to find a dud, and they do a mean sidecar. Though they've recently stopped serving their popular pie menu, South William offers daily specials in food, from a hearty Brazilian stew to more familiar fare, all linked in with whatever club night is running. And yes, many club nights

do rock the venue. Larry's Garage every Sunday sees DJ Eoin Long spinning tunes, while the Brazilian-themed Groovalization (where you can pick up that hearty stew) runs on Tuesdays. The bar also hosts a range of regular monthly nights, from the Zombie Circus to Mr Whippy's Soundsystem.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week, from 16:00 (12:00 Thursday to Saturday) to 23:30 (02:30 Thursday to Saturday, 23:00 Sunday). www.2night.ie for club listings.

Getting there: From the bottom of Grafton Street (facing up towards Stephens Green), take a right turn onto Wicklow Street. Five minutes down the street, turn left onto South William Street. South William will be halfway up the street on your left.



Renards

23, Frederick Street - Dublin 2.
It's Renards, Jim, but not as we know it - Robbie Fox's original playground for Celtic tiger cubs has been reopened with new faces in charge, a spiffy new layout and a more broad-based appeal: the offer of pints for €4 before midnight seems almost symbolic of a bar and club looking to attract more than just the rarefied set that came to its predecessor. Cheaper still are the pints of OLM

Lager, a smooth-as-velvet new beer created by former Heineken brewers and available for €3 a pint. That's not to say, however, that there's no appreciation of luxury anymore - a champagne bar upstairs, along with a broad cocktail menu, takes care of that. The bar opens during the daytime, making it a nice spot to catch the match with a drink or two, though they're keeping their eye on the late-night ball here: Renards is

open till the wee hours from Thursday to Saturday, with three Dublin DJs spinning everything from funky house to chart-toppers across the three floors of the venue. Admission is free before 23:00 (even on Saturdays), costing €8 with a flyer and €10 without thereafter. It was some time in the making, but this new incarnation of Renards looks like one hell of a comeback.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week, from 12:00 to 23:30 (02:30 Thursday to Saturday, 23:00 Sunday).

Getting there: From the Molly Malone statue (facing towards Grafton Street), turn left and head down Nassau Street. Take a right turn onto Frederick Street. Renards will be five minutes walk up the street on your left.



THE GRAND SOCIAL

The Grand Social

11, Lower Liffey Street - Dublin 1
Tel: 018740076

Many of us will miss the old Pravda, or at least its impressive selection of vodkas. However, The Grand Social seems altogether more suitable for today's stimulation-craving clubbers. Ever since it opened during the Absolute Fringe Fest (under the moniker of the Absolut Fringe Factory), the club has hosted varied events, from live music to comedy, cinema screenings and all kinds of performance. The Grand Social is split across four venues – the ballroom, the loft, the garden and the parlour – and there's invariably something interesting to check out. The diverse range of regular club nights and more is encouraging; Crackity Jones, a free cinema and late-night clubbing medley, is a popular choice on Tuesdays, as is No Disko, which runs on Fridays since relocating from The Academy. Indietronic sees DJ Eamon Barrett doing his thing every Saturday, and Saucy Sundays is a live music session running from 14:00. There are also plenty of one-off gigs and parties to check out too. All the action takes place against a décor that's been put together with a specific New York Factory feel in mind.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week until late. Check www.2night.ie for event listings.

Getting there: From O'Connell Bridge (facing towards the Daniel O'Connell statue), turn left and walk along Bachelor's Walk. Turn right at lower Liffey Street, and The Fringe Factory should be facing you.



The Sugar Club

8, Lower Leeson Street - Dublin 2
Tel: 016787188

It's hard to remember where we went for intimate gigs and fringe-interest events before the Sugar Club opened its doors just over a decade ago. One thing's for sure, though: it wasn't half as fancy. The space used to house the much-missed Irish Film Theatre, and a massive renovation transformed it. Now, with wood-panelled walls (irreplaceable Burmese

Teak, we're told) and plush seating in a layout that calls to mind cabaret clubs of yore, the setting for gigs and other events is as good as any in Dublin. More importantly, the venue attracts acts that do it justice: highlights from the past twelve months have included a manic one-man Lord of The Rings, sell-out weekly screenings of The Room (one of the film's most-loved stars, Greg Sestero, even made it to one) and

plenty of burlesque. 2011 is looking just as hot, with the regular Friday and Saturday club nights, a batch of new gigs, and a promise from the owners to continue supporting the arts. Even if you're not enthralled by whatever's taking place, The Sugar Club also has two bars with plenty of varied beers and a lengthy cocktail menu. It's easy to see why the past ten years have flown by at this place.

