

# FOOD & SPIRITS MAGAZINE



THE OMAHA METRO'S BEST GUIDE FOR FOOD,  
DINING, SPIRITS & WINE.

THIS PRODUCT WAS PREPARED FROM, INSPECTED AND PASSED MEAT AND/OR  
POULTRY. SOME FOOD PRODUCT MAY CONTAIN BACTERIA THAT COULD CAUSE  
ILLNESS IF THE PRODUCT IS MISHANDLED OR COOKED IMPROPERLY. FOR  
YOUR PROTECTION, FOLLOW THESE SAFE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS.

Keep raw meat &  
poultry separate  
from other foods.

Keep refrigerated or  
frozen. Thaw in  
refrigerator or  
microwave. Cook  
thoroughly.

Wash working  
surfaces, utensils,  
and hands after  
touching raw meat or  
poultry.

Omaha Edition

\$6.95

Issue 13

OMAHA - MOST RESTAURANTS  
PER CAPITA? PG. 7

BAR CHAT: BYGONE DAYS  
OF OMAHA'S BAR SCENE  
PG. 29



30 1/2



# Welcome to Spain



## Weekly Specials

### REVERSE HAPPY HOUR

Drink & food specials including \$3.50 glasses of Sangria every Friday, 10pm - 12am.

### TAPAS TUESDAY

Order two tapas per person, get one free.

### WINE WEDNESDAY

50% off selective wines.

### THURSDAY LADIES NIGHT

Sangria, mojitos & tapas specials.

### SUNDAY

UNO Guitar program performs! \$1 off sangria, mojitos, wells, domestics & imports.



6064 Maple St. Omaha, NE 68104

# 402-505-9917

online at [www.espanaomaha.com](http://www.espanaomaha.com)

# FOOD & Spirits

## CONTENTS

### SECTIONS

Food 7

Spirits 29

Listing Guide 40

### FEATURES

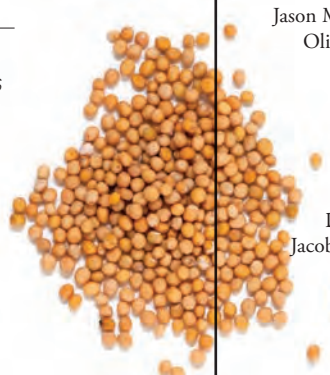
Omaha – Most Restaurants Per Capita? 7  
*Getting down to the bottom of who really has the most restaurants per capita.*

The Fifth Element of Cookery 18  
*What makes a memorable, well-balanced dish?*

Eating, Drinking & Biking Around Omaha 22  
*A tour of Omaha including nifty routes, great food and preferred drink spots.*

Bar Chat 29  
*Bygone days of Omaha's Bar Scene.*

Yeast Inspection 34  
*Magical Moments with Beer.*



### ON THE COVER & INSIDE THE COVER



The finely wrapped package of meat on the cover was photographed by Jessica Orth, while the delicious steak inside the cover is a porterhouse from Stoysich House of Sausage on 24th Street. It was photographed by David Ahlquist.

No. 13

**Publisher and Editor**  
 Erik Totten

**Contributing Writers**  
 Michael Campbell, April Christenson,  
 Dan Crowell, Keri Davis,  
 Binoy Fernandez, John Finocchiaro,  
 Lucas Korth, Sarah Lewis,  
 Jason McLaughlin, Miranda McQuillan,  
 Oliver Pollack, Charles Schlusell,  
 Ann Summers

**Art Direction & Design**  
 Jake Scott

**Photography**  
 David Ahlquist, Chad Ebel,  
 Jacob Herrman, J. Michael McBride,  
 Jessica Orth

**Distribution**  
 John Urzendowski

**Contact Us**

**Phone:**  
 402-203-6145

**Website:**  
[www.fsmomaha.com](http://www.fsmomaha.com)

**Publisher:**  
[eriktotten@fsmomaha.com](mailto:eriktotten@fsmomaha.com)

**Advertising Sales:**  
[sales@fsmomaha.com](mailto:sales@fsmomaha.com)

**Editorial:**  
[editorial@fsmomaha.com](mailto:editorial@fsmomaha.com)

*Food & Spirits Magazine is a quarterly publication of Food & Spirits Enterprises, LLC and is distributed for free at many restaurants, bars, lounges and hotels as well as being direct-mailed to select households. Subscriptions are also available for \$25 a year. The publisher does not knowingly accept false or misleading advertising or editorial content and does not accept responsibility for error, omission or content accuracy. Material may not be reproduced in any form without written permission from the publisher. Statements of fact and opinion in articles written by contributing writers are solely those of the author and do not necessarily imply those of Food & Spirits Magazine.*

## EXPERTS PANEL

MEET THE FULLY QUALIFIED PANEL OF INDUSTRY EXPERTS WHO HAVE DEVOTED THEIR KNOWLEDGE TO THIS ISSUE...

---



### 1 Michael Campbell

Michael Campbell is a regular humor columnist for *Food & Spirits Magazine*, where his “Dumpster” essays close every issue. His first book, *Are You Going To Eat That*, is a collection of 60 humor essays released in September 2009 by Prairie Moon Publishing. He has written for nationally-distributed entertainment newsletters *Coffee Break* and *Facts of Life*, and his off-beat observations have appeared in various issues of *Reader's Digest*. His weekly humor blog, MC, ([mcwritingessays.blogspot.com](http://mcwritingessays.blogspot.com)) reaches thousands of readers, and he was recently named Humor Writer of the Month by the Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop. Campbell is also an avid singer/songwriter with three CDs of original music, and was the founder of Mick's Music & Bar in Omaha.

### 2 Dan Crowell

Dan Crowell, cocktail enthusiast and self-avowed “spirits nerd,” is the Luxury Brands Specialist for Sterling Distributing Company in Omaha. He talks incessantly (even occasionally to other people) about the virtues of what he calls “investigative imbibement.” An eternally fascinated student of the distillers’ art, he encourages any like-minded individuals to engage him in spirited discussion at <http://libationassociation.blogspot.com>.

### 3 John Finocchiaro

John Finocchiaro is a past owner of Finocchiaro Wine Company, Inc., a Nebraska wholesale wine, spirits, and beer distributorship dating back to 1935. He also formerly co-owned Johnson Brothers Finocchiaro, LLC. John is a former Certified Public Accountant and a Certified Specialist of Wine.

### 4 Marq Manner

Marq Manner is a fan of Americana. He is interested in small town cafe's, roadside BBQ, getting a hotdog from a stand made in the likeness of George Washington, and the grittier eating atmospheres found in out of the way places. Marq has been writing about the local music scene for The Omaha City Weekly for the past five years and has also written music features for many other rags and blogs.

### 5 Jason McLaughlin

Jason holds the rank of National as a BJCP judge (Beer Judge Certification Program), is a craft beer aficionado, a writer for the Nebraska Beer Blog, and award winning homebrewer living in Lincoln. Jason's love for outstanding beer started early when his lifelong friend Adam Curfew of Salt Lake City got his start at Squatter's brewery. The rest is history, as Jason travels around the country judging beer competitions, and attending related events. Beer tasting and evaluation is his passion, and he can appreciate a great example of any style regardless of hype. His idea of a nice summer day is a lawn chair and a pint of Russian Imperial Stout.

### 6 Brian O'Malley

Brian O'Malley is a chef-instructor at the Institute for the Culinary Arts at Metropolitan Community College. As President of the Heartland Chapter of the American Culinary Federation, Coach of the Junior Culinary Competition Team, Board Member of the Nebraska Food Cooperative and the Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society, and Muse Extraordinaire for Sage student bistro O'Malley spreads his passion for local and sustainable cuisine throughout the community.

### 7 Ron Samuelson

Ron is co-owner of M's Pub and Vivace, which recently celebrated 15 years of operation in the Old Market. His restaurant career has spanned from Dallas and Denver to Omaha, with stints in the kitchen as well as front of house management for both corporate and locally owned concepts. Currently serving a five year term on the board of the Downtown Business Improvement District, Ron has also served as President of the Omaha Restaurant Association is an inductee into the Omaha Hospitality Hall of Fame.

### 8 Ann Summers

Ann R.B. Summers is a healthy living author who writes professionally about food, science, nature, nutrition and fitness. Check out her blog site at [annrbsummers.com](http://annrbsummers.com) for more on her recipes, children's science books, her newly updated e-book, and her online nutrition and fitness articles. She is a cook, food fanatic, mom, jewelry designer, editor, and a member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators.

## LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER



Welcome to the new issue of *Food & Spirits Magazine*. We think you're going like this one – it's got some meat on it (see what I did there?). A lot of incredibly talented writers, photographers and designers came together to make this issue happen and you should know who they are.

In food, April Christenson takes a look at a vegan and paleo diets

and what they both mean in the real eating world. We've also got a wonderful recipe for pepper steak by Charles Schlusel that may remind you of a dish at one of Omaha's top restaurants. The glorious Ann Summers takes a look at the fifth element of cooking and how important it is to all of us.

**"A lot of incredibly talented writers, photographers and designers came together to make this issue happen."**

Indian Food is something that Binoy Fernandez knows very well and he enlightens us with some of his favorite comfort foods. In another piece, I attempt to get to the bottom of which city REALLY has the most restaurants per capita and I think you'll be surprised by the results. The folks at Cooking Matters tell us about one of their outstanding volunteers, and, of course, no issue of *Food & Spirits Magazine* would be complete without some cheese, and Miranda McQuillan tells us about some of her favorites.

In beer, wine and spirits coverage Jason McLaughlin reviews some of his favorite beer memories from around the world and John Finocchiaro does the same with wine. Oliver Pollack tells about Barolo – is it a place, a wine, a book, or maybe all three? If you're a biker, check out the article by Lucas Korth which plots out his favorite biking path and the dining and drinking options along the way. And, perhaps my favorite article this issue is by Dan Crowell who has an in depth interview with Pat Gobel about the bar scene

**"We're always trying to make FSM better and give you something that accurately reflects this wonderful city we live in."**

in Omaha from days gone by – a trip down memory lane for some of the old-school Omaha drinkers.

We've also got some great photography by Jessica Orth, David Ahlquist, Chad Ebel and Jacob Hermann. I would be remiss if I didn't mention the person who creates what you see and puts all this eye candy (and packaged meat) together - William at Scott Creative, again, came through with some excellent work. And finally, all that work is for naught without getting all of it printed and we've got the best printers in town for that – Printco and Troy and Larry Reading always do excellent work.

On behalf of all us, I want to thank them for their stellar contributions. It goes without saying (but I will anyway) that I couldn't do it without them. We all do this out of love – whether that's love of food and drink, love of writing, love of creating, etc. That being said, it's not worth it for me unless you like it too. We truly hope you do. I want to thank all of you, our readers. We wouldn't be anywhere without you folks.

After all, this is your magazine too. As always, let us know what you like, and what you don't. We're always trying to make it better and give you something that accurately reflects this wonderful city we live in.



French Bulldog  
photo by Jessica Orth

# Omaha

– Most Restaurants per Capita? by Erik Totten



Midtown Crossing  
photo by Chad Ebel

It's testament to the dynamic city we live in that Omaha makes a lot of 'Best of' lists. Best place to live, to work, to drink, to raise kids, to go to the zoo, to start over, to sing a song and pick a bushel of apples (alright, those last two were my own inventions, but you get the idea). As well, a quick search of the interwebs also reveals that Omaha has been at least mentioned in lists of cities that has the most millionaires, are the most affordable, most hungover, most business-friendly, and so on. To us that live here, it's all quite flattering and a confirmation of things many of us have known for a while – Omaha is cool and a good place to do any number of things.

**"In an effort to get to the bottom of who REALLY has the most restaurants per capita, I decided to crunch the numbers and see for myself."**

Another 'Omaha has the most' that I've heard bandied about, and, in fact, I've said it as well, is that Omaha has the most restaurants per capita. Since I've worked at *Food & Spirits Magazine* I've always wondered about this one. Not that I don't think we have an incredibly dynamic and vibrant restaurant and dining scene,

because I think we do. But because, in my personal experience, having lived on both coasts and in a number of different cities, it's a claim I've heard many fine folks boast of concerning their particular locale.

I've also wondered about the accuracy of such claims when you really consider this wonderful city we live in. We're not a city that attracts a lot of seasonal tourists. Yes, we attract a lot of people from out of town for the College World Series and the other various amateur sporting events that Omaha hosts. As well, the Henry Doorly Zoo brings in gobs of people and the Red Sky Music Festival is known far and wide (just a little joke on that last one). But hosting those events and having one of the best zoos in the country isn't the same as a city nestled on the beach that triples in size over the summer months. As many people would enthusiastically tell you, I'm no genius, but it just seems to make sense that bringing in 400,000 tourists, who are going to spend as much as they can, for three or four months would create more restaurants than our relatively static population would be able to support.

My curiosity was recently reignited when I saw two more lists recently published on Huffington Post that identified cities with the most restaurants per capita. One list, created by the marketing research group, NPD Group (fun and weird fact – the NPD in NPD Group stands for National Purchase Diary). The other list was compiled by real-estate giant Trulia. The two lists couldn't be more different – take a look;



WOODMEN

First Coast





Omaha  
World-Herald

CenturyLink

Downtown Omaha skyline  
photo by Chad Ebel

## **NPD Group's Most Restaurants/Capita**

1. Juneau, Alaska
2. Salisbury, Maryland
3. Bend, Oregon
4. Panama City, Florida
5. New York City
6. Myrtle Beach, South Carolina
7. Anchorage, Alaska
8. Portland, Maine
9. Medford, Oregon
10. Santa Barbara, California

## **Trulia's Most Restaurants/Capita**

1. San Francisco, California
2. Fairfield, Connecticut
3. Long Island, New York
4. New York
5. Seattle, Washington,
6. San Jose, California
7. Orange County, California
8. Providence, Rhode Island
9. Boston, Massachusetts
10. Portland, Oregon

See there – much, much different conclusions. So, in an effort to get to the bottom of who REALLY has the most restaurants per capita, I decided to crunch the numbers and see for myself.

As I concluded nine hours later, it's not nearly as easy as it sounds for multiple reasons: First off, the data to figure it out can be found on the interwebs, but it's surrounded by all sorts of other data. You have to do some sorting and compiling. Second, you actually

have to do MATH to figure this out – enough said. Third, it all depends on how you define your terms. What are you defining as a restaurant? What are you defining as an area – is it the city, the county, the metro area surrounding it? And finally, the results can simply be confusing and counterintuitive.

**“It all depends on how you define your terms. The results can simply be confusing and counterintuitive.”**

To compile our list of the most restaurants per capita I decided to use the United States Census Bureau for the population totals and the number of full service restaurants. The most recent data available from the USCB is from 2010.

The USCB's definition of a full service restaurant:

“This industry group comprises establishments primarily engaged in providing food services to patrons who order and are served while seated (i.e., waiter/waitress service) and pay after eating. Establishments that provide this type of food service to patrons with any combination of other services, such as take-out services, are classified in this industry”.

