

2night magazine



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DUBLIN
JUNE 2010

the guide *ISSUE*

The best restaurants and venues in Dublin

Welcome to 2night's June issue, and our second guide to the best restaurants and venues in the city. This month, we've scouted out some of the most intriguing places on both sides of the Liffey, venturing from the hard-rock Mecca of Fibbers on Ormond Quay to the refined cool of The Secret Bar and The Exchequer, with many more fun and worthwhile places in between. It's a very varied line-up, and we reckon there's something for everyone in this little magazine.

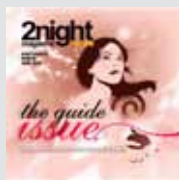
If you can't find what you're looking for in these pages, of course (and even if you can) you'll find many more places listed on our website at www.2night.ie. Along with informed reviews of this great city's best venues, you can visit www.2night.ie to find out about events all over Dublin, from live music and clubbing to cinema listings and the arts - in other words, it's the single best place to get all you need for a great night out in one sitting. You can have your say on your favourite - or least favourite - venues through 2night, and it's even easier than ever to do that: with our new look website, all you need is a Facebook account to comment on a venue! Even when you're on the go, you can use 2night through your mobile phone by visiting our mobile site (m.2night.ie) or downloading our fantastic, easy-to-use iPhone app. Like everything else from 2night, it's absolutely free - because we're good like that.

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meet other night-life enthusiasts keen on making the most of the night

2night
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your guide to restaurants, venues and events in your city

after work



Taste of Emilia

1, Lower Liffey Street – Dublin 1
Tel: 01 8788188

It may be a few streets away from the 'official' Italian Quarter, but Taste of Emilia is well-regarded as a place to enjoy the truly authentic aperitif experience in Dublin. It's got a tiny-but-charming dining room that's typically close to filling point and, even better, staff that seem positively filled with the joys of life. The atmosphere is banter-packed, and the fare is wonderful, dominated by rustic platters of meat and other nibbles, though you can grab a wrap if you so desire. Drinks are handy too: a glass of prosecco costing only €5 is always appealing, and there's plenty of Italian wine on offer for those who aren't so keen on the bubbly stuff. Naturally, the coffee is deliciously strong. Open seven days a week. Open Monday to Tuesday from 17:30 to 22:30, Wednesday to Saturday, from 12:00 to 22:30, Sunday from 15:00 to 21:00.



Central Hotel Library Bar

The Central Hotel, Exchequer Street
– Dublin 2
Tel: 01 6797302

Even when the area was slightly shabbier, The Central Hotel's Library Bar was very popular among those sufficiently clued-in or fortunate to discover it. The furniture has always been plush and the atmosphere calming, so the chance to idle away

a few hours in relative peace made this one of the city centre's bona-fide hidden gems. The same can't be said any more – though it's still precious, The Library Bar is no longer a secret, and there's a considerable bustle throughout the day. Fortunately, despite a general spruce-up, it's still retained the down-to-earth charm we know and love – plus the roar-

ing open fire that makes it magical on colder days. The service remains amiable but efficient. There's also a menu of Irish-style bar food, making it ideal for a sneaky pint over lunch as well as a drink or two before dinner.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week, from 12:00 to 23:30 (00:30 Friday and Saturday, 23:30 Sunday) Getting there: From the Molly Ma-

lone statue, head up Grafton Street towards Stephen's Green, but take a right onto Wicklow Street. Follow the street for five minutes (the name will change to Exchequer Street) and you should see the Central Hotel on your right. The Library Bar will be on the first floor.



Hogan's

35, George's Street - Dublin 2
Tel: 016775904

This pub had something of a renaissance in the early 1990s, once again becoming a very popular post-work haunt. Happily, it's stayed popular with the crowd that discovered it back in those days, and among anyone who appreciates a laid-back haunt with comfy seating some interesting tunes on the stereo, and enough interest to make it worth

staying there for the night. With three places to put yourself - a main standing bar, a side bar to loll about in, and a downstairs bar hosting weekend DJ sets - Hogan's has a lot to offer most punters, and the service is famously snappy. The decor is tasteful and moody, while the furniture has a hint of vintage chic about it - it's probably no surprise to regulars that this was originally planned to be a jazz club. Today, the DJs that take over Hogan's

from Thursday to Sunday play a mix of funk, rock and indie, and the action continues into the wee hours. This is a great place to listen to some tunes while enjoying a decent drink, though we'd recommend arriving before or after the 17:00 to 19:00 rush if you want to grab a table.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week, from 15:00 to 23:30 (01:00 Thursday and Sunday, 02:30 Friday to Saturday).

Getting there: From Central Bank (facing onto Dame Street), turn right and start walking away from Trinity College. Turn left at George's Street. Hogan's will be five minutes walk away on your left, at the corner of George's Street and Fade Street.



The Hut

159, Phibsboro Road, Phibsboro - 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 that isn't frightening to visit unless you've been drinking there for the last decade. The Hut, therefore, is a pretty special find, with welcoming staff who'll ask how you're doing and - gasp - actually wait for an answer. The regulars are

similarly friendly, which helps explain why it's a popular place 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 whenever Bohemians F.C. are playing down the road.

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 Porterhouse

16-18, Parliament Street, Temple Bar – Dublin 2.

Tel: 016798847

Long ago, we reckon, the folks at The Porterhouse decided not to bother competing with the plethora of touristy pubs that had sprung up in temple bar at doling out pints of Guinness to tourists. Instead, they set up one of the country's most highly respected microbreweries, and introduced both Dubliners and visitors to the joys of Oyster

Stout, Brainblasta, Temple Brau and many more drinks. The rest is history. These brews are impressive enough, but they've also imported some of the best beers from around the world to add to the attraction, from potent Trappist brews to subtle Asian drinks. This means that there's almost inevitably something you haven't tasted before on offer, unless you're prepared to take on the liver-shredding challenge of trying everything on the menu.

