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# nightspots

weekly nightlife section in



# the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in  
WINDY CITY TIMES

## SAVOR

### STK Chicago; honeygrow; Stock and Ledger

BY ANDREW DAVIS

There are old-school steakhouses—and then there are spots like **STK Chicago** (9 W. Kinzie St.; <http://togrp.com/venue/stk-chicago/>).

In fact, on the restaurant's website it says, "Not Your Daddy's Steakhouse"—and the One Group spot aims to live up to that with modern architecture, lithe bodies (on patrons and employees) and even a DJ. All of this adds up to what some consider to be the best (and the worst) touchstones of the River North Area. (Fortunately, the beat wasn't really thumping on the weeknight my dining companion and I were there—but I'm sure the music is turned up on the weekends, and I can only imagine what New Year's Eve was like.



**Short rib with jalapeño grits at STK.**

Photo by Andrew Davis

As for the cuisine, a cursory online look revealed a variety of enticing items (although, interestingly, no prices), so I was really looking forward to checking out the scene and the cuisine. As for the food, it ranged from meh to "Wow!"—although the final bill for two people (more than \$400 for the several items, with a couple wine pairings) had us saying "wow" for other reasons.

Regarding most items, STK hit the nail on the head. The Caesar salad was done quite well (and more spots mess up this simple dish more often than you might think), and the restaurant definitely knows what it's doing when it comes to beef. The steak was expertly done, and the shortrib (with jalapeño grits) was my favorite dish of the night.

And the desserts—oh, the desserts. The budino

was good, but the donuts and the warm baked cookies (with chocolate sauce, vanilla ice cream and caramel) were absolute delights.

In fact, the only major culinary shortcoming was with the tuna tartare, which was artfully done—but which also sat in a pool of soy sauce; maybe drizzling it with the sauce would be better. A minor snafu occurred with the salmon, which was slightly overcooked.

So, overall, I do recommend STK. I think it should be visited at least once—to check out the scene and try the shortrib and a dessert item, if nothing else. But be sure to save your pennies.

(By the way, STK also isn't like a lot of other steakhouses in that it has a dress code. Guys don't necessarily need to wear suits, but extremely casual dress may result in you being barred from entering. Welcome to River North—although you can bypass the scene by using Caviar.)

#### honeygrow

The fast-casual spot **honeygrow** (<https://www.honeygrow.com>) originated in Philadelphia in 2012, but has definitely made its mark in Chicago, with locations at 179 N. Morgan St. and 70 E. Lake St.



**Sour cherry barbecue at honeygrow.**

PR photo

Culinary director Chef David Katz offers everything from sustainably raised meats to sauces and dressings prepared from scratch daily. Produce is always fresh (as honeygrow stores do not own freezers), and are sourced locally and seasonably as often as possible.

This all goes toward dishes that are prepared quickly and that are pretty tasty. Patrons use kiosks to order dishes (a rapid development that certainly reflects the times) that include stir-fry and salad options as well as a honeybar choice (which features fresh fruits, local honey and toppings such as local plain yogurt, dark chocolate chips, coconut shavings and house made whipped cream). Thankfully, people have the option of paying with cash.

My result was a roast-pork stir-fry that was absolutely delicious and filling, although somehow I made room for my honeybar (all fruit—and chocolate chips). However, I have to hurry back for that pork dish, as it's seasonal and will be gone by early January (and, of course, it's the only one that's leaving the menu). I suggest you give honeygrow a try.



**Salmon coca at Stock and Ledger.**

Photo by Andrew Davis

#### Stock and Ledger

It may seem fitting that a restaurant named **Stock and Ledger** (70 W. Madison St.; <https://www.stockandledger.com>) has opened in the Loop.

However, here's the lowdown on the name: "Stock" pays homage to Chef Laura Piper's personalized menu, with "stock" as the base of her contemporary American and classic dishes. "Ledger" refers to the accounting term and Piper's business partner Rodd Goldman, an accountant-turned-restaurateur.

And as for the lowdown on the dishes: It's an intriguing melange of simple, straightforward dishes with locally sourced ingredients. (Sources include Three Sisters Garden and Genesis Farms, Piper told Windy City Times.)

Cocktails pay homage to the Loop, with drinks such as The Bull, The Bear and Write-Off, among others.

Starters include offerings such as spicy fried potatoes (with the kick being hit-or-miss) and a very pleasant smoked trout that should be tackled like a salad, I quickly learned. Speaking of salad, the salt-roasted beet item is a nice surprise, combining French feta, citrus, kale, pepita granola and cumin vinaigrette.

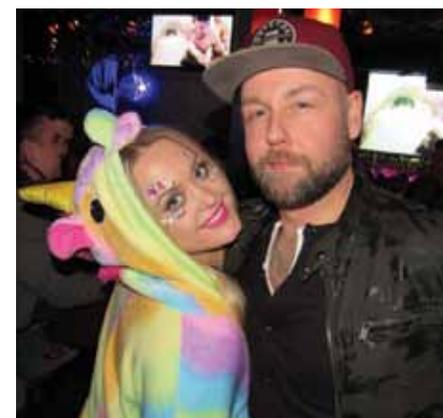
Cocas are Piper's take on the open-faced sandwich—and they're meant to be eaten with a knife and fork, as entrepreneurs (neatly) try to clinch those business deals. Among the variations are grilled chicken, pot roast, lamb kafta (reflecting Piper's time at a Lebanese restaurant) and smoked salmon; we tried the salmon (with whipped horseradish cream cheese, radishes, pickled red onion, hard-boiled egg, capers and baby kale) and absolutely loved it.

Entrees include a delightful chicken Kiev and a wonderful baked penne (with bacon!) that was just goeey enough to make it sinful.

Several desserts are also offered, including a pear-and-apple crumble, flourless chocolate cake and a cranberry shortcake that was probably the tarest item I had in 2017—and I actually mean that in a good way.

I can't wait to try The Lunchroom, a large fast-casual space adjacent to Stock and Ledger that will open in early 2018.

**Note: Restaurant profiles/events are based on invitations arranged from restaurants and/or firms.**



## SIDETRACK

**Having funsie in their One-One-Onesies,  
Monday, January 1.**

Photos by Jerry Nunn



## End of the year, end of an era

*Man's Country closes with  
historic Loose Ends party*

44 years after its opening, Chicago bathhouse Man's Country closed its doors permanently on January 1, but not before one last huge blow-out New Year's Eve party. The party, fittingly named Loose Ends, was the second of its kind (the first go-round happened in late November).

In opposition to the men-only vibe prevalent over the four-plus decades of its run, the venue welcomed all members of the community to experience this space one last time before its demise.

The 13-hour party featured music from local DJs Michael Serafini, Harry Cross, Eris Drew and L.A. Olympics, as well as Detroit's Jeffrey Sfire and Boston's Dee Diggs. Drag performances from The Vixen, Lucy Stoole, Bambi Banks and Abhijeet kept the spirit of the crowd pulsating all night—and morning—long.

Photos by Jerry Nunn



**BILLY Masters** returns to this space next week.

WEDNESDAY  
**January 10**

**all things** **SIDETRACK**  
**gaga**

hosted by  
**dixie lynn cartwright**

drag by  
**krissy feetface & aurora gozmic**

**lipsync & dance**

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