To define the area, we used the United States Office of Management and Budget's 366 Metro Statistical Areas (MSA). They defined the same areas as the data provided by the USCB.

“The U.S. Office of Management and Budget defines a MSA as one or more adjacent counties or county equivalents that have at least one urban core area of at least 50,000 population, plus adjacent territory that has a high degree of social and economic integration with the core as measured by commuting ties.”

So, what were the results of my research? In a word, confounding.



Brix at Midtown Crossing

When I compiled the information for ALL 366 metro areas in the United States, here's what I got;

### Most Restaurants/MSA

1. Ocean City, NJ
2. Barnstable Town, MA
3. Myrtle Beach, SC
4. Pittsfield, MA
5. Glens Falls, NY
6. Kingston, NY
7. Portland, ME
8. Bend, OR
9. Atlantic City, NJ
10. San Luis Obispo, CA
115. Des Moines, IA
182. Kansas City, MO
- 187. Omaha, NE**

**“Wherever Omaha ranks, one thing I’m positive about is that Omaha truly DOES have a vigorous dining and drink scene.”**

What the what, right? What the hell is a Barnstable? Portland, MAINE? No San Francisco or New York? Des Moines ahead of Omaha? Something smells rotten in Denmark. This list didn't

**OMAHA MAGAZINES**  
**BEST OF OMAHA**  
 FIRST PLACE • 2012 • FIRST PLACE

**HAND STRETCHED NEW YORK STYLE PIZZA**

THANKS FOR VOTING US #1 AGAIN

RECIPIENT OF 31 BEST PIZZA AWARDS

READER'S CHOICE  
 BEST of the Big O!

CALZONES • PASTA • SALADS • HOAGIES • APPETIZERS • BEER • WINE

**391-1881** 7834 Dodge St.  
**330-1444** 12997 W. Center Rd.  
**344-2222** 1109 Howard St.

**TRY OUR DAILY LUNCH SPECIALS!**  
 For banquets, parties, and meetings call 330-1444 (Up to 60 people)  
 Full Service Mon.-Fri. Nights & Sat.-Sun.  
 All Day Self-Service Lunch Mon.-Fri.  
**We deliver downtown!**  
**WWW.ZIOSPIZZERIA.COM**

**EVERYDAY**  
 - Cocktail Hour everyday from 5pm-7pm  
 - \$1.00 Off Beers & Small Plates  
 - \$2.00 Off Craft Cocktails and Wine by the Glass  
 - Small Plates available until midnight (Dine-In Only)  
 - PinPoint Card Friendly

**TUESDAYS: Wine Night**  
 - Every wine on the menu available at half price by the bottle, from 5pm - Bar Close

**THURSDAY DRINK NIGHT**  
 - We feature a selection of up to 3 cocktails not on the menu for \$5 a drink, 5pm - Bar Close

LUNCH: 11:30am - 2pm | DINNER: 5pm - Close | BAR: 11:30am - Close  
 indianovenomaha.com | 1010 Howard St. Omaha, NE | (402) 342-4856 | @IOSpeak

fsmomaha.com

match up to any others I've seen and left me more confused than I normally am.

When I compiled the data for just the 100 largest metro areas the results were dramatically different;

### **Most Restaurants/100 Largest Metro Areas**

1. San Francisco, CA
2. Bridgeport, CT
3. Scranton, PA
4. Poughkeepsie, NY
5. Providence, RI
6. Portland, OR
7. Hartford, CT
8. Seattle, WA
9. New Haven, CT
10. New York City
32. Des Moines, IA
54. Kansas City, MO
- 55. Omaha, NE**

This list seemed to be a little more rational, but I'm not sure that it jibes with what I expected.

Scranton? Really? It doesn't seem like there are a lot of restaurants there when I watch *The Office* and we all know that *The Office* is a real-life documentary.

So, what's up with the different results? I'm not entirely sure – I wish I was. Different methodology? Using different sources? Global Warming? Conspiracy or Sabotage? All those are possible and some even likely. And maybe that all speaks to a larger point that a great American writer expounded on ages ago when there were no such thing as mundane lists that compiled the most restaurants per capita or best city to be hungover in.

**“In the last year alone, we’ve seen a plethora of new dining and drinking establishments find a new home in Omaha or come under new, fresh ownership.”**



French Bulldog  
photo by Jessica Orth

“There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics.”  
 That sage Mark Twain figured it out (via 19th-century British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli who Twain attributed the quote to) long ago.

Whatever the case, and wherever Omaha ranks, one thing I’m positive about is that Omaha truly DOES have a vigorous dining and drink scene that we can all be proud of. In nearly five years of running *Food & Spirits Magazine*, I’ve seen a lot of traction in our restaurant and bar community and there is a ‘buzz’ surrounding it. We all get excited about new restaurants opening, tasting menus and exotic foods. We post pictures on Facebook of the latest/greatest/best meal we’ve had and our newest culinary creation. For Christ’s sake, I heard someone talking about a bone luge the other day (look it up – half of you will drool and the other half will throw up in their mouth a little bit).

In the last year alone, we’ve seen a plethora of new dining and drinking establishments find a new home in Omaha or come under new, fresh ownership;

**The Pizza Pie Guys** (3113 N. 120th Street), **Swine Dining BBQ** and their new dining location (204 E. Mission Avenue), **Omaha Tap House** (1403 Farnam Street), **Corner Creperie** (343 N. 24th Street), **Baxter’s** (6113 Maple Street), **J’s on Jackson** (1101 Jackson Street), **Brix Midtown** (3220 Farnam Street), **Lenny’s Subs** (3201 Farnam Street), **Mantra** (6913 Maple Street), **Star Deli** (6114 Military Avenue), **French Bulldog** (5003 Underwood Avenue), **Lot 2** (6207 Maple Street), **Shucks** (1911 Leavenworth Street), **Taita** (6109 Maple Street), **Joe’s Crab Shack** (701 N. 102nd Street), **Pageturners Lounge** (5004 Dodge Street), **Raising Cane’s** (7060 Dodge Street), **Saint’s Pub + Patio** (120 S. 31st Avenue), **Black Oak Grill** (220 S. 31st Avenue), **Bravo! Cucina**

**Italiana** (17151 Davenport Street), **J. Coco** (5203 Leavenworth Street), **Dolce** (12317 W. Maple Street), **Railcar Modern American Kitchen** (1814 N. 144th Street), **Corky Canvas** (3157 Farnam Street), **Mai Thai** (2279 S. 67th Street), **Pana 88** (3201 Farnam Street), **13th Street Brickhouse** (2202 13th Street), **Mixed** (2101 N. 120th Street), **DJ’s Dugout** (2102 S. 67th Street), **The Diner** (409 S. 12th Street) and **Jerry’s Bar** (6301 Military Avenue).

**“As they say, experience is the best teacher, and for my experience, I’ll take Omaha.”**

We’ve also got some new places on the horizon that we should see soon;

**Salt 88** (3623 N. 129th Street), **The Benson Brewery** (6059 Maple Street), **The Berry & Rye** (1105 Howard Street), **Infusion Brewing Company** (6115 Maple Street), **Big Mama’s Sandwich Shop** (2416 Lake Street), **Borgata Brewing and Distilling** (no address yet) and the **Daily Grub’s Jack Taco Cart** (will run on Benson First Fridays near the Petshop Gallery, from what I understand).

I’m sure that I may – unintentionally – overlooked a few but I think a point is still made; that’s a fine list of restaurants and bars and something we can all feel good about. I’ve been to many of them already and I’m looking forward to experiencing the others.

As they say, experience is the best teacher. And for my experience, I’ll take Omaha.

**7900 W. Dodge Rd • 402.390.6096 • bgtastyfoods.com**

# Comfort from India

story & photos  
by Binoy Fernandez



There are a few things that strike me when I reflect on my favorites when it comes to food and drink. The first is that, for me at least, my favorite dishes and drinks are not the best ones I've had. Chances are there wasn't any fancy plating involved, nor any extreme garnishes, and I probably didn't have it in a place that would stand out to anyone. As I think more about it, my favorites are not classified so much by what I had as the context surrounding it. What memories are attached to the dish or the drink, was it the first time I had it or is it something I keep going back to?

**"My favorite meal, hands down is a simple one. Kheema, steamed rice, yogurt curry, and masala green beans and potatoes."**

Comfort food springs to mind. These dishes aren't fancy, but we go to them for solace and refuge. We look for them as something

familiar when life seems to spiral out of control; and try as we might, though we may hunt them down at different restaurants, they just *aren't* the same as when we have it at mom's dinner table or in our own home, cooked on our stoves. Restaurants can get them close, but they just can't quite get them right to truly match our pre-conceived expectations.

My favorite meal, hands down, is a simple one, when I stop to think about it. It is basic, and it is something I can make without really thinking about things, just knowing by the feel of ground spices in my fingers how much to put and when to throw it in the pan. My favorite is an Indian meal: kheema, steamed rice, yogurt curry, and masala green beans and potatoes. It's my comfort food, and, I dare say, something I think I make even better than my mother.

I grew up thinking of ground meat as something called kheema, though I believe that in India it is properly called *mince*. For me, kheema is nothing more than spiced ground meat and peas. I first learned the dish using a conglomeration of spices: cumin, coriander, chili powder, salt, garam masala, and ginger-garlic paste, with fresh

coriander (cilantro) sprinkled on top. To say the sum is greater than the parts, here, would be an understatement. About ten years ago, though, my mother introduced me to Bhafat (Bah-fahth) Masala. I now I have a standing order on for whenever one of my family goes to India, as I don't know anywhere in the western hemisphere to get it and have no idea, whatsoever, on how to make this heavenly spice blend. I've found different recipes, but nothing that produces a flavor like what comes out of this spice blend I've found.

The second component to my favorite meal is a masala green bean and potato mix. Here we have diced onions, green beans and potatoes stir fried with onions, cumin seed, ground coriander, ground turmeric and chili powder. Again, not very complicated as far as some dishes go, and not a piquant dish if you use the chili powder correctly. This, coupled with the kheema and rice, is enough to make any meal memorable, but what makes this meal truly sing is the introduction of yogurt curry.

I'm not sure what the actual name for this sauce is, but it's tasty. Where people could use either the kheema or the beans as the focal point of the meal, this is an accompaniment or a supporting member, if you will. This gravy is made from besan (chickpea) flour, plain yogurt, ginger, and mustard seeds as its primary ingredients, along with sugar. Perhaps the most difficult thing to achieve is on how to integrate the yogurt to frying ginger, peppers and mustard seeds jumping around in hot oil. It has a slight sourness from the yogurt, but it's cut with the sweetness from the sugar that just works.

On the plate the rice gets its own space (I use about half the plate for mine), a separate section gets the kheema, and the third section gets the vegetable. I then liberally add the yogurt curry to the rice. Then you eat, get seconds, eat some more, pause, and look around for someone else to do clean up because you're in a food coma.

It isn't likely you'll find anything in a restaurant served up like this. It is something only available in the home. It's what I eat when I'm troubled, when I'm happy, when I'm needing to think about things – when I just want something good. It's what I cook when I need to escape from the world for a while. Simply put, it's my favorite.



**Established in 1919, Orsi's is famous for our pizza, Italian cheeses and bread products. Our Italian Deli features a variety of meats, including homemade sausage and imported olives.**

**BRING THIS AD IN FOR \$3 OFF ANY FULL-SHEET PARTY PIZZA**

TUESDAY - THURSDAY 8:30 am - 8 pm FRIDAY 8:30 am - 9 pm  
SATURDAY 7:30 am - 8 pm SUNDAY 7:30 am - 6 pm  
CLOSED MONDAY



**621 Pacific St, Omaha  
402-345-3438**



# Finding Your Favorite Cheese

by Miranda Mcquillan



Of all the jobs that I've had in my illustrious career as a global food citizen, there were none that brought me as much joy as being a cheese monger. There was so much to learn, thousands of cheeses to taste, and cultural exploration abounding. Yet, after 10 years, a semester in France, and 6 cheese shops in three states, there are still so many cheeses left to taste.

That's one of the many wonderful things about cheese – there are thousands of kinds of cheese in the world. From soft to hard, blue to brie, goat to sheep, French, Italian, Spanish and on and on, and there will always be more for us to explore. I have personally and painstakingly tasted many cheeses. Some repeatedly over the years so as to be a worthy, dedicated and exuberant tour guide to those who want to know more. I've selected my favorites from five categories including blues, bries, sheep, goat, hard, and raw milk, to help make your adventures easier and tastier.

**“From soft to hard, blue to brie, goat to sheep, French, Italian, Spanish and on and on, there will always be more for us to explore.”**

When you think of blue cheese, you may crinkle your nose or feel intimidated. You're not alone. Many people struggle to find that right blue cheese that sings on their palate. One quick rule of thumb is that either you like blue cheese or you don't. If you like it, you'll like many blues. However, if you don't, you really have to find one that works for you and go from there. My favorite blue cheese is Maytag (\$19.99/lb) from Newton, Iowa - an obvious choice to some, but still a masterfully made cheese. Blue cheeses are either musty like mushrooms or tangy like buttermilk. Blue Stilton (\$18.99/lb) is musty while Maytag is buttermilk, and mirrors Danish Buttermilk Blue cheese. Try them with a drizzle of honey for something different.

For those who don't like blue cheese, try Cambazola (\$17-19.99/lb) blue brie. The luxury of brie is long standing and almost royal in the pretentious feelings we have about it. Many people are turned

off by this, as well as the flurry, or the white mold that encases brie. This is the most important part of the aging process of the brie, and it IS edible. However, if that “flurry” is too thick, it can take away from brie for a rookie. For an experienced cheese lover who eats that rind, a thick flurry has a strange mouth feel, as you are trying to taste a balance between the paste of the cheese and the rind. My favorite brie is Fromage D’Affinois (\$12.99/lb) - a rich, buttery and decadent cow's milk brie that is always that exact ripe texture and offers perfect balance between salt, fat and a delicate, yet flurried rind. They also make a goat (Florette), sheep (Brebis Rocastin) and Fromage D’Affinois with garlic & herbs. Each one has that same velvety texture, and lovely balanced flavor, showcasing how lush each type of milk can be. Luxury made simple.

Though sheep and goats milk are distinctly different, they are often categorized together as “The Other Milks”. Sheep cheeses will play on your whole tongue, touching on every taste bud and flavor as you eat them, changing and growing as you taste. Goat's milk is often described as “barny, pungent, and gamey” and truly is an acquired taste. I often compare fresh young goat cheese, or “Chevre” to the flavor of sour cream and cream cheese, and it can play the same role in many dishes. The truth is, goat cheese is actually milder than many sheep cheeses, and sheep cheese is often more complex.



The simple, rustic and sweet flavor of goat's cheese & milk evokes feelings of the farm and eating outdoors. My favorite goat cheese is Bucheron (\$14.99/lb), a brie-ripened goat log that ages like St. Andre (for you cheese intermediaries out there). It has a rich, firmer middle and a soft brie texture at the edge of the rind. It's like two cheeses in one and I love it. My favorite sheep cheese is Petit Basque, a French, raw sheep's milk cheese made in the Pyrenees. Both on the Spanish and French sides of the mountains they produce many sheep cheeses. This "little barrel" will run you about \$18.99/lb, but you are worth it, as is the cheese – I promise.