The bar, part of an ever-expanding pub empire, has a traditional look without being twee, and is split over several floors, with a large smoking area and a few tables available if you fancy tucking into the above-average pub-grub – the porterhouse burger offers both soakage and flavour, a precious combination. Live music seven nights a week rounds out a great drinking experience.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week, from 11:30 (12:00 Sunday) to 23:30 (02:30 Friday and Saturday, 23:00 Sunday).

Getting there: From the Central bank (facing onto Dame Street), turn right and start walking away from Trinity College. Turn right onto Parliament Street. The Porterhouse will be half-way down the street, on your right.



The Secret Bar

3, Fade Street – Dublin 2.

A converted building filled with nooks, crannies, and interesting features, The Secret Bar has quickly established itself as one of the city's favourite after-work spots since opening in 2008. We reckon that's due at least in part to its consistently laid-back feel, enhanced by a décor that reminds everyone of the Manhattan apartment they'll never be cool enough to have – exposed brickwork, walls painted in both bold

primary colours and white, plus a blend of both rustic and modern furniture, all somehow work. The music is similarly soothing, with a blend of funk and light house softened by the odd tropical note, and a cocktail here is a relaxing experience. We're particular admirers of everything they do with elderflower liqueur, though there are plenty of interesting twists on classic recipes to drink, and beer-lovers have ample choice too. The Secret Bar has started serv-

ing pub food from 13:00 on Monday to Friday, with a menu devised by those accomplished chefs downstairs at l'Gueuleton, and brunch available on Saturday and Sunday. Come for the Saturday barbecue – along with the always-busy Friday night rush, it's a great time to enjoy the bar's distinctive charm.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week, from 13:00 to 23:30 (01:00 Thursday and Sunday, 02:30 Friday and Saturday).

Getting there: From Central Bank (facing onto Dame Street) turn right and start walking away from Trinity College. Take a left turn onto George's Street and walk up it for ten minutes until you reach Fade Street, on your left. The Secret Bar will be half-way down the street on your right.

Dinner



Buenos Aires Grill

Unit 2, Castle Lane, Golden Lane – Dublin 8
Tel: 014759616

Argentinean food may well be the most under-rated cuisine among Dubliners. Not because it's talked about derisively, you understand – the problem is that it's not raved about enough at all. Thankfully, the city's first Argentinean restaurant has been generating considerable buzz. The look is a long way from the pampas or the back streets of Buenos Aires, with a comfortable but formal black and white dining room set off by the odd splash of red. The menu, though, is undeniably authentic, with lashings of meat and seafood. We're suckers for the garnish they use on their prime steaks and the grilled half rack of lamb. Thankfully, in a nod to novices, they offer platters for two, allowing you to sample more than one dish.

Opening hours: Open Monday to Saturday. Lunch served Monday to Friday, from 12:00 to 15:00, dinner Monday to Saturday from 17:00 to late. Getting there: From Stephens Green Shopping Centre, head down South King Street, following the street as it winds past South William Street. Keep going, crossing George's Street, and you will hit Golden Lane after about five minutes.



Café Carlo at Lynam's Hotel

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

Having been on the go for six years, Café Carlo does a brisk little trade including lunchtime regulars from local businesses, a sizeable pre-theatre crowd, and plenty of passing traffic throughout the day. The décor is well-thought-out – no twee Italianisms, plenty of room between tables and an airy atmosphere – but it's the food

that draws superlatives. Rather than dwelling entirely on Italian cuisine, the folks at Café Carlo have started to offer a huge range of dishes, from tasty chicken wings with Carlo's secret sauce to afterwork tapas with a chilled glass of wine. Great Irish dishes are included on the menu, with pan-fried pork medallions, a fine sirloin steak and the salmon all highlights. There's plenty of value too, with appealing

set menus for pre-theatre, lunch and evening diners, while a lengthy snack menu makes this place worth a visit even if you don't fancy a full meal. Friendly staff and a busy-but-stress-free atmosphere make this a great little oasis from O'Connell Street for a casual meal with plenty of flavour – and value to boot.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week, from 12:00 to 22:00. Getting there: From the spire, head north up O'Connell Street. You will see Café Carlo almost immediately on your left.



Chez Max

133, Baggot Street – Dublin 2
Tel: 016618899

If the Chez Max café down by Dublin Castle is the friendly, homely side of the French character, this bistro has distinctly more va va voom. That's not to say, though, that this is lacking in charm: quite apart from the spacious and bright décor, this place has very welcoming staff, while the menu is positively loaded with authentic and delicious classic French fare. The vegetable crumble will even satisfy pure carnivores, while moules frites and boeuf Bourguignon will appeal to purists. A nice little buzz about the place makes it ideal for ordering another drink and lingering after dinner.

Open seven days a week. Lunch served from 12:00 to 15:30 (16:00 Saturday), dinner from 17:30 to 22:00 (23:00 Friday and Saturday).

Getting there: From Stephens Green Shopping Centre, walk down Stephens Green toward the canal. Cross the road onto Merrion Row and keep walking until you are on Baggot Street.



Chilli Banana

112 Upper Drumcondra Road, Drumcondra – Dublin 9
Tel: 017979239

It's official – great Thai food has arrived in the suburbs. In fact, the more laid-back – and reasonably-priced – restaurants that dot the food-loving outskirts of Dublin frequently trump the hip city-centre places, and Chilli Banana in Drumcondra ticks all the boxes you'd hope for from such a place. Recently re-opened after a very successful facelift, it manages to maintain a friendly vibe despite the slick look and the high-quality food. The highlights of the menu include the beef pangang and the nua kratiem prig tai (beef and garlic to you and me), while there's a great €18 early bird deal on the go as well.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week, from 17:30 to 22:30.

