

Dining out: Nashville's great restaurant scene

By Shirley Hallblade

Food and music come together for memorable meals

Visitors to Nashville for the ACRL National Conference in April have a variety of options for eating out in the downtown area ("The District") or for exploring restaurants in other parts of the city accessible by taxi or car. And it's not all country ham and biscuits, grits and gravy, BBQ and cornbread, or fried catfish—although Nashville offers some of the best for those who want to sample these regional specialties. Nashville is known especially for its many small cafes featuring "down-home" cooking, also known as "meat-and-three" restaurants (choice of entree and three vegetables).

With the rapid growth of Nashville in recent years, new restaurants of all types have been opening around the city. This article mentions only a few of the many choices for dining while in Nashville. More complete guides to restaurants and clubs and a compiled list of recommended favorites of local academic librarians will be available at the hospitality desk in the ACRL conference registration area.

In the District

All of the conference hotels have restaurants and the Convention Center offers a small snack bar. Within walking distance of the conference hotels are several restaurants located along Second Avenue (also known as Market Street), along Broadway, and in Printer's Alley.

Second Avenue between Broadway and Church Street offers choices ranging from the **Old Spaghetti Factory** to **Laurel's Raw Bar** to **Mulligan's Pub** for Irish fare. A popular res-

taurant for those who enjoy wine and fine dining is **Mere Bulles**, which also has live music. Several other sandwich shops and restaurants are located in the converted warehouses along this street. Heading south on Second Avenue is the **Crab House**, a new restaurant featuring fresh seafood.

Along Broadway you can't miss the **Hard Rock Cafe** (near the river) and **Planet Hollywood** (up a few blocks). Also along this street, which includes several clubs offering live music, are B. B. King's new club, the **Big River Grill & Brewing Works** (a brew pub), the **Merchants**, a fine restaurant located in an historic building, and **Henry's Coffeehouse**, a new venue for acoustic music with good coffee and light snacks and sandwiches. Further up the street in the Union Station Hotel is **Arthur's**, a Mobil four-star restaurant with a fixed price multicourse dinner menu.

Printer's Alley, once *the* nightclub scene in Nashville, offers choices such as the **Captain's Table**, a supper club located in the Alley since 1946, and the **Bourbon Street Blues and Boogie Bar** with Cajun fare. Nearby on Church Street is **Morton's of Chicago** for the steak and seafood lover.

A few minutes by cab

Steaks are also featured at **Buddy Killen's Stock-Yard**, a Nashville landmark. The **Gerst House**, located on the site of a former brewery, offers traditional German fare and a live German band on Saturday and Sunday evenings.

In the historic Germantown district, not far from the Farmer's Market and the Bicentennial Mall, diners can choose from **Monell's** which features southern food served family style and the **Mad Platter**, a small restaurant with a daily

Shirley Hallblade is cochair of the Local Arrangements Committee. She is on leave from Vanderbilt University where she was most recently associate director of libraries; e-mail: hallblade@library.vanderbilt.edu

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Some restaurants and clubs popular with locals and featuring innovative menus and, in some cases, live music, are **12th & Porter**, **Cafe One Two Three**, and **Jules Dining Hall and Bar Car**.

Heading out

For those who have cars or who are willing to take taxis, many more restaurants can be found within a short drive from downtown. The main streets to look for are Broadway, Division, West End Avenue, and 21st Avenue (or Hillsboro Road). These streets take you near Music Row, Vanderbilt University, and Hillsboro Village, a three block area near Belmont and Vanderbilt Universities with shops and several cafes and restaurants. Also near these areas is Elliston Place with funky shops and more options for food and drink.

Favorite places in these areas with interesting decor, varied menus, and moderate prices include **Faison's**, **Sunset Grill**, **Bosco's**, **Midtown Cafe**, **Granite Falls**, and **South Street**—all of which serve both lunch and dinner. More modestly priced and good food can be found at these other popular restaurants: **Elliston Place Soda Shop**, **Calypso Cafe**, **Rotier's**, **San Antonio Taco Company**, **Slice of Life**, **Pancake Pantry**, and **Sportsman's Grille** in the village.

Several restaurants in this area offering finer dining include **Valentino's** or **Mario's** for Italian/Continental, **Trilogy** (the new restaurant owned by Naomi and Wynona Judd), and **Ruth's Chris Steak House**. The **Cakewalk**, off West End Avenue at 29th Street, serves fresh, creative dishes for both lunch and dinner, and is a favorite of local librarians. For top-of-the-line gourmet dining, the **Wild Boar** offers an extensive wine collection and contemporary European cuisine that have garnered several awards.

A sense of adventure

For those with time, wheels, and/or a sense of adventure, there are some restaurants located further away from downtown that are worth



Nashville's Hard Rock Cafe is one of many nightspots that will tempt ACRL conference-goers in April.

exploring either for their cuisine or for their local color.

In the Belle Meade area located in west Nashville are **Sperry's**, a long-time neighborhood restaurant featuring steaks and seafood, and the **Belle Meade Brasserie**, an upscale bistro with an innovative and varied menu.

Those who travel east of downtown to Opryland will have many restaurant choices in this popular tourist area. The famed **Opryland Hotel**, with its indoor conservatories, waterfalls, and scenic settings, has several cafes and restaurants under its expansive roof.

The **Loveless Cafe**, located several miles southwest of Nashville on Highway 100, is a local landmark known for its country cooking. The cafe features country ham with red-eye gravy, southern fried chicken, and homemade biscuits with peach and blackberry preserves. It is open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Reservations are recommended, especially for breakfast or lunch on weekends, as this is a popular spot for both tourists and locals.

Still more

This is only a sampling of Nashville's many restaurants. Check out the hospitality desk in the conference registration area for more information on dining options. The Local Arrangements Committee is also arranging a "dinner with colleagues" for those interested in getting together with old or new friends and a local librarian host for dinner at one of Nashville's interesting restaurants. Sign-up lists for these dinners will be available at the hospitality desk as well. Enjoy! ■

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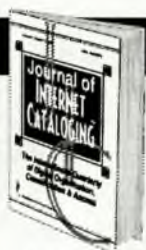
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