Hard cheeses are wide ranging and complex. That extended aging develops the sharpness and flavor profile into something that reveals itself as you place it on your tongue, give it a chew, and then, trust me here, suck on it like a piece of candy a couple times – seriously! You will find that what your sense of taste does with a good, hard aged cheese is second only to what your sense of Mmmmmm will do with it.

**"A delicious, emerging category for us in America is aged gouda. Cypress Groves' Midnight Moon is so rich and almost sweet that I can say I have never tasted anything like it."**

A delicious, emerging category for us in America is aged gouda (\$15-30.00/lb). There are many from Holland, like the Dutch Masters collection with the younger Vincent Van Gough and the older Rembrandt Aged Goudas. I have to say that in the hard cheese category, it is a tie between Landana's 1000 Day Aged Gouda

(Holland), which is aged almost three years, and Cypress Groves' Midnight Moon (CA), an aged goat gouda that is so sharp, rich and almost sweet that I can say I have never tasted anything like it. As an honorable mention, try Beechers Flagship Reserve Cheddar (WA). They coat the wheel in butter before they wrap and age it.

Raw Milk cheeses offer an unbelievably different taste and depth to a cheese. In the beginning of cheese making many hundreds of years ago, the pasteurization method didn't exist yet, so all cheeses being made were raw milk. Eventually, in some cases, the maker had to decide if they would pasteurize or not. To many, that process is what degenerates and subsequently ruins a cheese. Cheese enzymes are like bread starters, they have to be cared for and maintained over time. Once you let them die, or "mutate", that cheese will never be the same. That is a major reason – aside from awesome flavor and complexity – that many cheeses are still raw milk.

A raw milk cheese must be aged over 60 days in order to be sold in the United States. However, in Europe and most of the rest of the world that is not the case. You can buy fresh, soft-ripened, raw milk cheese, which anyone that knows their cheeses will tell you, is something to behold. My favorite raw milk cheese is Gruyere de Comte (\$13-26.00/lb), which was the original Gruyere, before the Swiss pasteurized. Comte is from the Franche Comte region, below the Alsace Lorraine bordering Switzerland & Germany. It's nutty, rich and buttery, the perfect table or fondue cheese.

Cheeses in a category often resemble one another physically as well as by taste, but the subtle differences are what dance on your taste buds and send you in the direction of that one favorite in each category. Take your time, taste A LOT of cheeses, and set your cheese dance card. Only you know what the best cheeses in the world are - your taste buds will tell you.



**Now at Dixie Quicks Public House & RNG Gallery.**

157 West Broadway Council Bluffs, Iowa | [dixiequicks.com](http://dixiequicks.com) | 712.256.4140

# The Fifth Element of Cookery

by Ann Summers

Water, Wood, Fire, and Earth have been described as the four classical elements of nature, the essential phases of matter. In the East they added Metal. In India or Classical Greece it was Ether. The elements vary, but throughout history every culture of note from the Greeks to the Native Americans has invented a system to still the flapping sheet of chaos, peg it down at the four cardinal points of the compass and restore balance to their world.

Not surprisingly, the culinary universe reflects the real one which is always a day late and a dollar short of unanimity: contracting vs. expanding, thawing vs. freezing, mustard vs. mayo, ketchup vs. malt vinegar. We've seen what imbalance in the kitchen brings—those gastronomic abominations that are greasy, salty, sickeningly sweet, sour as all get-out, or simply inedible. A well-balanced dish will weigh savory, acid, sweet, and piquant. Equal measures of fire, water, wood, and earth will result in equilibrium, good feng shui,

Ayurveda, Mat, and a decent meal. Most of us who have tasted the extremes of a tipped scale agree that truly good food is a kind of alchemy.

By good food, I mean dishes from our past that lit up every synapse, stamping our brains with such powerful sensory daguerreotypes

that our eyes close under a drape of daydream as we taste them again with mere whiff of lemon peel, the clink-clunk of ice in crystal, the warm springy tug of good bread as it tears, the chalky tang of coffee-bitter chocolate, the oil-pastel white and persimmon pinstripe of sliced wild salmon. As cooks, we must follow the road maps of our souls to be able to re-create such feelings with a single dish, but we grope for specifics. Even the most poetic shlop fails to describe sublime meals because it is just darn tough to fully answer one question: What about that food made it so great? Restaurateurs and home-cooks alike would give all their dried Madagascan vanilla beans and Kashmiri saffron to get that answer and use it accordingly.

**“Most of us who have tasted the extremes of a tipped scale will agree that truly good food is a kind of alchemy.”**

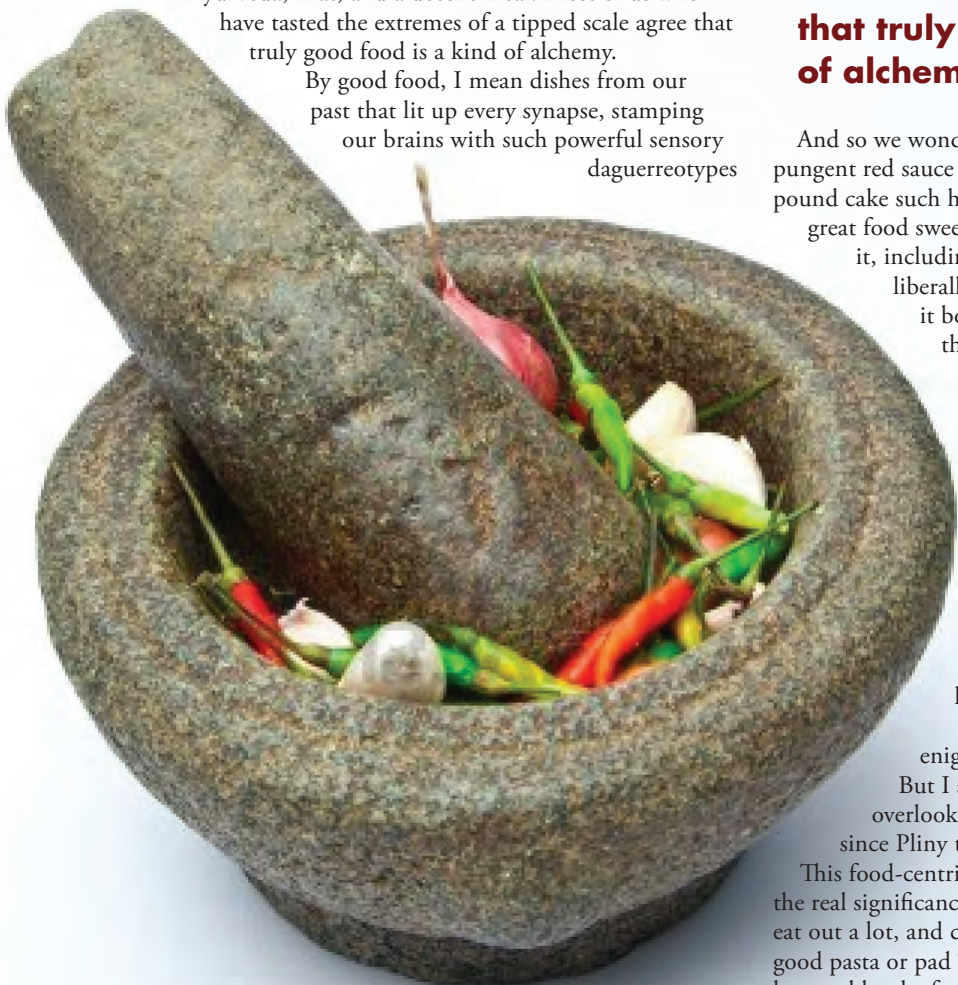
And so we wonder, why was that crispy golden fried ravioli with pungent red sauce so compelling? Why was my grandmother's pound cake such heaven? Such confusion owes to the fact that great food sweeps up all the mundane things that accompany it, including the knot in our stomachs, and sauces them liberally into a single memory. It's hard to say: was it bone china, chandeliers, wind-tunnel fans, or thoughtful, recycled, bamboo table linens? Was it the weather, the mood, the neighborhood, the decade, the hormones?

Was it music, or muzak, or coziness, or location, or the buzz on the patio? Was it a conjuring trick that the amiable bartender slash owner slash chef created? As chefs it's even harder to tell: Was it the well-seasoned cookware, the Japanese bi-steel hamon tempered cutlery, the free-range fois gras, the fifty thousand-dollar gas range with special Peking-duck-torching burners? Was it location, location, location?

Some insist that dining pleasure requires an enigmatic combination of all these diverse elements.

But I argue for something more basic that tends to get overlooked by cooks and has been ignored in restaurants since Pliny the Elder sent back his stuffed olives: the food.

This food-centric concept is no revelation to food critics. But the real significance of food quality may be a shock to people that eat out a lot, and can't figure out why they just can't get really good pasta or pad Thai or whatever when they dine. They may be haunted by the feeling that somewhere, there is a truly spectacular



version of that steak they just mangled and overpaid for, but they can't recall if they actually ate it, or just dreamed it. From a purely practical viewpoint, good food is the only thing that should concern a cook. A dining experience without it is as pointless as a pickup without a bed, or an argument without facts.

Concord on the plate is challenging when we cooks must face handicaps such as limited time, eggs of different sizes, varying relative humidity and altitude, and all the organic irregularities that make us sigh over one piece of fish and gag over another. But how can cooks know they are making good food? How can they be sure? As the great evolutionary biologist and skeptic, Richard Dawkins, put it, "How do we know that we know what we know?" As cooks, we may not reach perfection, but we muddle through and we can vastly improve the odds.


**"From a purely practical viewpoint, good food is the only thing that should concern a cook."**

We can educate ourselves. No one says you have to read Marie-Antoine Carême in French but if you've never heard of him, you will be guilty of ignoring the moon and looking at the finger pointing to it and you will, as Bruce Lee said, "Miss all that heavenly glory." (Actually—Enter the Dragon fans know—he said, "heavenry grory," but I doubt anyone dared to jab him in his titanium-strength external abdominal obliques to point it out.) Back in the 1800's Carême wrote, "When we no longer have good cooking in the world, we will have no literature, nor high and sharp intelligence, nor friendly gathering, nor social harmony." Still germane, both Carême and Master Lee.



We can educate our palates. You may never cotton to sea urchin roe stuffed into sows' udders (what? It was a popular Roman appetizer or *gustatiō*) but if you've never tasted sea urchins at all, you are missing an important piece of the vast panoply that makes up the human palate. And don't give me that "man can live on any restricted diet like meat and taters or twigs" argument. I will sum up the history of anthropoid gastronomy thusly: if it didn't get away, we ate it.

We can guard our palate against desensitizers. Smoking, excessive drinking or limiting our diet to one over-riding flavor enhancer (salt, fat, hot sauce, tannins, fake sweeteners, Applebee's) can seriously damage your ability to taste actual flavors. It was said that the great Victorian writer, William Makepeace Thackeray, always drank such strong red wine that when he was given a fine French Sancerre he remarked that the water in that part of France was rather sweet for his taste. I've seen people drown everything in vinegar, mustard, ketchup, salt, hot sauce or sugar. Somewhere, there exists a person (possibly from Manchester, England) who uses all of the above at once.


We must listen to our diners. You and your diners may all have the palate of a goat but you can listen to those that don't. It rocks my world when producing mogul and Chef Gordon Ramsay examines restaurants and tells wanna-be chefs none too gently that their food is simply disgusting. Next, every diner is canvassed, along with the wait-staff and random passersby, and all give the same reply: "This food is terrible." And again and again you will see the chef-for-a-minute respond, "There is nothing wrong with the food. It's very good." What is going on here? How do you know that you don't know what you don't know? Unsurprisingly, a serious disconnect exists somewhere and a cook's job is to find it and reconnect.



SHARE OUR STRENGTH'S  
**COOKING  
MATTERS™**  
NO KID HUNGRY

NATIONALLY SPONSORED BY  

Share Our Strength's *Cooking Matters*® empowers families at risk of hunger with the skills, knowledge and confidence to make healthy and affordable meals. With the help of volunteers, participants learn how to prepare nutritious, low-cost ingredients in ways that provide the best nourishment possible for their families. For more information about volunteering with Cooking Matters, contact Keri Davis, Assistant Coordinator at 402-930-4069 or e-mail [kdavis@thevnacares.org](mailto:kdavis@thevnacares.org).

 12565 West Center Rd, Ste 100  
402-342-5566  
[www.thevnacares.org](http://www.thevnacares.org)

We can stop trying to impress everyone. A few years in culinary school and there we go infusing everything with powders, foams, and reductions. It's complicated, and certainly bears out the expectation of "value added" cuisine, but does it taste good? A typical test for a new chef is to have her cook an egg because an egg is the most basic thing one can cook but the easiest to screw up. Gumbo and goulash need spice, but they can still be fresh and simple.

We can do something well and stick to it. Not everyone likes Italian food (which is sad) and not everyone has a taste for organ meat (which is understandable.) But who really wants to eat haggis at the Authentic Mexican Chinese Tandoori Sushi Barbeque Shack? Some people take global cuisine to new heights and some just don't know when to quit. If you live in the heartland, grill steak. If you live on the coast, steam clams. And if life gives you lemons and butter, you'd better be making some killer lemon curd.

Heeding balance, and with a willingness to challenge our desperate clinging to our own rightness, we will need no magic formula to make great food. We only need mindfulness, passion, and the sensible accumulation of good, time-tested, memory-blitzing recipes. We can know that we know what we know. Perhaps it is self-awareness that should be the final and fifth element.



# Vegan vs. Paleo

by April Christenson



If you've hosted a dinner party recently, this may sound familiar.

*"Will there be a vegan option?"*

*"Should I bring a gluten-free alternative?"*

*"Is this grass-fed beef?"*

Now more than ever, people are rethinking what they eat. Gone are the days of simple dinners with a protein in the center of the plate, a starch and a vegetable on the side. From vegetarian and vegan to gluten-free to the Paleolithic (paleo) diet, there are many popular and varied food ideologies. There are often members of a single social group or family with extremely different views on food.

Interestingly, two of the most popular food ideologies right now, vegan and paleo, are at completely different ends of the food ideology spectrum. Vegans consume a mostly plant-based diet, excluding any animal products, such as meat, dairy and eggs. Paleo, on the other hand, is a diet based on what our hunter-gatherer ancestors ate millions of years ago, before the rise of

**"Two of the most popular food ideologies right now are at completely different ends of the food ideology spectrum."**

agriculture. People who eat paleo consume mostly vegetables, grass-fed beef, free-range chicken and nuts and seeds. Proponents of the paleo diet believe that many of the health problems we face today, including the obesity epidemic, are caused by eating too many processed foods and refined sugars.

On a typical Sunday afternoon, you can find Jeni Chase in her kitchen, preparing food for her family to eat all week. Chase is a member of **Paleo Omaha** ([www.paleoomaha.com](http://www.paleoomaha.com)).