Getting there: The best way to reach Chilli Banana is by bus – the 46X (from Stephen's Green and O'Connell Street) stops on the Drumcondra Road. Get out at the St Patrick's College stop and continue walking up the Drumcondra Road in the same direction. You will soon see Chilli Banana.



Christophe's Café

Duck Lane, Smithfield Village – Dublin 7

Tel: 01 887 4417

Traditional homemade dishes, wholesome soups, hearty sandwiches and a warm welcome have drawn considerable numbers of people out to this deceptively large neighbourhood restaurant. We can hardly blame them: Christophe's has a knack of making anyone feel at home, with unpretentious but warm décor and a fair buzz in the dining room. There's a distinct-

ly gallic feel about the place, exemplified in the menu: rustic staples like the assiette of cured meat blend very well with more sophisticated fare, and there are dishes (we're thinking primarily of the veal stew and the rabbit and hazelnut terrine) you don't typically find at French restaurants of this quality. There are, of course, the choices we've come to expect: a fine rib-eye, some seafood and a leg of lamb all make an appearance. We can't fault the cooking or pres-

entation, while the service is similarly on-the-button. Anyone in need of a fancy lunch to grab on the go will be glad that they've now accepting take away orders before 12.

Opening hours: Open Monday to Saturday. Breakfast Lunch served Monday to Saturday from 08:00 to 17:00, dinner Tuesday to Saturday from 17:00 to 22:00.

Getting there: From Christ Church Cathedral, head down Winetavern Street and cross the Liffey before

turning left onto the northside quays. Head down the quays for five minutes before turning right onto Smithfield. Duck lane will be a turn-off on the right just a few minutes walk onto Smithfield square.



Dada

44-45 South William Street –
Dublin 2

Tel: 016170777

Husband and wife team Aziz and Eva Nouhi have done a good job in creating a little Moroccan oasis on South William Street in Dada Restaurant. The restaurant's look is heavily inspired by the Moorish architecture of North Africa and Southern Spain, with unusually-shaped arches, warm colours on the walls and intimate lighting all adding to the exotic feel.

The food prepared by head chef Moulay Joseph is similarly moreish (get it?), with rich flavours and authentic recipes. The lamb tangine is a particular delight, and we could gobble their couscous all day. You'll also be amazed at the vegetable dishes that you never imagined would worth, including a gorgeous pumpkin salad. A Moroccan coffee, meanwhile, is a nice way to round out the meal. The atmosphere at Dada is pretty quiet, though it's starting to pick up

considerably as more people hear of the place. In other words, get in there while you can still reserve a table.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week. Lunch served Thursday to Sunday, from 12:00 to 16:00 (17:00 Saturday and Sunday). Dinner served from 17:00 to late.

Getting there: From the Molly Malone statue, head up Grafton Street towards Stephens Green, taking a right at Wicklow Street. Head down Wicklow Street for about four minutes, be-

fore taking a left onto South William Street. Dada will be two minutes up the street, on your left.



Dall'Italiano

Hart's Corner, Glasnevin – Dublin 11
Tel: 018302549

Since opening its doors a year ago, Dall'Italiano has managed to capture all the elements that neighbourhood restaurants-cum-coffee-shops should aspire to: friendly service, an informal and relaxing atmosphere, and food that locals would happily travel into town for. Local office workers benefit from a lengthy choice of paninis and keen lunch deals, while the evening sees a full A La Carte menu on offer. Interestingly, the Italian-owned place broadens its remit to include some traditional dishes Dubliners rarely get to experience in our eateries – the hearty spezzatino di manzo, a flavourful meat stew, and pollo taormina are just two examples. The lunch menu, offering a full meal for €9.80, changes weekly, ensuring plenty of variety, while traditional Italian sweets like the cassata Siciliana round out a meal delightfully. In other words, townies, it's well worth the trip.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week. Breakfast served from 10:00 to 12:00, Monday to Saturday, Lunch served seven days a week from 12:00 to 15:00, dinner from 15:00 to 22:30 (22:00 Sunday). All day panini menu available.

Getting there: The best way to reach Dall'Italiano is by bus: the 4, 19, 19A and 83 all stop nearby. After the bus passes through Phibsboro, it will reach Hart's Corner, turning right and then right again in quick succession. Get off the bus – you'll be on Botanic Road – and turn right onto Lindsay Road. After you walk down Lindsay Road for two minutes, you should see Dall'Italiano straight ahead.



Darwins

80, Aungier Street – Dublin 2
Tel: 014757511

Partisans of Darwin's wept bitter tears when the original home of 'evolutionary food' appeared to shut up shop and make way for Conrad Gallagher's Salon Des Saveurs. Thankfully, we weren't deprived of the place for long, as they've opened up again just across the road. Even better, we can confirm that it's still got that classy-but-unpretentious feel going on, with a conservative-enough

décor but very welcoming staff, and a fair hum of unpressed conversation. Whether the food qualifies as 'evolutionary' is the source of some debate, though – of course, one may well argue that the dishes are interesting (the lamb plate, for example, with a char grilled half rack and roasted eye fillet, marinated in garlic and rosemary and served with a mint jus) and indeed innovative, but they don't seem determined to break the culinary mould into pieces – at least, not

if their well-executed takes on Irish classic steaks and seafood dishes are anything to go by. We guess it's more of a personal evolution they have in mind: after seeing the kind of quality you get for mains between €20 and €30 a plate, and how interesting wines don't need to cost the earth, you'll probably demand that every other restaurant ups its game a little.