Opening hours: Opening hours vary depending on the programme, but The Sugar Club is typically open seven days a week, from 20:00 to 00:00. Check www.2night.ie for gig and event listings.

Getting there: From the Leeson street end of Stephen's Green, cross the road onto Leeson Street. You should see the Sugar Club on your right.



The Wright Venue

South Quarter, Airside Business Park –
County Dublin
Tel: 018900099

Having celebrated its first birthday in 2010, The Wright Venue venue continues to pay back its owners for the bold gambit of opening a massive club outside the city centre. With a capacity of 2700, it's truly on an epic scale and its location adjacent to the airport means that it's only 15 minutes from the city centre via the port tunnel. The venue houses a spacious club and performance area, a terrace bar, a members-only Penthouse Club, and the laid-back Purple Room that evokes a 1920s Harlem Jazz Club. It also boasts The Cities – luxurious private hire booths with plasma screens, gaming consoles and pre-stocked fridges. Top Irish and International DJs appear regularly, and the monthly Urban Friday (featuring resident spinner Frank Jez, plus lots of R'n'B and Hip Hop) is a highlight. It may be a relatively new addition to the city's clubbing scene, but it's already won international kudos as a must-visit place for anyone stopping off in the city - just ask Westlife, Peaches Geldof, Rihanna or Pixie Lott, who've all visited following Dublin gigs. The club has residencies from international clubbing marquee Fierce Angel and regular slots from the DJ elite including Roger Sanchez, Dirty Vegas and many more.

Opening hours: Open every Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Bank Holiday Sunday from 22:00. Also available for private hire, launches and film shoots.

Getting there: Coming out of Dublin Airport (the Swords Road/Airport Roundabout), turn left and head north on the Dublin Road. Take the seventh right (at a roundabout) onto the Swords Road, which then becomes Lakeshore Drive. At the fork in the road, take a right, and the Wright Venue should be on your left. Alternatively, you can journey to the venue by minibus. Buses leave at 23:00 and 00:00 from the Mansion House and various locations across the city – check out www.thewrightvenue.ie for details.



Tramco Brewery

Tramco Brewery
121, Lower Rathmines Road – Dublin 6
Tel: 014968050

Sitting in a fiercely competitive area for easy-going drinkers or full-on clubbers, a place like Tramco needs to have something for everyone. Luckily, it does. Early in the evening, this place is great for kicking back over their range of craft beers: the menu includes Munich lager, Hauss lager, and a very tasty red ale. The brews are particularly appealing when there's a match on: the venue has recently erected a forty-foot cinema screen in the spacious beer garden. It's a sign of how seriously the folks at Tramco take the entertainment, and they follow through too, with some cracking one-off gigs and a range of popular club nights. Wednesdays and Thursdays see tempting promotions run for the students of the area – selected bottles and shots are offered for €2, a price that's hard to match anywhere else.

Opening hours: Open Wednesday to Saturday from 17:30 to 03:00.

Getting there: Tramco is on the line of the 15A/B/E buses. These all leave from Eden Quay and pass by Trinity College. If on foot, from the Harcourt Street end of Stephen's Green, walk down Cuffe Street away from the Green. Turn left at Wexford Street, and continue walking on the same road, crossing the canal. As you come into Rathmines, Tramco will be on your right.



Vanilla Nightclub

19, Morehampton Road - Dublin 4
Tel: 016379805

You can't read a newspaper nowadays without discovering new facts about Ireland's banjaxed economy and how we'll all have to emigrate or starve. Luckily, the folks behind Vanilla nightclub either don't read the papers, or manfully ignore them. Not only have they set up in Dublin 4's hampton hotel - just down the round from several NAMA-bound

developers - but they've also gone for a distinctly decadent, boutique look. Vanilla is packed with ultra-modern furnishings, cool lighting and luxury at every corner, including a great mix of signature on popular cocktails. The music on the dance-floor is eclectic - a mix of sounds from the 70s through to the modern day, and spanning genres from Barry White to Lady Gaga. What's more, they even have private booths

available with the same futuristic aesthetic, plus a docking station for an iPod - allowing you and your mates to play the DJ for the evening. Even though doors typically open at 23:00, you can swing by hampton hotel earlier in the evening and grab a pre-clubbing cocktail at the hotel bar. The bar also features live music from 20:00 every Friday and Saturday night. Admission is for the over-26s.

Opening hours: Open Friday and Saturday, from 23:00 to late.
Getting there: From the canal end of Leeson Street, cross the bridge and head down Upper Leeson Street until it becomes Morehampton Road. Hampton hotel will be in a small turn-off on your right.

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