"I like to do a weekly cook-up," Chase said. "I'll cook up a bunch of food at once and have meals for the week."

Chase decided to try the paleo diet at the beginning of 2011. She had been suffering from a myriad of health problems, including the hypothyroidism and acne she had battled for most of her life. In the beginning, she took it slow.

"I'd allow myself a cheat day at the end of the week. If I ate well all week, I could have a whole pizza that day if I wanted," Chase said, laughing.

On her weekly "cheat day" Chase would allow herself to eat the non-paleo foods she craved. She began to notice that, while she felt great during the week when she was eating paleo, after she indulged on her cheat day she'd feel tired, bloated and pretty miserable.

"That was a really great way to transition to paleo," Chase said. "Because when I did that I realized that on my cheat days I felt awful."

It wasn't long before Chase realized how different she felt when eating paleo. She decided to go "whole hog," in her own words. Since then she's lost 40 pounds and her acne has cleared up.



“My endocrinologist isn’t very surprised,” Chase said. “He just says, ‘keep doing what you’re doing!’”

So, what does a typical day of food look like if you’re eating paleo? For most, it’s something like this:

Breakfast might be a couple eggs and sautéed greens. It could also be leftovers from dinner the night before. Breakfast, said Chase, is one of the hardest meals for beginning paleo eaters to adapt to, because unlike the typical American breakfast which is heavily carbohydrate based (think cold cereal, bagels, toast, etc.), a typical paleo breakfast is often more meat centered.

“It’s not as low carb as Atkins,” Chase said. “But you do end up eating fewer carbohydrates because you’re not eating all those bread products. My blood sugar is much more stable now as a result.”

Lunch and dinner center around healthy proteins like grass-fed beef, free-range chicken or wild-caught fish and fresh, seasonal vegetables. Nuts and seeds are a typical snack between meals.

Chase said it’s easy to shop paleo in Omaha. She does some of her shopping at grocery stores, some from local farms and gets a lot of produce from farmer’s markets and indoor farmer’s markets like Tomato Tomato. Some of her favorite local farms are **Chisholm Family Farm** in Elmwood, Neb., and **Honey Creek Farms** in Lincoln.

“It’s quite easy because of the resources we have in this area,” Chase said of local farms. “As long as you’re willing to put in the time to cook your own meals.”

**“Paleo and vegan share some common ground, like a concern for the environment and better, more humane farming practices.”**

Those who eat paleo tend to prepare meals at home more often than visit restaurants, simply because it is hard to know the source of your food at a typical restaurant. Both Chase and another paleo advocate I spoke with, however, said that Omaha has many paleo-friendly restaurants. Some of their favorites included **Mark’s Bistro, Lot 2** and **M’s Pub**.

At the other end of the food spectrum is veganism. John McDevitt runs the meetup group **Vegan Omaha** ([www.veganomaha.com](http://www.veganomaha.com)). He went vegan nearly 10 years ago.

“I always tell people, I went vegan for my cat.” McDevitt joked.

In all seriousness, McDevitt said he went vegan for both health reasons and ethical concerns. He ate a vegetarian diet for two years before transitioning to veganism.

“I was already used to not eating dairy, ordering pizza without cheese, for example,” McDevitt said. “So it wasn’t that hard.”

McDevitt started Vegan Omaha in January 2008 as a way to connect with other vegans in the community. Fewer than five people attended the first meeting. Now, there are often thirty or forty people in attendance. Their most recent meetup was December 16 at **Crystal Jade**.

For vegans, a typical breakfast might be a green smoothie or tofu scramble or even something as simple as whole grain toast with almond butter. For lunch and dinner, a healthy vegan meal should be mostly plant-based and may include beans, tofu or hearty root vegetables.

Some of veganism’s detractors claim that the diet can be unhealthy because some who are used to eating meat turn to highly processed meat-like products to fill that void. Think soy “chicken” nuggets. Another concern is malnutrition or deprivation of important nutrients, like vitamin B-12 which most people get from



5914 Center St. Omaha, NE  
**402-551-0552**  
[www.petrows.com](http://www.petrows.com)

Open Monday – Saturday, 6am - 9:30pm. Closed Sunday.

eating animal meat. McDevitt said it’s all about trial and error and finding a balance.

“You can definitely be an unhealthy vegan,” McDevitt said. “You can eat candy all day and it may be vegan. But as long as you’re eating whole grains, vegetables and fruit, I think it’s healthier overall.”

Although some see Nebraska as a meat-eater’s paradise, McDevitt said that he does not think it’s difficult to be vegan in Omaha. Many restaurants, he said, are now offering at least one or two vegan menu options. Vegan Omaha’s website has a comprehensive restaurant directory. Among McDevitt’s favorites are **Amsterdam Falafel** and **Crystal Jade**.

McDevitt said that one of his favorite things about being a vegan is the diverse community.

“The great thing about veganism is all the different kinds of vegans - be it for environmental, ethical or health reasons,” McDevitt said. “I never really thought about the environmental impact of raising cattle, for example. So, it’s not just one thing. There’s a bunch of different things that draw people to veganism.”

At the end of the day, there is no right or wrong diet. Even two food ideologies as juxtaposed as paleo and vegan share some common ground, like a concern for the environment and better, more humane farming practices.

“We have amazing resources in Nebraska,” Chase said. “So many farmers are doing it right and we need to support them.”

Another tip that both Chase and McDevitt shared for those who are just starting out with a new diet, take it slow.

“It’s trial and error,” McDevitt said. “The internet is an amazing tool for research. There are a lot of good websites and support communities.”

# EATING, DRINKING & by Lucas Korth BIKING AROUND OMAHA

Oh, the bicycle. There is no nobler method of transport; its awe-inspiring grace only surpassed by unparalleled precision, and such simplicity! A design centuries old, yet capable of propelling even the modestly athletic to daring speeds. And it's the speed that hooks you. The exhilaration is incomparable to any other mode of street travel. Those in the sports car commercials are only operating with a fraction of what a bike will get you.

I'm going to take ya'll on an abbreviated bicycle tour of this big beautiful place we call Omaha; hooking you up with some good routes and nifty food and drink spots to hit up along the way. Now, I'll be the first to admit that there are most certainly folks in this great town who are more knowledgeable about biking in Omaha than I, not to mention stronger cyclists too, but you know what? They aren't writing this article. In fact the most qualified guy I know barely knows how to read or write (rhymes with Fat Grover).

**"I'm going to take y'all on an abbreviated bicycle tour of this big beautiful place we call Omaha."**

So where to begin? Well an obvious choice would be, how about where you live? But since any good tour needs some direction we're going to start where I did. And I don't mean when I first started riding initially, mind you. You see, like most broke numbskulls I tooled around on a junk mountain bike for about a year until I finally had the scratch to get myself a proper road bike. That day biking immediately went from a cheap way to get around/not be grotesquely fat to wow, I'm having fun, cool. So that's important, if you're reading this and you got some broke-ass Huffy sounding like its got baseball cards in every spoke even though it doesn't; buy a real bike. Best \$400 I've ever borrowed from my girlfriend (and eventually paid back years later).

After careful deliberation I've decided we should start this thing downtown. Now, unless you're some smarmy douche you probably don't live downtown so let's get there first. There are dozens of ways to do that and they're basically all fun because you'll be going downhill and therefore really fast. You see the neat and also crappy thing about Omaha is that it is situated in a river valley. As a result the terrain around town ranges from slightly hilly to hilly as crap, buddy, and that will be something you'll always want to keep in mind when you're planning routes around the city.

Now back to getting downtown, I prefer Jackson street because it's got plenty of lanes, light traffic and, if you time it right, you can bomb all the hills and get there in no time. The best part of Jackson is what I call the "home stretch". It starts right around 28th street, just a block or two after the interstate. You'll know you're there

when you reach the top of a hill and all that lies before you is about a mile and a half of road, all downhill, with only a few stoplights to potentially impede your progress. What's nice is these lights are timed with the car traffic, and what's even nicer is if you have a fast bike and a decent pair of stems you can keep up with traffic and catch all the lights! There isn't a feeling quite like blazing down a street and seeing the look on a motorist's face as he notices a cyclist is passing him. Even if Jackson Street is out of the way for you, it's worth taking just for the opportunity to encounter one of the greatest feelings you can experience on this Earth.



Before we hit our first stop, I should mention that I'm operating under the guise that it's a gorgeous afternoon sometime in the distant, not frozen future. And hopefully, it's around three in the afternoon which is exactly when the **Upstream Brewing Company's** excellent happy hour starts. Now if you're one of those rabid, weirdo go-getters that get out of bed before the high temperature hits then you probably have some time to kill. A person of your ilk would probably enjoy milling around the **Old Market** for an hour or two, or if you're more like me you could bop across the pedestrian bridge and gamble some of that hard-earned dough away at the boats. That's right my friends, there is a safe and reliable way to ride a bicycle to a floating casino. What a country! Anyway,

about the Upstream - It's hands down the best place to do some day drinking in the Old Market, especially when the weather's cooperating. The deck on the second floor is perfect for having a couple craft beers while soaking up some sun heat. They also have a really marvelous pool hall and, yes, it turns out shooting billiards is really fun. When you think you are about ready to move on, order one more beer. The next leg is kind of rough.

Remember flying down Harney Street? Well unfortunately what goes down must come back up, and we got some climbing to do. Stay on Jackson Street West and merge onto St. Mary's Avenue. It's relatively flat up to this point but you're coming up on K-19 aka the Widowmaker. Just maintain a steady cadence and keep breathing regularly and eventually you'll get to the top. I've found it helps significantly if you play Bad Company songs in your head and try not to think about how much further that damn hill stretches. If you don't want to tackle the whole thing all in one swoop, the **Rose & Crown** is strategically placed part of the way up the hill. The RC also is endowed with a magnificent deck, the best in the city I'm tempted to say, so if you find yourself enjoying it instead of endlessly pumping those scrawny legs of yours, don't feel so bad.

Salvation! The worst hill of the trip is behind you, but sadly there isn't much time for a breather. We're about to merge onto Leavenworth Street and we'll be riding on some heavily trafficked roads for the next few miles. It can be pretty terrifying having cars whiz by you, affording maybe a centimeter or two of space as the driver sneers at you maliciously, so be sure to be extra careful. And if some motorist tries to give you guff, flip him off and remember you got just as much right to the road as they do.



Mother India  
photo by Jessica Orth

**“Don't let it's modest appearance fool you; the food at Mother India is excellent.”**

Well on that note, who's getting hungry? Better make a quick pit stop for some really great Indian food. I'm referring of course to **Mother India**, conveniently located in what appears to be a TuffShed on 35th and Leavenworth, but don't let it's modest appearance fool you; the food is excellent. I usually go with the Lamb Curry, but I've yet to be disappointed with any of the other entrees. And as an added bonus, I don't know if it's the spices or

what, but Indian food always seems to give me a ton of extra energy which is helpful when your vehicle is self-propelled (that's a fart joke).



O'Leaver's Pub

**“Keep in mind that it is nigh impossible to simply pop into O'Leaver's and have 'one or two'.”**

All refueled and ready to press on, get back onto Leavenworth and continue to ride the alternating hills until you get down into Saddle Creek. Turn south onto Saddle Creek and contemplate stopping at the legendary **O'Leaver's Pub**. Just keep in mind that if you do decide to stop, your tour is probably over. It is nigh impossible to simply pop into O'Leaver's and have “one or two”, I'm sorry, but that just isn't going to happen. You see, O'Leaver's is the kind of place that simultaneously evokes memories of zaniness past while concurrently dispatching the vibes of wacky shit to come. I know it sounds ridiculous, but the theory has been around for centuries. T.H. White wrote a book about it. It's called, *The Once and Future Party*. You've been warned.

Looks like you've taken my advice and we can proceed. Excellent. Continue south on Saddle Creek until it merges with Center Street. Take Center west for a little over a mile and, please, do be careful, neither of these roads have bike lanes, but they're both very flat and the faster you can go, the better. As you approach the 72nd Street overpass you will dread the very possibility of having to climb that hill, but don't worry we're taking a right and entering that new hotspot for the young people, Aksarben Village! If you've got a hankering for some BBQ or rather a cupcake, you can stop at either **Mojo's** or **Jones' Brothers Cupcakes**, but otherwise press on because we're in the home-stretch.

That Aksarben Road will take you all the way north to Pacific, which you will cross and enter Elmwood Park. Elmwood is a delightful little jaunt but always be wary of errant golf balls, those can ruin your day right quick. Stay on Elmwood and take a right just before you begin to climb up into the University. This will lead you into one of those traffic circles (what are those things called anyway?) get out on Happy Hollow. This will start you on a little route I call circle-to-circle; continue northeast on Happy Hollow across Dodge, past Underwood, past Cuming, until it drains into another one of those traffic circles. From here you can take a quick detour east on Saddle Creek to an Omaha staple, the **Homy**

**Inn.** Renown for having champagne on tap, the Homy's also got an underrated tap selection and you can also eat peanuts out of a dog dish like some filthy animal. Make sure to fill up on those nuts because this is the last stop until the end of the line, or as it is more commonly known, Benson.

Head back into that traffic circle and exit onto Country Club. From here all you got to do is follow the signs! That's right, there are helpful signs posted along the remainder of the route because you are on the officially sanctioned Omaha, Nebraska bicycle route to the borough, Benson, 2013, thank you. Easy enough, right?

**“I’d be remiss if I didn’t mention Benson’s pièce de résistance, Jake’s Cigars & Spirits.”**

You’ve just completed this beginner’s bike route that I arbitrarily created so congratulations! Celebrate with a lovely dinner at one of the first-rate eateries Benson has to offer like **Lot 2** or **Taita**. I’d also recommend stopping by the delightful **Omaha Bicycle Company**. Grab yourself a cup of coffee while their expert mechanics try to discern what was causing that bizarre popping noise you kept hearing (hopefully it wasn’t your knees because that would be terrible). Or perhaps you want to cultivate that growing buzz of yours at one of the several hundred bars Benson has to offer.

I’d be remiss (and probably fired) if I didn’t mention the cream of the crop, Benson’s pièce de résistance, **Jake’s Cigar’s and Spirits**. Nowhere else on Earth can you possess a preference anywhere from PBR to 30 year old scotch and feel right at home. So order yourself something special and try not to think about how you still have to bike home. Ride safe everyone.



Jake's Cigars & Spirits  
photo by J. Michael McBride



**exploreandenjoy!**  
Indulge in the possibilities

**MIDTOWN CROSSING**  
*MC*  
[www.midtowncrossing.com](http://www.midtowncrossing.com)





# A Foodie is Born!

## Discovering Food Through Cooking a Classic Dish

by Charles Schlusell

Many of my most cherished food memories all come together at a restaurant situated in the heart of the **Old Market**. Most, if not all, of my involvement in the Omaha area culinary landscape emanates from a fortuitous job opportunity many years ago while I was attending the **Institute for the Culinary Arts** at Metro. I was working at a local grocery store deli when someone mentioned that there might be an opening at **V. Mertz**. I immediately headed down to the Old Market with my portfolio in tow and within a few days was pinching myself to make sure it was for real.