Opening hours: Open Monday to Saturday, from 17:00 to late.
Getting there. From Stephens Green Shopping Centre (facing onto Grafton Street), turn left and head down South King Street, crossing South William Street and following the road as it winds around, until you reach George's Street. Turn left and walk up the street for five minutes – the name changes to Aungier Street, and Darwin's will be on your right.



Radha Govinda's

83 Middle Abbey Street
Tel: 014750309

If the mental image you have of veggie grub involved lentils, the oily abomination that is tofu, or generally insipid fare that exercises your gag reflex more than your tastebuds, you clearly have never checked out Radha Govindas. A steady stream of diners to this northside branch of the popular chain belies the notion that

there's no appetite in this neck of the woods for hearty food that doesn't involve animals being killed. There's a laid-back atmosphere and the place is welcoming for veggies of all kinds, whether their aversion to eating meat comes from dietary, religious or other moral reasons. Fortunately, even meat-lovers won't feel like they're doing penance by eating here: the menu changes by day, but the Govin-

das Special Subji (a smorgasbord of vegetables with basmati rice) and the veggie burger are almost always on. There are snacks and lighter bites too, along with a varied selection of deserts: if the deliciously coconutty bounty balls are being served, grab more than one. Particularly for the portion sizes and quality on offer, the prices here are excellent.

Opening hours: Open Monday to Saturday, from 12:00 to 21:00.
Directions: From O'Connell Bridge, head up O'Connell Street and take a left turn onto Abbey Street. Govindas will be on your right, near Eason's.



Green 19

19, Camden Street – Dublin 2
Tel: 014789626

Green Nineteen is a relatively new kid on the block, having only opened its doors in October 2008. It's got a simple proposition to suit the times we're in too: breakfast dishes for a fiver, lunch for €8 or less, and dinner for €10. The food itself - think well-made Irish staples with the odd inter-

national dish thrown in - is well worth travelling up to Camden Street for. In particular, the portobello mushroom, pinchos, and corned beef have been attracting rave reviews. In our experience, they do a mean venison pie too, while their handmade ketchup is a unique and tasty touch. The restaurant attracts a mixed crowd of money-conscious locals, gig-goers

and families, leading to a different atmosphere on just about every visit. For a reasonably priced treat, you should check out the drinks menu: beers are all €4 or €5, while a variety of cocktails are available at €9 a pop. Add an impressive collection of paintings for patrons to peruse during dinner, and you've a combination that's bound to appeal.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week, from 11:00 (12:00 Sunday) to 23:00 (18:00 Sunday).

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 Green Nineteen should be five minutes down the street on your left.



Il Posto

10, Stephens Green – Dublin 2

It's 12 years since the Jackson sisters set up here with the aim of bringing a high-class Italian offering to the 'golden mile' of Merrion Row and Stephens Green. Based on the crowds wandering into the atmospheric cellar restaurant or dining al fresco upstairs, their mission is going well. Prices aren't extortionate, especially considering the sheer quality of the fare, but this place is

well into 'special treat' territory for most. Thankfully, an insanely good value lunch menu - which includes the ever popular lamb's liver - is at hand to tempt us into splurging on a more regular basis. Along with the liver, the polpetta (a delicious serving of beef meatballs with a spicy pepper sauce) comes highly recommended. Both the outdoor setting and underground dining rooms have their charms - we'd lean towards going

underground at dinnertime, both for sheer coziness and to avoid sozzled passers-by. Meanwhile, staff are exceedingly attentive - last time we visited, we weren't even able to pour our own glasses of wine. If you like being thoroughly pampered and stuffed with good food (who doesn't?) drop in here when you're feeling flush - or fancy an exceptional lunch.

Opening hours: Open Monday to Saturday. Lunch served from 12:00 to 14:30, dinner from 17:30 to late. Getting there: From Stephens Green Shopping Centre (facing onto Grafton Street) turn right and start walking towards the canals. You will see Il Posto on your left almost immediately.



Le Bon Crubeen

81-82, Talbot Street – Dublin 1
Tel: 017040126

You could easily pass by the exterior of this surprisingly-classy French restaurant without a second glance, but it's worth taking the time to look inside: the décor has a modern but calming feel, with dark wood and solid-but-comfortable furnishings. If the dining room is conservative, though, there's plenty of pizzazz on in the kitchen. The food is dominated

by gallic brasserie classics, though with a distinctly value-conscious edge – where else in town can you get a fine pot roast guinea fowl or a grilled sea bass (with wilted spinach, fondant potato and an intriguing caper butter Sauce) for €12.50? By far our favourite dish, though is the five-spiced pork belly – it's slightly pricier at €17.80, but still a relative snip. The service is attentive without being over-the-top, and you'll fall in love

with the perfectly prepared vanilla brûlée, while the Bulmers cider and apple crumble is also worth a shout. All in all, it's a welcome addition to Dublin 1's culinary scene, and a great place to grab good French cuisine without going over the top.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week, from 12:00 to 21:30.
Getting there: From O'Connell Bridge, head up O'Connell Street, turning right onto North Earl Street. Walk to the end of the street, crossing onto Talbot Street, and Le Bon Crubeen will be on your right.