I had dined at V. Mertz a couple times over the years and to say it was one of my favorite restaurants is an understatement. Who can resist the romantically-lit, step-back-in-time charming atmosphere of this grande dame of the Omaha restaurant scene? Here I was as the main assistant to the head chef in the restaurant of my dreams – I was awestruck. Because of this and many other delicious experiences there, to this day V. Mertz remains one of my favorite places to eat.

**“I had been touting the ecstasies and raptures of eating truly great food to one of my best friends. Little did he know his proverbial mind was about to be blown.”**

Just one walk down the Old Market passage way and the mists magically start to swirl round my feet and all the memories come flooding back. Suddenly there I am, eating lunch with my mother. Mom was one of the main influences that set me on a path to seeking out the exotic flavors of cuisines that were a rarity for a boy growing up in small town Nebraska. My heart is full as I see mom's smiling countenance as she waves goodbye, the mists start to swirl again as the years flash by to the late 90's and another dinner at V. Mertz, once I had started working there.

I had been touting the ecstasies and raptures of eating truly great food at a fine dining restaurant to one of my best friends. He had no reference point for the type of dining experience I was trying to illumine upon his psyche. He couldn't comprehend that the enjoyment/cost ratio factor could be exponentially increased beyond the \$8.95 he paid for the incredibly tasty nachos supreme he enjoyed at his favorite Mexican restaurant.

Little did he know his proverbial mind was about to be blown and his culinary world about to be rocked. Using my coveted fifty percent dining discount for food and wine we walked into the ancient passage way and descended the cobbled stairs to V. Mertz with a purpose – he to prove me wrong and I he. We sat down in the simple yet elegant surroundings and before long the appetizers arrived. He skeptically took a first bite and began to chew. Soon,

although it seemed like ages the adjectives began to flow, “amazing, incredible, unbelievable, ethereal” and then “I had no idea food could taste this wonderful!”

A new foodie was born that evening and soon he was telling me of the new restaurants he had discovered. Over the years he has often impressed me with the recipes he was fine-tuning at home and recently has regaled me with tales of delectable meals at romantic bistros that he and his lovely wife dined at while honeymooning in Paris this summer. Of course there was only one recipe I could share for this article. A dish that still causes me to instantly drool merely by thinking of it – the classic V. Mertz peppersteak with brandy cream sauce. The following is my version inspired by that iconic recipe. Enjoy!

### Pepper Crusted New York Strips with Cognac Morel Cream Sauce (yields 4 servings)

#### Steaks

- 4 – 12-16oz New York Strip Steaks (trim any fat or gristle)
- 1 Tbsp unsalted butter
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 4 Tbsp coarsely crushed peppercorns (crush with bottom of heavy pan)
- Kosher salt

#### Sauce

- 1 oz dried morel mushrooms
- 1 Tbsp reserved mushroom jus
- 1/2 cup shallots finely diced
- 1/2 cup cognac or brandy
- 1 cup heavy cream
- Fresh chives chopped

#### Directions

- Place morels in a bowl, pour 1 1/2 cups boiling water over mushrooms and cover with plastic wrap and let stand at least 30 min. Season both sides of the steaks with Kosher salt and peppercorns, pressing firmly to adhere the peppercorns.
- Drain water from morels and slice the larger mushrooms in half, reserve mushroom jus.
- Melt butter and add olive oil to a heavy bottomed sauté pan or cast iron skillet over medium high heat until butter and oil just start to smoke. Add steaks and do not move for 3-4 minutes, then flip steaks and cook for another 3-4 minutes for medium rare.
- Remove steaks and place on a platter loosely tented with foil. Drain all but approximately two tablespoons of the oil from the pan add shallots and mushrooms sautéing over medium heat, about 2 minutes. Remove pan from stove add cognac, return to stove and carefully ignite cognac, cook over medium heat for a couple minutes scraping up caramelized bits from pan bottom add cream and 1 Tbsp reserved mushroom jus cooking over medium heat till sauce thickens. Add kosher salt to taste. Spoon sauce over steaks and garnish with fresh chopped chives.





Pepper Crusted New York Strips with Cognac Morel Cream Sauce  
photo by Jacob Hermann

# Share Our Strength's Rebecca Beaudoin

by Keri Davis



Share our Strength's Cooking Matters empowers families at risk of hunger with the skills, knowledge and confidence to make healthy and affordable meals. With the help of our volunteer culinary and nutrition educators, course participants learn how to select nutritious, low-cost ingredients and how to prepare meals in ways that provide the best

nourishment possible for their families.

Nutrition instructor **Rebecca Beaudoin** has been volunteering with **Cooking Matters** since April of 2011. She has taught many Cooking Matters courses and has led multiple Shopping Matters tours since she came on board. Beaudoin received her degree in dietetics from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and completed her dietetic internship at Mayo Medical Center in Rochester, MN. Her first job was at The Mayo Medical Center, in the Trauma Intensive Care Unit (ICU). Later on, she moved to Georgia and was the Clinical Nutrition Manager and ICU dietician. While there she also did consulting work for a long term care center and for a hospice center. Beaudoin moved back to Nebraska and worked as a health care inspector for the state, followed by one year in Food Sales at **Sysco**. Currently, Beaudoin is one of the two registered dietitians at the Stockyards Plaza Hy-Vee.

**“Beaudoin has discovered that when children are truly involved from the ground up, they have more investment into eating healthy.”**



Beaudoin first became involved with Cooking Matters after she was sought out by the programs volunteer coordinator. After meeting with the coordinator to discuss the organization and observe a class, Beaudoin was hooked. She loved the Cooking Matters program and its mission to end childhood hunger by 2015. She felt that the program followed right in line with the goals of her employer, Hy-Vee, and she loved the idea of being more involved with the community.

**“By adding exercise into the nutrition education piece, kids are more excited to learn about nutrition and generally retain the information better.”**

Beaudoin feels that the most valuable lesson she has learned so far by volunteering with Cooking Matters is how to reach kids. She has discovered that when children are truly involved from the ground up, they have more investment into eating healthy. “It’s easier for kids to be excited about eating fruits and vegetables when they invest time and energy into the meal that they have prepared.”

Beaudoin has also learned through her volunteer experiences that it is important to get kids up and moving. She has found that by adding exercise into the nutrition education piece, kids are more excited to learn about nutrition and generally retain the information better. Beaudoin hopes that her participants take home their excitement and the knowledge they have gained from participating in a Cooking Matters course and share it with the rest of their families.

**“Beaudoin believes there is huge value in eating healthy meals together as a family and the skills taught in a Cooking Matters course help individuals make that happen.”**

Volunteering with Cooking Matters is important to Beaudoin because she feels it is imperative to be connected to the community you work in. She believes there is huge value in eating healthy meals together as a family and the skills taught in a Cooking Matters course help individuals make that happen. One of Beaudoin’s favorite times during a Cooking Matters series is graduation day. She loves the excitement that fills the room and enjoys the moment when all of the kids receive their graduation items, especially the chef hats.

Beaudoin’s advice to someone who is thinking about volunteering is, “Don’t worry if you’re not an expert in the subject area.” There are many ways for someone to be involved with Cooking Matters and the most important thing is being out there in the community and giving back.

# Bar Chat

by Dan Crowell

## Bygone Days of Omaha's Bar Scene

Those interested in dining or enjoying cocktails out in Omaha pursue these interests within a bar and restaurant environment that is in a state of constant evolution. Today's bars and restaurants, and the customers that frequent them, bring fragments of the culture and the establishments of bygone days with them into the present. It's relatively easy to take a quick mental tally of the significant and exciting changes that have taken place over the past several years. But what about a longer look back, say twenty or thirty years, or even longer? What would this reveal about how we got to where we are today? How might one trace a thread of Omaha restaurant and bar lineage from the present back that far, and what insights might be gained in the process?

Fortunately, one such time capsule exists in the person of **Pat Gobel**, long-time proprietor of the **Dundee Dell**. Pat's history in the Omaha bar and restaurant scene and his path to the Dell is a long, colorful and fascinating one that weaves its way through a number of marquee establishments, which themselves formed part of the early foundation on which today's bar & restaurant culture is built. Pat was kind enough to sit down for an interview recently.

**Food & Spirits Magazine: Pat, you have an impressive resume. Could you walk me through it?**

Pat Gobel: My sophomore year of college at Creighton in the early seventies, I wanted to bring my car to campus. Technically you couldn't have a car your freshman year. So I wanted a car and a girlfriend, and to support both of those concepts, I needed a job. A friend of mine was working at the **Oar House**, where the **Spaghetti Works** is now (corner of 11th & Howard in the Old Market). And she said, "Why don't you come and work at the Oar House? I'm waiting tables, etc.," and I said "Why not?" So I went down and I applied, and I got a job tending bar. At that time, the Oar House was Dixieland jazz (According to the Preston Love autobiography [A Thousand Honey Creeks Later](#), Count Basie and his band played at the Oar House). It had oysters on the half-shell, it had peel & eat shrimp, and yards, half-yards, and feet of beer. The owner was a bit of a bounder and a cad, and it eventually came to no good. So I left there and went to **The Observatory**. One of our managers moved over to The Observatory and I kind of followed him over there.

**"Back in the day, if you wanted to go out, The Prom Townhouse was the place to go."**

**FSM: And where was The Observatory located?**

PG: That was at the old **Prom Townhouse** (7000 Dodge St), where Office Max is now (the building was destroyed by the 1975 tornado – its wooden arches, the only structural element left standing, were incorporated into the interior framework of the **Pink Poodle** restaurant in Crescent, IA). The Prom Townhouse was the bomb. Back in the day, if you wanted to go out, that was



the place to go. They had a really good Japanese restaurant, a really good mainline restaurant, and a good Chinese restaurant all in one place. The people who ran the Chinese restaurant went on to start **Chu's Chop Suey House** (formerly located at 6455 Center St), and the people that ran the Japanese restaurant went on to start **Mt Fuji** on 72nd & Blondo, and the guy that ran the mainline restaurant was **Ernie Firmature** (NOTE: Ernie passed away on November 9th of last year at age 85), and he went on to start **The Gas Lamp** (formerly at 30th & Leavenworth Streets) and several other wonderful restaurants (including longtime Regency fixture, **The Sidewalk Café**, **The Brothers Lounge** at 38th & Leavenworth is also a Firmature creation).

So, the Prom Townhouse was the stuff. Now, in 1972, it's in its declining years. It's not what it used to be. It was run by this group out of Kansas City that were reportedly the mob. I love the rumors in this industry. Whether or not it's true, it makes for a great story. Anyway, it was the beginning of the disco era, may that rot in hell forever, so this was a disco kind of joint. The tables were eighteen inches or so off the ground, and all the waitresses wore basically mini-skirts, orange halter tops and orange undies. So they had to bend way over to put your drink down on this little table close to the floor, and what happens to a halter top when you bend way over?

**FSM: Wow!**

PG: Yes, it was very risqué, especially for Omaha in 1972. The hippie era of peace and flowers and tie-dye and 'why can't we all just get along?' had ended, and now it was disco, and cocaine, and Gloria Gaynor, and Donna Summer, and the Bee Gees, for Christ's sake. And so it was just dreck. The Observatory was all of that. The manager fired a waitress in bed one day. She had apparently made a comment about his prowess.

**"Looking back, it was a unique time in American history, and a unique time in Omaha history. It was just a beautiful time."**

I was only there for a few miserable months. Very short-lived. I couldn't stand it. But one nice connection I made there was a great old boxer around town named Mouse Strauss (the boxing career of Bruce 'The Mouse' Strauss inspired the 1997 movie "The Mouse", which featured cameo appearances by Ray 'Boom Boom' Mancini and Randall 'Tex' Cobb). Mouse was a longtime boxer who would box four or five times a night in different weight classes under different names, and he was the guy that went down. He was five feet eight or so, middleweight, and he was the head bouncer at The Observatory, and all the guys backing him up were these sides of beef that were linemen for UNO. And the rule was, "You don't hit anybody until I hit somebody. If you see me getting hit, don't hit anybody, but when I start hitting somebody, you can hit somebody". And Mouse could take a punch. You couldn't knock him down unless he decided he was going down. That was the beauty of his boxing career. You could be six four, punching this guy who is five eight, and he's just standing there grinning at you like, "Is that all you got?" There were fights every night, but Mouse never lost his head. He never got emotional about it. He never got angry.

So I went from there and got a job at **M's Pub** in November or December of 1972. M's opened for business in January of '73, and I was the first waiter hired. I didn't know how to wait tables. I didn't know what side of the plate the fork or knife went on, but Mary (Mary Vogel – founder of M's Pub, the 'M' in M's) thought I was cute. Mary was sort of this grand dame. She'd been an Ak-Sar-Ben

**NOW APPEARING!**  
**EXCITING DOUBLE-BARRELLED ENTERTAINMENT!**  
**PEE-DEE'S**  
 SUPPER CLUB  
 2 SHOWS NIGHTLY  
 1st Show 9:30



**THE ENCHANTING MARIE MISAKURA**

**DANCING NIGHTLY to the EXCITING RUSS LONG COMBO**

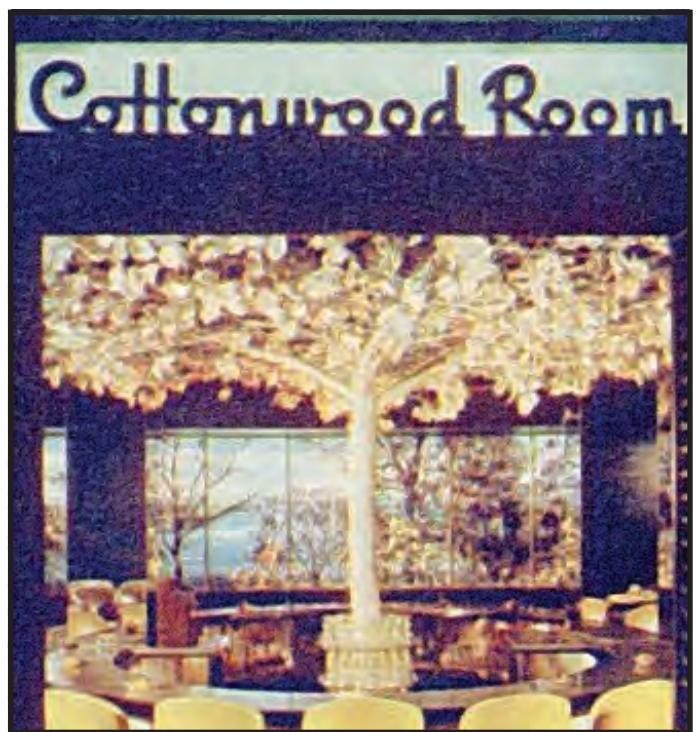
**DINING ROOM OPENS DAILY AT 5 P.M.**      **BROILED STEAK and SEAFOODS with Your FAVORITE COCKTAIL**

(For Reservations Phone 366-9956)

**1 1/2 MILES EAST OF SO. OMAHA BRIDGE**



**CLIFF WINEHILL KING OF THE COMICS**



**Peppermint Cave**  
 THE MOST TALKED ABOUT CLUB IN OMAHA

with Omaha's Finest Band      The Esquires

NO COVER      FREE EXHIBITIONS      FREE LESSONS

**JACK and JILL**  
 Omaha's most appetizing food  
 Open 24 hours

**THE RON-D-VOO**  
 Piano Bar - Delicious drinks  
 Loads of Fun

**HILL HOTEL**

16th and Howard      Leon Asher, Manager  
 Free parking for overnight guests

princess, her father was a wealthy architect, she married and buried two very rich husbands, and she was rolling in dough. So she built this gorgeous place, and it opened my eyes to all sorts of possibilities. I grew up in a small town in Nebraska. We didn't have any black people. We didn't have any gay people. A mixed marriage there was when a Catholic married a Lutheran. We didn't have any kind of an arts scene. We didn't have wealthy people.

The Old Market at that time was basically four joints. The French Café opened first, then Mr. Toad, then the Firehouse Dinner Theater (in the space currently occupied by Upstream Brewing Company on 11th & Jackson), and then M's Pub. There were a bunch of head shops, where you could buy pot under the counter, and records and bongos over the counter. And there were some really cool art galleries. A beautiful place called Gallery at the Market was in the Nouvelle Eve space (northwest corner of 11th & Howard). Tom Davis owned it, and his family was involved with First National Bank. So the Market was this weird mix of eccentric people, what was left of the hippies, really rich people from Fairacres and such, and an artsy kind of crowd. They're all sort of hanging out and enjoying each other.

I'd work at M's and wait tables, and learn how to do that from some very, very good waiters, and then after hours we'd end up in Fairacres, sitting around drinking wine and talking about Miles Davis, and Baryshnikov, and art. It really opened up my world. Looking back, it was a unique time in American history, and it was a unique time in Omaha history. All these things got together, mixed well together, and everybody got along. It was just a beautiful time.

**"You didn't drink vodka unless you were one of those 'alcoholics'. You drank gin, rum, scotch or bourbon, but respectable people certainly didn't drink vodka."**

I worked at M's for a couple years at least. Mary sort of took me under her wing. I think I was her surrogate son. I eventually went on to become the bar manager there. I bought the liquor, ran the schedule, and did a whole lot of things, without thinking 'this is unique' or 'I'm not qualified to do this'. None of that ever crossed my mind. I learned that there are many kinds of liquor, which was news to me because all I ever had been was a beer drinker. There were a dozen or so scotches, and four or five different bourbons. Vodka was kind of looked down on at the time. You didn't drink vodka unless you were one of those 'alcoholics'. So you drank gin, you might drink rum, you'd drink cognac, or scotch, or bourbon. But respectable people certainly didn't drink vodka.

It was a different world. The ladies always drank cream drinks. We blended I don't know how many Grasshoppers, and Velvet Hammers, and Banchees, and Golden Cadillacs, these hideous drinks. But I was new to the game, and I didn't know. It was just the way it was. And a Martini was a Martini. It was gin, and it always had vermouth in it. We were 'by the book' bartenders. There was a rigor to it, and we took great pride in the drinks that we presented. They were made according to the recipe and the proportions were correct. If you're making a Stinger and it's two parts brandy and one part white crème de menthe, and somebody wants more crème de menthe, well then it's not really a Stinger anymore. If that's what you want, I'm going to charge you for it, but it's not a Stinger. It's some kind of mess.

There was respectability and an expectation of a bartender back then that went away for a while and now seems to be starting to



return again. Customers would come in, of course this is long before cell phones, and they would say, "If anyone calls for me, I'm not here". Part of my job is making really good drinks, but another part of my job is taking care of my customers – that confidence. Whether they knew me by name or not, I was expected to hold up that end. So it was, "yes sir, no problem". Then the phone call would come in, and I'd say, "I'm sorry. He's not here". And I'd hang up, and I'd go over to him and I'd say, "You just had a call. I told them you're not here." And he'd say, "Thank you". There were pay phones in the rest rooms, so if you needed to make a confidential call, you didn't go to the pay phone by the front door, you went to the pay phone in the rest room and you made your call.

You never mentioned to a customer who he was in here with previously, the night before or last week. You kept that to yourself, and you were expected to be aware enough to know to keep your mouth shut. Nowadays, everything's on Facebook, blah, blah, blah, and 'I had oatmeal for breakfast'. Who cares? But in those days, you were expected to keep a confidence, to keep your mouth shut, and to never ever mention it. There was a charm and a certain unspoken gentility about things. It was the end of an era.

## "That was a rockin' good time. I was in college and the Chicago Bar was a college bar."

After a few years at M's, I went to work at the **Chicago Bar**. It was a brand new joint opened up on 33rd and Farnam, right by Mutual of Omaha. **Dick Duda** was another great mentor of mine. He had owned several joints, and he was just this larger-than-life guy. He had taken this place that was called The Players and turned it into the Chicago Bar. It went from being a sort of a singles lounge to being a saloon – peanut shells on the floor and longneck bottles, which was kind of novel at the time. Strawberry Daiquiris were popular at the time. God, what a hideous drink! We just made tons of them.

*Food for Malihinis*  
**ALOHA!**

Make us this tropical atmosphere of your desire when you will see our food menu. It's just a matter of adding imagination to the menu!

APPETIZERS		SOUPS	
FRESH FRIED SHRIMP (Cantonese cooked in peanut oil)	.75	CHINESE WON TON	.30
CHINESE BARBECUED PORK	.85	CHINESE EGG NOODLES with Breast of Chicken and Chinese Vegetables	.65
HAWAIIAN CHINESE BARBECUED SPAREBILLS	.75	MINCED BREAST OF CHICKEN	.65
EGG ROLL stuffed with Shrimp, Pork, Bamboo Shoots and Water Chestnuts	.35		
BARBECUED CHICKEN (Cantonese Style)	.75		
ENTREES			
LOBSTER POLYNESIAN	2.25	SHRIMP CANTONESE STYLE	1.85
MANDARIN DUCK - Braised, Marinated, Chopped in Peanut Oil and served with Plum Sauce	2.00		2.25
ALMOND CHICKEN - Tender Chicken with Mushrooms, Bamboo Shoots, Celery and Water Chestnuts	1.90		
CHICKEN PINEAPPLE - Chicken Sauteed with Pineapple and Green Peppers	2.00		
CANTON CHICKEN - Strips of Breast of Chicken, Cooked with Chinese Black Mushrooms, Spices, Water Chestnuts and Green Onions	1.85		
BEEF ALMOND - Tender Beef, Mushrooms, Bamboo Shoots, Water Chestnuts and Celery	1.85		
PEPPER BEEF - Thinly Sliced Beef Cooked with Water Chestnuts and Tender Pepper	1.85		
FRESH TOMATO and PEPPER STEAK - Beef Cooked with Green Onions	1.95		
PORK TENDERLOIN Sauteed in Oyster Sauce, Water Chestnuts, Onions and Bamboo Shoots	1.95		
CANTON DINNER		SHANGHAI DINNER (Four Dishes)	
APPETIZER: Fried Shrimp or Wonton Soup		APPETIZER: Fried Shrimp or Barbecued Ribs	
BEEF TOMATO (Tenderloin sauteed with fresh tomatoes)		MANDARIN DUCK (Braised, marinated, chopped in Peanut Oil and served with Wild Plum Sauce)	
CHICKEN ALMOND (Tender Chicken, Mushrooms, Bamboo Shoots)		CHICKEN PINEAPPLE (Breast of Chicken Sauteed with Pineapple and Green Peppers)	
CHINESE PEA PODS (Fresh tender Chinese Pea Pods sauteed with Onions and Peas)		FRESH CHINESE PEA POD FAR-EAST STYLE (Chinese Green, Onion, Celery, Beef Sprouts, Green Peppers and Peas)	
FRIED RICE (Almond Cakes)			
FOOD YUNG			
PORK Egg Foo Yung	1.25		
SHRIMP Egg Foo Yung	1.45		
LOBSTER Egg Foo Yung	1.75		
CHICKEN Egg Foo Yung	1.50		
CHINESE FRIED RICE			
PORK Fried Rice	1.00		
LOBSTER Fried Rice	1.50		
SHRIMP Fried Rice	1.25		
CHICKEN Fried Rice	1.40		
DESSERTS			
FRESH HAWAIIAN SUGAR COFF PINEAPPLE	1.00		
ASSORTED FRUITS a Season, Served on Snow Ice	1.25		
KUMQUATS	.35	ALMOND COOKIES	.05
COCONUT ICE CREAM (Served with Peppermint)	.35	Each	
SHAN SWEET	.35	PINEAPPLE SHERBERT	.35
FLAVORING SUGARED SLICED BANANAS with Chocolate Ice Cream	1.00		
COCONUT HONEY ICE CREAM	.50		

© 1998 Food & Spirits, all rights reserved to Siskind-Costner, Inc.

**POMPEII COCKTAIL LOUNGE**  
NOW  
Helen Mack  
Most Popular Song Stylist in the Great Midwest  
Plus  
"FUZZY" MONTELLA  
"The Singing Bartender"

**Trentino's**  
RESTAURANT  
TENTH & PACIFIC

THE PLACE FOR—  
Italian Food  
Choice Steaks  
Sea Food

Open 11 a.m. daily except Tues.  
AMERICAN EXPRESS ✓  
DINER'S CLUB ✓  
Ample Parking

**Dancing**  
NIGHTLY  
EXCEPT SUNDAY  
IN THE  
Famous  
**PAX ROOM**  
To The Sounds of the  
**CHUCK SUTTON**  
COMBO  
PLAYING YOUR FAVORITE  
DANCE TUNES

FREE Hospitality Table with  
CHOICE FOOD Selections From  
Reasonable Price Menus  
★ ★ ★  
COCKTAILS MIXED DRINKS

**PAXTON HOTEL**  
14th & FARNAM

The joint was packed. We had really good burgers and really good hot dogs. Dick taught me that you can make a fortune selling what people want to buy, but you'll go broke trying to sell what you want to sell. It took me a long time to really understand the wisdom of that. He made a fortune selling tap beer and burgers. Nothing fancy, but man it was good! He knew how to fill a joint up.

Dick would hire cocktail waitresses right off the floor. We'd get into the middle of a busy shift and we couldn't get the drinks across the bar fast enough because there weren't any waitresses, or they quit or whatever, and he'd go up to somebody and say, "Hey. Want to make twenty bucks? Here's a cocktail tray. Go talk to him." And he'd point at me. And I'd be thinking, "Dammit, Dick!" So this girl would come up and I'd say, "Go over and ask that table what they want to drink". She'd come back and say, "They want a Gin & Tonic and a Rum & Coke", so I'd make them and set them up there, and she'd say, "Which one's the Gin & Tonic?" and I'd say, "I'll put two



straws in that one so you can keep them straight". I'd go downstairs and change four or five kegs at a time, and I might do that twice in a night. It was crazy how much beer we sold.

Those were the days when there were only a certain number of liquor licenses in the city of Omaha, so if you wanted to open a bar or restaurant, you had to buy an existing license from somebody else. So you'd go to North Omaha or South Omaha, the depressed part of town, and buy somebody's license. At that time, the going rate was ten to twenty thousand dollars, which was a lot of money back in that day.

Anyhow, that was a rockin' good time. I was in college. It was a college bar. The girls would roll out of Mutual at three or three-thirty in the afternoon, the college boys would be lined up there to meet them, and the game was on.


From the Chicago, I gravitated back downtown. The Chicago was fun, but the tips weren't there. I learned that if you want to make good tips, you need to cut your hair, you need to present well, and you need to work the fancier joints. So I got a job at the French Café. The two long-time bartenders had quit, and there was an opening there, which just never happened. I got in there and got the job as bartender, and then I became bar manager. I worked there for about three years and had a ball. I learned more about fine cuisine, and cognac, and really fine service, lessons I carry with me to this day - an appreciation for the finer things in life, and doing things with a certain style. It was wonderful.

**“The beauty of being in service in restaurants and bars is that it’s a very honorable position. A lot of people don’t understand that.”**

Mike Harrison was there at the time, and **Tony Abbott**, of course. And I learned from some highly skilled individuals. We had a couple guys there that had been Union Pacific porters when they were young men. At this point they were pretty old men. Back in the day, if they wanted to get on the train, and these guys were supporting their whole family, they had to show up in front of the captain before boarding the train, in full uniform. It had to be pressed. All the buttons had to be shined. Their fingernails had to be shined. Their shoes had to be shined. If anything was out of place, the captain wouldn't let them on the train, which meant that their family didn't eat that week. So they came up from hard times.

The beauty of being in service in restaurants and bars is that it's a very honorable position. A lot of people don't understand that. They look down on the server, the bartender, the hostess, whoever it is. The chain restaurants have really done a lot to dumb those positions down. That's why it's such a joy to go to restaurant towns like New Orleans or Washington D.C., or to Europe, and to see true service and really appreciate it for what it is.

Here at the Dell, where I've been for 23 years now, we're a pub, so we've specifically done away with a lot of service elements. We don't have tablecloths. Our napkins are paper. This is a pub. This is where you come to hang out. If you want a meal, great, but you don't have to eat. If you want a drink, great, but you don't have to drink. We want you to be at home here, and we want it to have that homey feeling. But in a fine restaurant, which I enjoy as much as anything in life, it's wonderful to see people that appreciate service. And not the snooty, 'I'm too good for you' kind of service - the kind of service where they truly enjoy presenting their products and their service. It's such a joy to be around that.



**Get more of what you love**

Whether you want a particular stone, style, setting, price-range, pure metals to avoid contact dermatitis, or help designing your perfect piece, we understand that custom jewelry is about you – not us.

Jewelry Sets • Single Pieces • Real Gems  
Solid Metals • Handmade

**Ann Summers Jewelry**  
“Real Gems for Real Women.”

Call 402-658-7563 or visit our webstore for a free consult.  
[www.AnnSummersJewelry.com](http://www.AnnSummersJewelry.com)

fsmomaha.com

*“One of the Nation’s Finest Steak Houses”*



**SAM NISI'S SPARETIME Cafe** INTERNATIONALLY KNOWN

Featured In National Magazines

THE MOST SOUGHT-AFTER PRODUCT . . . AN OMAHA STEAK . . . FROM THE STEAK HOUSE THAT RECEIVES THE TOP STEAKS OF THE OMAHA MARKET.

**34 2-9665**

Only 5 Minutes from Downtown Omaha

1211 South 5th  
2 blocks south & 5 blocks east of Burlington Depot  
Parking a step from your car door to our front door

AIR CONDITIONED  
**COCKTAIL BAR**

Open 4 PM to 1 AM—Saturdays 4 PM to 2 AM



# YEAST INSPECTION:

## *Magical Moments with Beer*

by Jason McLaughlin

Even on its own, beer is a magical thing. The best beer moments happen when the company, circumstances and environment come together to make something supremely enjoyable. If I think about it hard enough, I can think of dozens of wondrous experiences when the beer was not perfect, but the surroundings were just right and so the whole evening (or afternoon) was amazing. So, I will share with you here some of my favorite memories surrounding beer, some of which changed my life, while some of which were just plain fun. Nothing about these incidents was contrived. Each was just the perfect beer for a unique circumstance in a particularly fitting venue.