L'Gueuleton

5, Fade Street – Dublin 2
Tel: 016753708

Lying just off the George's Street restaurant strip, L'Gueuleton still draws an impressively-sized (and dressed) crowd to sit in the rustic French-style dining room – the odd rickety chair or table adds to the charm. The food, though, is anything but rickety, with fresh and high quality ingredients lovingly blended together – they even bake their own bread in this place. The menu features all the hearty fare

you'd expect at a traditional French bistro, from the venison stew to the obligatory Toulouse sausages, and Irish upper-range staples such as the slow roasted pork belly. While these are excellently done, we like some of the dishes you'll rarely find in Dublin, such as the civet of wild Irish hare or the grilled hake with chorizo. Desserts are also a mix of Irish and French classics, with the white chocolate mousse particularly worthwhile. High-end food coupled with manage-

able prices tends to ensure a restaurant stays busy, and L'Gueuleton is no exception. The battle to get a seat is made fiercer by the restaurant's no-reservations policy, though exceptions can be made for particularly large groups. Of course, any annoyance at this little anachronism is quickly dispelled by the satisfaction once you actually sit down, and the sheer buzz of the dining room.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week. Lunch served 12:30 (13:00 Sunday) to 15:00, dinner from 18:00 to 22:00 (21:00 Sunday).
Getting there: From Central Bank (facing onto Dame Street), turn right and start walking away from Trinity College. Turn left at George's Street, and walk up until you reach Fade Street. Turn left onto Fade Street, and L'Gueuleton will be on your right.



Pacino's

18, Suffolk Street – Dublin 2
Tel: 016775651

It seems odd to apply the term 'hidden gem' to a restaurant and venue that's been open since 1994 on Suffolk Street, but people that regularly pass by Pacinos often do so in ignorance. For starters, the large dining room has been filled with light – and an easy-going atmosphere – since a 2008 renovation. That renovation has also seen the restaurant's basement

transformed into a cellar bar and venue that is free to hire for private parties. When patrons are finished enjoying themselves downstairs, they can head upstairs, mingling at the Rock'Roll club every Friday or the hot Salsa club on Saturday nights. Even though they've added these late night clubs, it's clear that the staff at Pacino's haven't taken their eyes off the food either. The breakfast menu still has a mix of light crepes and

hearty Irish fare, while lunch and evening features Italian classics. The classic and gourmet pizzas – and the delicious Carbonara – are all cooked to perfection. Great value is on offer from Sunday to Wednesday, with two courses available for €10. More recently, the restaurant has developed a range of sauces and olive oil that can be bought to take home, plus soft ice cream and milkshakes to enjoy there or on the go.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week, from 07:30 (09:00 Saturday, 10:00 Sunday) to 23:00 (22:00 Monday). Late club Friday and Saturday from 23:00.

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



Sabor Brazil

50, Pleasants Street - Dublin 2
Tel: 014750304

This restaurant originally opened as a fresh and pleasant – but pretty informal – place with a café vibe. However, Sabor Brazil has decided to move to a much higher spot on our culinary brow, most obviously in its décor, which is blessed with a distinctly baroque charm. They've also upped the ante on the food front, with considerable success: the din-

ing room is frequently booked out, partly thanks to the fact that only 20 people can fit here in the first place! Moody lighting and a hint of opulence in the light furnishings adds plenty of ambience, and the concise menu is nothing if not authentic. There's something for most tastes (including steak for anyone who wants to stick to Irish fare) but we'd be fans of the Peito De Frango Recheado, a succulent chicken breast stuffed

with cream cheese and chives, and wrapped in bacon. The cook used to be a chocolatier in Brazil, meaning deserts are obligatory. For the totally authentic experience, kick off the excellent meal by ordering one of the best traditional Caipirinhas available in the city, though there's plenty of South American wine on offer too.

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.



Salon Des Saveurs

16, Aungier Street – Dublin 2
Tel: 014758840

Many of the reviews about this place have tended to dwell on stories about Conrad Gallagher's South African misadventure and AWOL paintings, proving once and for all that many food critics prefer gossip to actual analysis. Thankfully, Gallagher has proved utterly defiant, making a massive portrait of chefs that have influenced him the highlight of the pleasant dining room. More to the

point, the (alleged) sins of the father shouldn't damn this fine little restaurant, which has an interesting and worthy concept at its heart: a selection of four tasting menus, ranging from €24 right up to €54, are on offer, with complementary flavours and ingredients all adding up to a super meal. There's are separate lunch and early bird menus on offer too, but that rather defeats the point - besides, the tasting menus are a delight, not least in the way that desert at the end is all

centred around a common theme, be it apple, lemon or chocolate. We're big fans of tasting menu two, which features a superlative-inducing canon of lamb and a 'pumpkin' theme throughout. Special dietary requirements can be catered for, but it's best to mention this when reserving.

Opening hours: Open Monday to Saturday. Lunch from 12:30 to 14:30 (extra sitting Friday at 16:00). Getting there: From Stephens Green Shopping Centre, walk away from the green down South King Street. Cross onto Stephen Street and take a left onto Aungier Street. Salon Des Saveurs will be five minutes walk up the street on your left.



The Winding Stair

40, Ormond Quay, Dublin 1
Tel: 018727320

Once known as an easy-going combination of a bookshop and café, The Winding Stair confirmed its shift into the high end of Ireland's culinary scene by snagging a Bib Gourmand in the Michelin Guide of 2008. The food has stayed at a high level since then, and remains focused on quality Irish cuisine with an organic emphasis. The menu changes but, in our experience, the preparation is very consistent – grab the Fermanagh Black Pig pork Wellington, or the Kilkeel hake fillet with lemon and parsley mash, if either are available. Service is snappy and, for food of this quality, it's fine value too, with dinner mains typically weighing in between €20 and €25. The lunch deal has been feted for offering great value, and rightly so – you get two courses for €17.95, or three for €22.95. Meanwhile, in a nice little touch, they've still kept the bookshop on the go downstairs, with a couple of rare tomes on offer – literary types should arrive early to have a flick through for some gems.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week. Lunch served from 12:00 to 15:00, dinner from 17:30 to 22:00. Bookshop open Tuesday to Sunday, from 12:00 to 17:00.