**September 2007: Tripel Karmeliet at Cheeky Monk Belgian Beer Café** (Denver, Colorado)

In a way, my life as a beer geek started here. While enjoying the Great American Beer Festival, my girlfriend (now wife) and I stumbled upon this fantastic Belgian-style beer bar and café on Colfax Avenue. I had long been a fan of craft beer, but nowhere near a beer geek by any means, until that single experience. We sat down in the dimly lit bar area and browsed their well written

beer menu filled with detailed tasting notes

**“An explosion of velvety honey, lush apricots with a kiss of citrus and baked bread. It was intense perfection.”**

for their 100% Belgian draft and bottle offerings. I chose something I can't remember, but she chose Tripel Karmeliet. I remember the very moment it touched my tongue. It felt like pure magic. There was an explosion of velvety honey, lush apricots with a kiss of citrus and baked bread. It was intense perfection. I asked myself, “How can a beer possibly taste this good?” That was it. Everything beer



geek related I have become is because of that single moment. I felt bad for drinking my girlfriend's whole beer because she didn't like what I ordered for myself.

**June 2010: Mango Mama at Minneapolis Town Hall Brewery** (Minneapolis, Minnesota)

While visiting Minneapolis for the National Homebrewers

Conference with a big group of Lincoln homebrewers, I talked the guys into a quick drive over to a brewery that I had enjoyed a few growlers from in the past and had fallen completely in love with.

**“This is a beer I had dreamt of tasting. That day goes down as a monumental day for brewing inspiration.”**

It wasn't too hard to twist their arms to go since, at the conference the night before, this brewery had served an epic line-up of beers at “Pro Night”. The small brewery and restaurant is covered in beautiful wood giving it an old world tap room feel. The food was top notch pub fare which is robust enough to handle their flavorful brews. They are best known for a phenomenal IPA which goes by the name Masala Mama, but I had my heart set on a special version aged on mangoes called Mango Mama. This is a beer I had read about and dreamt of tasting. The beer was pure genius, a titan of a fruit beer. The marriage of the fruity hops and mangoes were balanced masterfully with an unobtrusive but firm bitterness. My homebrewing mind instantly went into recipe cloning mode, and I was lucky to be surrounded by that great group of fellow brewers at the time. I scribbled some notes that would later become a

contest winning beer that was brewed professionally by Empyrean Brewing Co. That day goes down as a monumental day for brewing inspiration.

**June 2011: *Lost Abbey Yellow Bus* at *Toronado***

(San Diego, California)

The original Toronado in San Francisco has long been hailed as the most famous beer bar in California, so when I was in San Diego for another National Homebrewers Conference with Nebraska friends, we made sure to visit their second location. Since Toronado is known for carrying great and hard to find beer, especially in

bottles, it is easy to get swept away and find yourself with

**“This visit had history written all over it as we opened an uber-rare bottle of Yellow Bus while the Bruins went on to victory.”**

a couple hundred dollar tab before you open the last bottle of the night. The ambiance is simple and purely devoted to beer service. They had tons of glassware, 50 draft options and a 250+ bottle menu. We were lucky to find a seat in a corner that was plastered with hundreds of brewery stickers and a flat screen TV. The bar was standing room only and most patrons looked slightly uncomfortable with the crowd. To my delight, I was able to comfortably watch the Boston Bruins play for their first Stanley Cup in 39 years. I grew up spending my summers with family in Boston, and developed an unhealthy affinity for their sports teams. I realized this visit had history written all over it as we opened an uber-rare bottle of *Lost Abbey Yellow Bus* while the Bruins went on to victory. A sour ale, bracingly tart and loaded with peach character. Definitely one of the most memorable and appropriate-for-the-moment beers of my life.

**April 2012: *De Molen Hemel & Aarde* *Bruichladdich* Barrel Aged**

at *’t Arendsnest*

(Amsterdam, Netherlands)

My wife and I stopped in Amsterdam on our return from Portugal (a true beer wasteland) where we had just spent our honeymoon. There are a lot of beer related things to do in Amsterdam, other than just touring the famous brewery with the green bottles, but none will give you insight into Dutch brewing like a stop into



**“The beer we enjoyed at *’t Arendsnest* was the first proper beer we had had in over a week. Beer had never tasted so good.”**

*’t Arendsnest*, located on the Herengracht canal. The décor is classic European tavern. It had lots of antique wood and brass and was warm, cozy and narrow. Every beer served there was made in the Netherlands with the main focus on artisanal Dutch craft beer.

Since I was familiar with only a handful of the beers available, I left the suggestions to the well-dressed bartender and I wasn't disappointed. Though Dutch beer sports a unique minerality that sets it apart from many European beers, it has an obvious regional similarity to the neighboring Belgian styles. I finished with a barrel aged smoked Imperial Stout from my favorite Dutch brewery *De Molen*, called *Hemel & Aarde* (Heaven & Earth). It was aged in well-seasoned *Bruichladdich* single malt Scotch whiskey barrels, which lends a fantastic peat character which played well with the huge chocolate and espresso notes. It was sublime, especially during the unusually cold Dutch spring. The beer we enjoyed at *’t Arendsnest* was the first proper beer we had had in over a week and I swear beer had never tasted so good.

These are some my favorite memories with beer, but I am always ready for the next life changing experience and waiting for the next perfect circumstance - perfect place, perfect company, and perfect beer.



fsmomaha.com

# Wine Memories

by John Finocchiaro

It never fails. The holiday season always makes me count my blessings. And tops on my list are family and friends, and the many great times spent with them. One near-constant on such special occasions has been good wine.

I have spent most of my adult life (and a good chunk of my pre-adult life for that matter) with wine on the brain. Many years ago my grandfather immigrated to America from Sicily and, after the repeal of Prohibition, obtained the first wholesale license to import and sell wine in the state of Nebraska. Therein began the family

business, continuing on for over 70 years and three generations. It is safe to say that my family has imported, bottled, sold, served - and probably spilled - lots and lots of vino. Wine is in my blood. And along with the wine came many great and wonderful memories.


To pick a favorite wine memory would be difficult, if not impossible. Numerous family Christmas gatherings stand out. There have been many trips to the “wine countries” of the Napa and Sonoma valleys, and personal tours and tastings of Frescobaldi and Ornellaia wineries in Italy. I am humbled and grateful for having dined with industry icons such as the Mondavi, Gallo, Sebastiani, Trefethen, and Rombauer families. And I remember barrels of laughs and stimulating conversations over the course of countless tastings, particularly with my good friend and fellow wine geek, JB. Wine has been very, very good to me.

**“Wine may have caused the event to occur, but the company - the special people present at these events - is no doubt what made them so memorable.”**

One irony of looking back is that some recollections may no longer seem quite as special, while other nearly-forgotten reminiscences begin to emerge as precious gems. Like many a fine wine, years of age are sometimes needed for the best to glow the brightest. One such event occurred roughly 20 years ago.

I recently stumbled upon some old notes from a wine tasting at my parents’ house. My father, Lou, had been saving some very special bottles for just the right time. The lineup was incredible - a perfect 100 point 1986 Chateau LaFite Rothschild, 1974 Heitz Martha’s Vineyard Cabernet (98 points), 1980 Opus One, and more. These were world-class wines. Some were quite rare. And none were for the faint of heart. My father would call together some of his nearest and dearest friends for the tasting, and somehow I found myself on the illustrious guest list. Call it nepotism, but I surely was not about to pass this up. The evening was magnificent, and my mother’s impeccable taste and hospitality was not to be outdone by the wine. The elite group of friends engaged in absolutely lovely, lively, and enlightening conversation, tasting and comparing wine after wine. My personal wine notes were filled with such sophisticated wine jargon and technical terms as, “wow” and “damn, this is REALLY good!” Believe me; no one would accuse me of plagiarizing Robert Parker’s Wine Advocate. If this was my night to be born a wine aficionado it is safe to say that I was still in the incubator. Nevertheless, my father and his friends graciously embraced my presence.

Looking back, something occurred to me. While that particular evening remained in my memory as an all-time great, I could not recall a single wine from the tasting. And looking back to several other precious tastings and dinners, I similarly could only vaguely remember the exact wines present. How could this be? After all,



**“Wine plus friends equals a memory far greater than simply wine alone. It is the presence of friends that creates lasting memories.”**

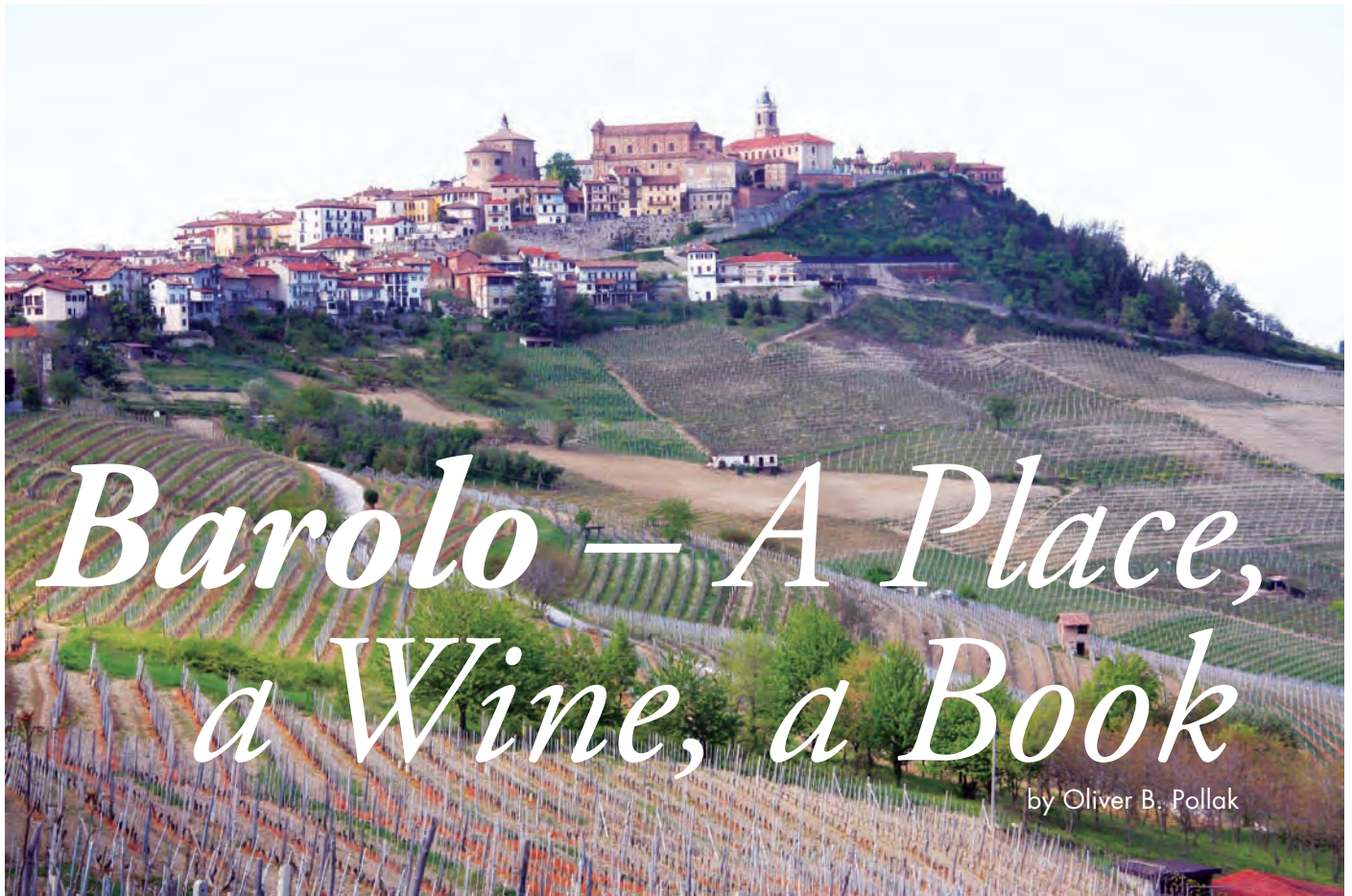
the one constant to so many of these was, well, magnificent wine. And then it dawned on me. Maybe great wine was always present. But maybe the wine itself was not what embedded the event in my mind as a special memory. Wine may have caused the event to occur, stimulated the conversation, enhanced the meal, enlivened the spirits, and provided the thread from which we could all find a commonality of pleasure. The wine may have brought us together. But the company – the special people present at these events - is no doubt what made them so memorable.

And at the top of my list for special people to credit for my most precious wine memories is my father. Without his presence and the honor of conversing and enjoying each other's company these special times would have been rather ordinary. As my father, teacher, mentor, friend, confidant, advisor, and business partner, wine had accompanied the both of us on many an occasion. But make no mistake about it – the wine never placed higher than a silver medal compared to his gold.

Wine can make almost any occasion special. But pop the cork on a killer cabernet all by yourself sometime. The wine itself may be terrific, but it just isn't the same as enjoying it with loved ones and special friends. Celebrations are meant to be shared. Wine plus friends equals a memory far greater than simply wine alone. It is the presence of friends and family that creates these lasting memories. And if wine is the glue that connects, creates, and stimulates such gatherings, then I enthusiastically say "thank-you wine". And from the bottom of my heart, I say thank you Dad. Wine would never taste so good without you.



Urban Wine Company



My wife, Karen, and I were at the Council Bluffs Public Library taking down an exhibit we curated, “Sixty Years of Iowa Jewish Cookbooks,” (22 volumes), now on display at UNO’s Criss Library, and traveling to Des Moines in the summer.

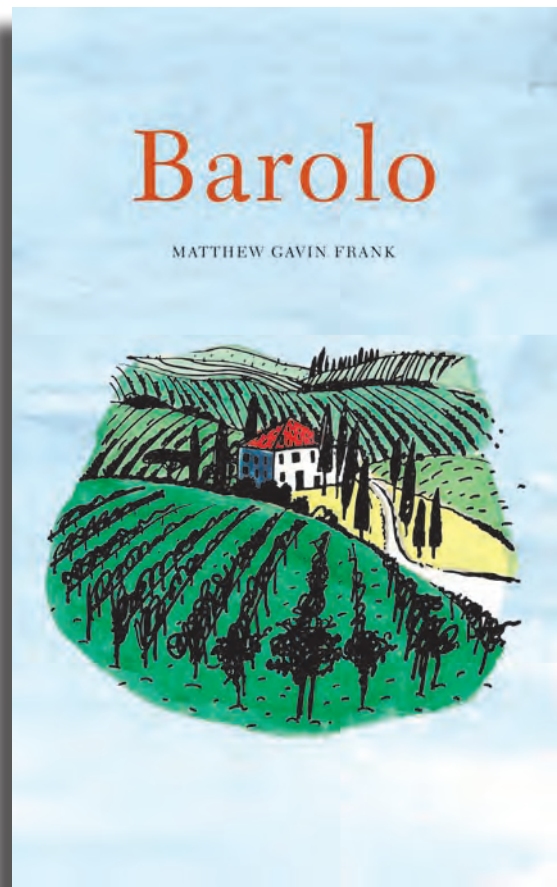
We lunched at **Dixie Quicks**. Their wine list had a Lebanese red mentioned in *Divine Vintage* (2012) and two Mexican reds, of which I sampled the admirable Zinfandel. I don’t usually wine at lunch on workdays; during the afternoon I resisted dozing while digesting Rene’s amazing cuisine and the Bekka Valley wine.