Getting there: From O'Connell Bridge (facing north), turn left onto Batchelor's Walk and keep walking until you pass Lower Liffey Street. The Winding Stair should be visible on your right.



Yamamori Sushi

38-39, Lower Ormond Quay –
Dublin 1.

Tel: 018720003

The sister restaurant of the popular Japanese place on George's Street has a few elements of the traditional experience (witness the low tables and long benches) but this is on the whole a more modern restaurant – the furniture is a bit more contemporary, the deceptively large dining room (and cool smoking area) is noticeably brighter, and the place has a certain relaxed hum to it that some of the trendiest places can only aspire to. As the name suggests, sushi is high on the agenda, and there's a broad menu to choose from - we're particular fans of the *suzuki* (sea bass), and conservative tastes are met well by items like the *tamago* (rolled egg). If even the sushi fails to excite, the menu contains all the tasty dishes available up at Yamamori Noodles. Dishes like the spicy beef ramen and wok-fried noodles are just as delicious too. They also earn considerable kudos for stocking some delicious Asian beers and other drinks, while the deserts are also a pleasant surprise. A fun, fresh and exciting place for a great meal at a reasonable price.

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

Getting there: From the O'Connell Street Bridge (facing north), turn left and start walking along the quays. When you reach Lower Ormond Quay, you should see Yamamori Noodles on your right.



Venu Brasserie

21, Annes Lane - Dublin 2

Tel: 016706755

Venu was hotly tipped on its 2006 opening to be Dublin's next big thing and, thankfully, has displayed considerably more staying power than many boomtime establishments that shared that moniker. That's primarily because there's considerably more substance here than many places, with top-drawer ingredients and staff both behind the bar and in the kitchen. Below the pale, ultra-luxurious décor of the entrance-way, this is a very cool, atmospheric cocktail bar and restaurant. The food, pulled together with élan by head chef Dennis Massey, is dominated Irish recipes that typically come with an interesting twist – however, the straight-up cod in tempura batter with chips still has a place in our hearts. The cocktail bar is one of the finest in the city, with a jaw-dropping array of spirits mixed by people who know the difference between a sidecar and a martini with brandy in it. There's a massive menu of drinks, but don't be intimidated: the team are understanding of customers who need time to pick their drinks, and happy to offer recommendations. If you're going with a few people, make sure you enjoy their company: the atmosphere is calm, and tables are spaced out, so you'll have plenty of time and space for conversation. A great midweek deal runs from Tuesday to Thursday all night, with three courses available for €25.

Opening hours: Open Tuesday to Saturday. Brunch served from 12:00 on Saturday. Last food orders at 23:00.

Getting there: From Grafton Street (walking from Stephen's Green towards the Molly Malone Statue) take a right turn at South Anne Street. Anne's Lane is the first right turn off South Anne Street.

after dinner



Fibbers Rock Bar

Upper Ormond Quay – Dublin 1

After years of nurturing a small but ferociously-devoted following, Fibber Magees (better known as simply Fibbers) has spawned another rock bar on the quays, meaning hard-core heavy metal fans now have more choice than ever before. Perhaps strangely, given the close proximity to Parnell Street, they're aiming for an older crowd here – not that we're complaining. It's markedly cleaner than the original and, while some hardcore fans of Fibbers MK1 may miss its distinctive smell, we really don't. With reasonably-priced pints and some comfy seating on offer too, we can see it taking off.

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: From the O'Connell Street Bridge (facing north), turn left and start walking along the quays. After about ten minutes, you should see Fibbers on your Right.



James Joyce Café Bar and Ulysses Venue

52, Middle Abbey Street – Dublin 1
Tel: 018728188

Given how many places fail to impress as a café bar or live venue, it's frankly a delight to stumble upon James Joyce and Ulysses, which does both with considerable style. This recently-opened venue, just a few minutes walk away from Abbey Street, has plenty to draw lovers of clubbing, cool new music, gourmet pub-grub, or all three. When you walk into what was once the Abbey Hotel Bar, the

first thing you'll notice is the stylish facelift it's been given: the space is bright and airy, though they've retained the odd bookcase and wooden panelling to make a laid-back area for enjoying Paul Cassin's fresh signature cocktails. The elderflower margarita and blueberry martini are particular highlights, while the 'fruit of the day' offer (where a selected fruit such as smoked banana or poached pear can be added to your drink for free) offers an interesting twist to many

classic recipes. The gigging and clubbing happens at the Ulysses venue, a traditional pub transformed into a cool and relaxing club, in the back. Top indie acts play every Friday night, and a mix of house, soul and funk fills the place at weekends. June 5 saw the launch of Alibi, a great Saturday night club with six international DJs and late opening until 02:30.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week, from 10:30 (12:30 Sunday) to 00:30 (01:30 Friday, 02:30 Saturday)

Getting there: From O'Connell Bridge, head north up O'Connell Street before taking a left at Abbey Street. James Joyce will be on your left, about five minutes walk up the street.



Shebeen Chic

4, South Great George's Street – Dublin 2

Tel: 016799667

It's positively striving for Boho cool, but we really don't mind. Since Shebeen Chic opened its doors a couple of years ago, they've frittered around the edges of it – ditching knick-knacks here, adding them there – but it's still retained that self-consciously dissolute look that separated it from just about every venue on the street. They've made a few good changes, though – for one, they've started hosting some intriguing gigs and DJ sets from time to time, and the food (already respectable) has come on considerably. Though, if anything, the menu become a little more conservative (we see no more references to 'Onion and Tears' on it anyway) the mainly Irish dishes are done well – they offer a fine bangers and mash with Vivian Fay's sausages, and the brulée of the day is invariably set off by some perfectly-portioned chocolate chip cookies. The cocktail menu mainly consists of well-known, popular drinks, but the raspberry snap (with vodka, chambord, fresh raspberries and lemon) and the eclipse (like the snap, but with Jack Daniels instead of vodka, plus limes and cranberry juice in place of lemon) are definitely interesting. Service is pretty snappy – in a good way – whether you're having a drink at the bar or sitting down for a meal.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week from 12:00 to 22:00 (23:00 Thursday to Saturday)

From Central Bank (facing onto Dame Street), turn right and start walking away from Trinity College. Turn left at George's Street, and Shebeen Chic will be on your left.



Sin-É

14, Upper Ormond Quay – Dublin 1
Tel: 018787078

A fine little boozier that's particularly popular among clued-in students and twentysomethings, Sin É has a fairly traditional decor inside, but the crowd is an eclectic mix – architects, artists and even the odd lawyer go here to get away from the Temple bar and workplace bustle, and they find

a fairly easy-going atmosphere that's enhanced by laid-back staff. It's a nice place to grab a Sunday beer or five – aside from the bar food, they have a range of continental brews along with the usual suspects and some delicious craft beers from the Big Hand Brewery. If you're after something a little more energetic, though, the events policy is a dream – between

varied DJ sets and some great live gigs, it's an ideal place for the music lover in search of something a little bit different. Whether you're interested by straight up indie rock, trad, or interesting up-and-comers showcased on the Wednesday night Dublin Beat Club, this place should float your boat.

Opening hours. Open seven days a week from 12:00 to 23:30 (00:30 Friday and Saturday, 23:00 Sunday). Getting there: From O'Connell Bridge (facing north) turn left and start heading down the quays. After about ten minutes, you should reach Upper Ormond Quay, and Sin É will be on your right.



The Exchequer

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

Who says you can't make a raging success of a gastropub in 2010? The Exchequer hit the ground running in style when it opened late in 2009, with both the bar and restaurant consistently packed out. "It's been a really great success," says co-owner Ian Tucker.

Of course, a quick visit will explain why this place has taken off at a time when many places are biting the dust: Along with the intriguing décor, you'll find real substance to what The

Exchequer offers. For one, they do quality Irish food with that all-too-rare combination of creativity and value – not only are their ling fingers battered in 'Belfast Blonde' craft beer, for example, but they're also available for €13.95. A wild venison pie (€11.95) and braised neck of lamb (€16.95) come recommended too. Treat yourself to their signature jelly and ice cream (€4.95) for desert – you'll thank us later.

The Exchequer has also caught on as a night-time venue with the help of DJs Marina Diniz and Richie Rock do-

ing a mix of upbeat, summery tunes and darker heavy house. And yes, that is a familiar face downing one of top mixologist Darren Geraghty's signature cocktails (you'll love the loop the loop): more clued-in celebs have taken to the place, which has played host to everything from The Holiday Show's celebration ahead of its second TV3 series to the after-party of Shutter Island's Irish premier. With all these ingredients, it's little wonder that The Exchequer is getting hotter and hotter as we head into summer.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week, from 12:00 (11:00 Sunday) to 23:30 (02:30 Friday and Saturday, 01:00 Sunday).

Getting there: From the bottom of Grafton Street (facing towards Stephen's Green, turn right onto Wicklow Street. Keep following the street for roughly eight minutes – the name changes to Exchequer Street as you get closer to Georges Street and you should see The Exchequer on your right.



The Czech Inn

Essex Gate, Essex Street, Temple Bar - Dublin 2
Tel: 016711535

Ignore the lame pun in the name, and instead simply admire the savvy of the folks behind The Czech Inn. Opened in 2006 to replace Isolde's Tower, the pub and restaurant aims to capture the traditional Czechoslovakian experience – from what we can see, they're pretty successful in that aim. It's certainly a popular place among eastern European 'new Irish',

and anyone with a real love of Czechoslovakia's excellent beer scene. The pub has some of the best delights from the country's 60 breweries available on draft and in bottled form – make sure to try the Šariš tmavý, a dark sweet-tasting beer, and some of the high-quality spirits too. The food has a less universal appeal, but should be tried at least once, if only to say you've had goulash. The grilled pork chop marinated in beer should appeal to everyone, and portions are

frankly enormous, which is nice if you find yourself taking to the unique food. Very late opening hours add to the attraction if you like burning the midnight oil in relatively relaxed surroundings.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week, from 12:00 to 03:00 (01:30 Sunday)

Getting there: From Central Bank, walk down Dame Street away from Trinity College. Take a right turn at Parliament Street, and a left at Essex Street. The Czech Inn should be on your right.



The International Bar

23, Wicklow Street – Dublin 2
Tel: 016779250

It's impossible really to review this pub without mentioning the laughs. For one, there's the comedy club upstairs in what used to be The Dubliner's offices running seven nights a week. It all kicks off with the Dublin Comedy Improv on Monday, Andrew Stanley's 'Mish Mash' every Tuesday, and the somewhat misnamed comedy cellar on Wednesdays. Thursday, Friday and Saturday features the In-

ternational Comedy Club under Des and Aidan Bishop's stewardship, and they've recently added an intriguing Sunday night slot, where established comics will try out new or experimental material – if you fancy being a guinea pig, or just want to hear something fresh, this night is for you. Even before the comics moved in back in 1988, though, the pub provided plenty of laughs. The deceptively-small ground floor bar effectively annexes the pavement outside as a

smoking area on busy nights, while a larger lounge downstairs is rather reminds us of the pub from Only Fools and Horses – not least in the banter from the close-knit crowd. Live music (there's a trad session on Sunday afternoons in the main bar, and upstairs before the comedy) and even the odd play complete the mix of a fun bar with lots going on.

Opening hours: Open seven days a week from 11:00 until 23:30 (00:30 Thursday to Saturday, 23:00 Sunday). Comedy seven days a week from 20:30 (20:00 Sunday).

Getting there: From the lower end of Grafton Street (facing towards Stephen's Green), turn left onto Wicklow Street. Walk for roughly five minutes, to the corner of Wicklow Street and South William Street, and The International should be on your right.



The Academy

57, Middle Abbey Street - Dublin 1
Tel: 018779999

Once upon a time, this place was infamous as Spirit, a hell-hole of a 'theatre bar' that was rather more popular among pill-poppers than lovers of drama. Fortunately, those days are gone, and the folks behind The Academy are making the most of this excellent venue. 650 gig-goers or clubbers can be catered for over two levels, making it the perfect venue for catching an up-and-coming group or a solid mid-level act. The acoustics are excellent for both live music and the quality club nights. Friday is a particular highlight, with Foreplay Friday (R'n'B, hip hop, garage and reggae) on the go in tandem with Now, That's What I Called Music!, a major 90s nostalgia-fest. Propaganda, the UK's biggest indie night, takes over on Saturdays, with multi-sensory shows incorporating music videos into every DJ's set.

Opening hours: Opening times vary depending on the schedule – visit www.2night.ie or www.theacademydublin.com for up-to-date information. Getting there: From O'Connell Bridge, head onto O'Connell Street, turning left at Abbey Street. The Academy will be half-way down the street on your left.



Spy

Powerscourt Townhouse, South William Street – Dublin 2.

Tel: 016770014

Set in a Georgian townhouse, Spy's biggest asset is its interior, complete with period features. It's a delight to wander around when deserted but, of course, Spy is usually well-packed. It's particularly popular with trendier

thirtysomethings, who don't seem to mind a slightly haughty staff or paying top dollar for drinks. Good quality music also helps save any bruised ego: Spy has developed a knack of picking top DJs before they make it big. It's a fun club to visit, and a little more mature than most late night spots in the city centre, with some

fantastic club nights. For bringing Greg Sestero (better known as Mark from cult so-bad-its-good movie *The Room*) to Dublin, Soundcheck on Thursdays has won our undying admiration.

Opening hours: Open from Wednesday to Saturday, 16:00 to 03:00. Getting there: From Molly Malone statue end of Grafton Street (facing towards Stephen's Green), turn right onto Wicklow Street. Take the second left onto Clarendon Street. Spy will be on your left, a few minutes walk up the street.



The Wright Venue

South Quarter, Airside, Co Dublin
Tel: 01 8900099 - www.twv.ie

The Wright Venue is one of those places that invites superlatives - parked adjacent to the airport, it's a jaw-droppingly large place, incorporating a substantial main club, a terrace bar, a members-only 'penthouse club', the laid-back and mature 'purple room' with 70s and 80s vibes, plus 'the cities' - luxurious private hire booths with plasma screens, gaming consoles and pre-stocked fridges available

from €75 (with half the value back in drinks!) a head. In other words, the people behind the Wright Venue haven't just attempted to match the 'superclubs' of Miami and Ibiza for scale - they're making a very decent stab at recreating the experience too. Top Irish and International DJs are on hand across the venue, with the monthly Urban Friday (featuring resident spinner Frank Jez, plus lots of R'n'B and Hip Hop) particularly popular. It may be a relatively new addition to the city's clubbing scene,

but it's already a landmark venue with residencies from international clubbing marques Fierce Angel and Kissdafunk and dj dates with Roger Sanchez, Trevor Nelson and Dirty Vegas coming up.

Opening hours: The Purple room and Penthouse Club is open on Thursday from 22:00 to 02:30 with the entire club open Friday and Saturday, from 22:00 to 02:30.

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 the Wright Venue Coaches. Buses leave at 23:00 and 00:00 from Westmoreland and more the 30 other locations across the city and county - check out www.thewrightvenue.ie for details.



Tripod

Old Harcourt Street Station, Harcour Street – Dublin 2
Tel: 014763374

Tripod may have only opened its doors in December 2006, but it's already become one of the most important spots on the Dublin nightlife scene. It's easy to see why: Tripod is a state-of-the-art venue, with top notch lighting and sound systems, and has won considerable accolades for the near-perfect sightlines towards the stage from any point in the main hall.

The interior is pure 'industrial chic', there's a swanky bar with a good view of the stage, and the grim-but-cool Crawdaddy is downstairs. Meanwhile, a VIP area is a very nice spot to rest your legs when you've danced your heart out. Of course, none of Tripod's well-thought-out design features would be worth writing about if the tunes weren't good enough to warrant a visit. Tripod's rise has been fuelled most of all by a very eclectic booking policy of live acts, and the

schedule offers something for everyone - with the exception of cheesy chart music 'lovers': Artists who have played here include everyone from Chic, Ani DiFranco, The Dandy Warhols and Cat Power to Carl Cox and Laurent Garnier. In addition to live music, Tripod is a clubbing mecca, with regular resident DJs – house and electro feature heavily on the playlists – and some top international spinners.

Opening Hours: Opening times vary depending on schedule. Check www.2night.ie and www.pod.ie for regular updates.

Getting there: From the Harcourt Street end of Stephen's Green, head up Harcourt Street. After roughly ten minutes walking up the street, you should see Tripod on your left.



YO!
SUSHI

YO Sushi
Brown Thomas Clarendon Street, Dublin 2
OPENING HOURS:
Mon - Thurs: 12 pm to 9 pm
Fri-Sat: 12 pm to 11 pm
Sun: 1pm to 9 pm

YO Sushi
Dundrum Town Centre, Co. Dublin
OPENING HOURS:
Mon - Fri: 12 pm to 9 pm
Sat - Sun: 12 pm to 7 pm

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