On DQ’s bar lay *Food & Spirits Magazine*. Behind the bar stood Erik Totten, the publisher of FSM.

**“Matthew Gavin Frank forsakes his restaurant job in Juneau, Alaska for Barolo, a village of about 700 inhabitants in northwestern Italy.”**

We schmoozed. He said there may be space for another story if it arrived within six days. I said, “I’ll see what I have on my desk.” I called the University of Nebraska Press, founded in 1941, and in the top ten of America’s approximately 130 university presses, to identify recently released culinary books. UNP concentrates on the American West, sports history, Jewish studies, translations of French, German, and Spanish literature, and a series called, “At Table,” about food, a portfolio containing about 22 volumes in print.

The next morning FedEx delivered three books. Excitement and wonder accompany a book shipment: *Hoosh, Roast Penguin, Scurvy Day, and other stories of Antarctic Cuisine*; *At Mesa’s Edge* by Eugenia



*Bone; Cooking and Ranching in Colorado's North Fork Valley* by Jason C. Anthony; and *Barolo* by Matthew Gavin Frank, a paperback edition of the 2010 hardback. Time did not permit reading and synthesizing all three, so I went with Frank's *Barolo*.

Matthew Gavin Frank, raised in Chicago, enjoyed Matzo ball soup cooked by Ruth, his paternal Jewish grandmother. Charlie Trotter's provided his seminal fine dining experience.

Matthew forsakes his restaurant job in Juneau, Alaska to pick the Nebbiolo dark-skinned red wine grape, the heart of Barolo, for Luciano Sandrone. Barolo is a village of about 700 inhabitants in northwestern Italy. He pitches a tent in a friend's back yard and embarks on a gustatory romp.

How do communicate when you only understand about a third of the Italian you hear? You start with prego and grazie and keep focused on food and wine, which is amenable to gesticulation and grunts, oohs and aahs.

### **"How do you communicate when you only understand about a third of the Italian you hear?"**

Between bar snacks, home cucina meals, enotecas (cellars), cantinas (cellar, basement, winery), cafes, panetterias (bakery), macellerias (butcher) and gelaterias, he ingested a wide variety of traditional and exotic dishes including venison au poivre and kumquat chutney, prosciutto crudo, donkey, duck, truffled and wild boar salami, speck, raw tripe, pickled porcini, Barolo stewed rabbit, grissini breadsticks, panini, persimmon, figs, white truffles, melon gelato, cappuccino, Rosolio liquor employing rose petals, and observed cows head in a boiling cauldron.

These adventures were capped by attending the Salone del Gusto, Salon of Taste, Italy's Slow Food movement, in Turin, a city of 2.2 million, which included a vertical tasting of six Barolos.

Enjoying food lies in the anticipation, preparation, ingestion, participation and the libations. While reading *Barolo* I dined at **V. Mertz**, and drank the one Barolo on their wine list, a very enjoyable 2007 Albe G. D. Vajra.

Amazon states, 'people who read X also purchased Y': If you enjoy European rural ambience there is Pasquale's Nose: *Idle Days in an Italian Town* (2001) by former Nebraskan Michael Ripps, *A Year in Provence* (1989) by Peter Mayle, and *Under Tuscan Sun* (1997) by Frances Mayes. And for Nebraska, there is UNP's *Cather's Kitchen, Foodways in Literature and Life* (1987) by Roger and Linda Welsch.

Matthew Frank, a visiting assistant professor of writing at Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Michigan, has also published *Pot Farm*, set in California, with University of Nebraska Press.



The Old Market's favorite spot for lunch and dinner.



Award-winning food & wine list.  
Open late 7 nights a week.  
Call for reservations.

422 S. 11th Street • 402-342-2550  
[www.MsPubOmaha.com](http://www.MsPubOmaha.com)



Contemporary Italian

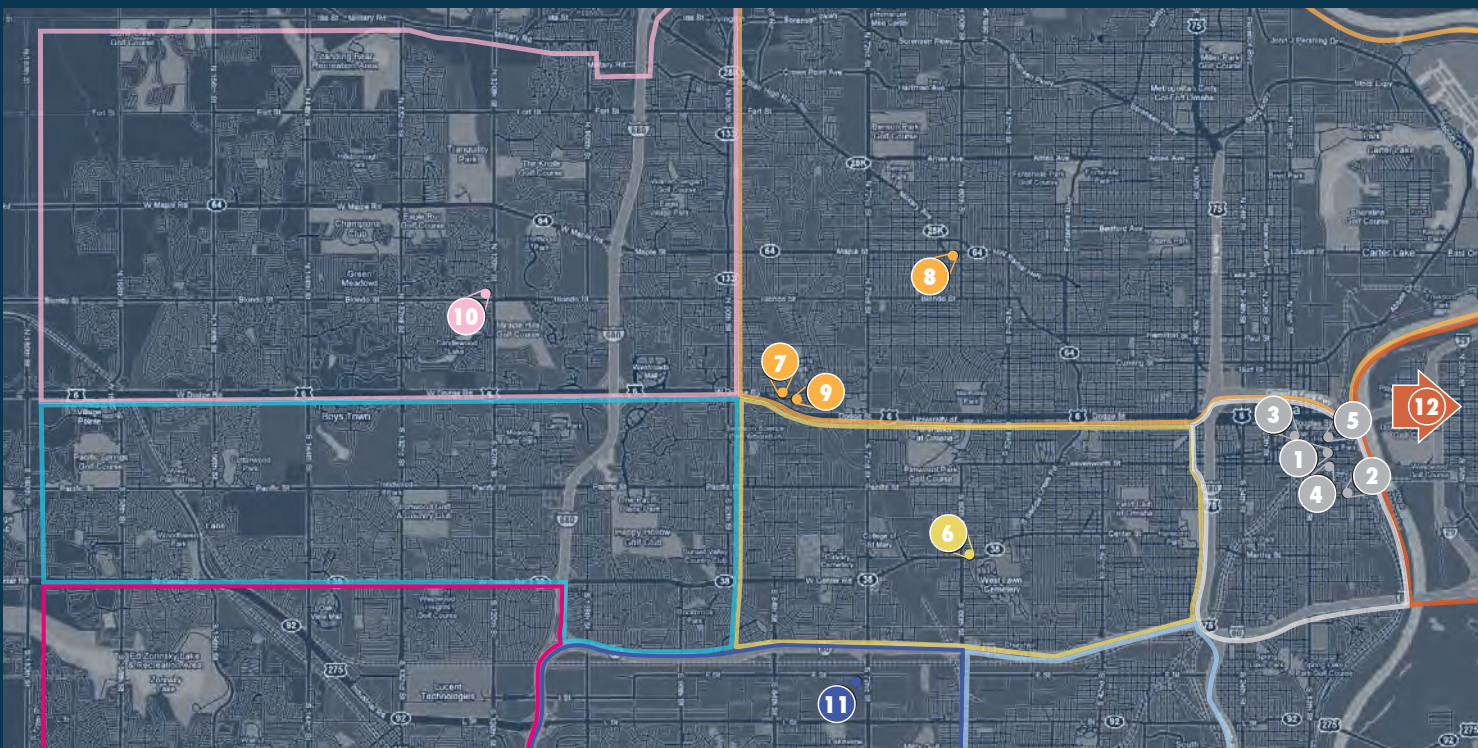
Italian and Mediterranean specialties complemented with the area's largest selection of Italian wines.  
Call for reservations.

**Vivace**

1108 Howard Street  
402-342-2050  
[www.vivaceomaha.com](http://www.vivaceomaha.com)

# SELECTED OMAHA RESTAURANTS, BARS & LOUNGES

- Downtown
- Central Omaha
- North Omaha
- Northwest Omaha
- South Omaha
- South Central Omaha
- Bellevue
- South West Omaha
- West Omaha



**1** **10**

402-342-4856  
1010 Howard Street



The restaurant that adds spice to Omaha! We prepare signature, traditional Indian dishes, slow-cooked and made-from-scratch. Each of our wines or made-from-scratch cocktails pairs naturally with our food menu. Open Mon - Sat, 11:30am - 2:00pm, 5:00 - close.

**2** **M's Pub**

402-342-2050  
1110 Howard St



M's Pub has been serving Omaha's discriminating diners in the heart of the Old Market for over 33 years. Our cutting edge, award winning cuisine is complemented by the Wine Spectator-recognized wine list, and served by our knowledgeable, courteous staff! Make reservations today and join us.

**3** **Orsi's Italian Bakery**

402-345-3438  
621 Pacific Street



Located in the heart of Omaha's Little Italy, Orsi's has been family run since 1919 and in the same location since 1934. Famous for our pizza and bread products, Orsi's now features an Italian deli including Italian cheeses, meats, homemade Italian sausage and imported olives.



**4 Urban Wine Co.**

402-934-0005  
1037 Jones Street



Urban Wine Company is Omaha's casual, contemporary and affordable wine bar experience for the enjoyment of fine wines, brews, spirits and tasty foods. Join us daily for amazing happy hour deals, a glass of one of our 40 boutique wines, or a bottle of one of 200 available by the bottle.

**5 Vivace**

402-342-2050  
1110 Howard St



Serving contemporary Italian fare accented by a Mediterranean flair, our menu is complemented by an award-winning wine list, welcoming, attentive service, and the "most beautiful dining room in the Old Market"! Reservations honored @ [www.OpenTable.com](http://www.OpenTable.com)

**6 Petrow's**

402-551-0552  
5914 Center Street



A family owned Omaha tradition since 1957. The whole family will love this original diner's look and taste. The menu features all the classic staples, from hot beef and pork tenderloin to made-from-scratch pies and homemade ice cream. Open 6am through 9:30pm.

**7 B&G Tasty Foods**

402-390-6096  
7900 West Dodge Road



B&G Tasty Foods has been serving their delicious, original loose meat sandwiches and other tasty delights since 1953. Come in today for a satisfying meal or an ice cream treat. Unrivaled for fast, friendly, family dining! Dine in and carry-out available.

**8 España**

402-505-9917  
6064 Maple Street



España is Omaha's only authentic Spanish/Mediterranean restaurant, bar and club featuring over 60 tapas or "small plates". Featuring performances by flamenco guitarists, Latin jazz musicians & flamenco/salsa dancers. Reverse Happy hour (10pm -12am) features \$3.50 glasses of Sangria.

**9 Zio's Pizzeria**

402-391-1881  
7834 Dodge Street



Omaha's original handstretched New York-style pizza has been serving up pizza, calzones, pasta and more since 1985. Pizzas are made from scratch using the freshest ingredients and over 40 toppings to choose from. Visit our three locations (Midtown, Downtown & West Omaha) for lunch specials, dine-in or carry out.

**10 Taxi's**

402-898-1882  
1822 North 120th Street



Taxi's large menu features soups, salads, sandwiches, comfort foods, seafood & steaks. Prixe Fixe items are available nightly, & wine bottles are half-price on Tuesdays & Wednesdays. Our popular brunch features Egg Benedict, omelettes, quiches & more. Call ahead to get your name in.

**11 Anthony's Steakhouse**

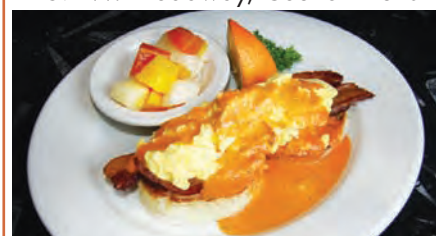
402-331-7575  
7220 F Street



For over 45 years, Anthony's Steakhouse has been known for quality steaks and an impeccable guest experience. Our premium beef is aged on premise. Our ballroom and banquet facilities are the perfect location for business meetings or wedding receptions.

**12 Dixie Quicks**

712-256-4140  
157 W. Broadway, Council Bluffs



Dixie Quicks features an ever-changing menu of Southern Cooking with Cajun, Tex-Mex and Southwest elements. We shop for ingredients every day so the food we serve is fresh. Comfort food, darn good flavors and plenty of personality help describe what you will find at Dixie Quicks.



# The Dumpster: Something Fishy Going On

by Michael Campbell

My favorite place to go for seafood was a box of Mrs. Paul's. Fish sticks were my favorite. Throughout my life I thought I loved seafood. It turns out what I love is tartar sauce and wine vinegar.

Tartar sauce is just pickle relish in mayonnaise. It makes everything you put it on taste like a French hot dog. I slathered it on my little bricks of fish like mortar.

At the tender age of thirteen (if there is anything tender about thirteen) I discovered that fish doesn't always come in golden rectangles. This came to me when I took a job as a busboy. In the traditional demonstration of freshness (it was frozen) trout was served with head and tail intact, an arching display like a canoe. Clearing tables, I didn't see much of the original fish — just the bones and leftover head, eyes looking up at me in wonder.

**“At the tender age of thirteen I discovered that fish doesn't always come in golden rectangles.”**

Occasionally my dad would bring home a can of sardines, and my mother would ban him to the back porch. He'd invite me to be his fellow expatriate, gingerly lifting each greasy slug onto a cracker. Spill any sardine oil and you'd stink for a week. Sardines in a can are usually even more intact than trout and are eaten whole—bones, guts, and head. For a boy watching his dad, that's pretty cool.

My mother once brought home an oily sack of dinner from Long John Silvers. Everything in it was brown. She fetched a bottle of wine vinegar, which must have been in our house the whole time but I had never seen it. Always practical, she probably bought the fish as an excuse to use up the vinegar.

Vinegar on breaded fish is delicious. With added tartar sauce, lovelier still. With enough tartar sauce and vinegar I could

enjoy deep-fat-fried shoelaces. I can even like an oyster, which otherwise is as appetizing as a spoonful of snot.

There are sushi people and hot dog people, but it's a needless division. Neither food tastes good by itself. With enough hot mustard or wasabi, you can hardly tell them apart.

The wasabi that local sushi restaurants serve isn't real wasabi. Real wasabi is very expensive and used sparingly, mostly in Japan. We get a green-dyed horseradish paste. I'm fine with that. When stirred with soy sauce, it creates the perfect condiment for sushi, to keep it from tasting like sushi.

You mix the two. They give you a tiny dish for the job. Sushi chefs don't pre-mix soy sauce and wasabi for you because it turns a taupish grey, the consistency of corpse drippings. Chefs prefer this result to be your fault.

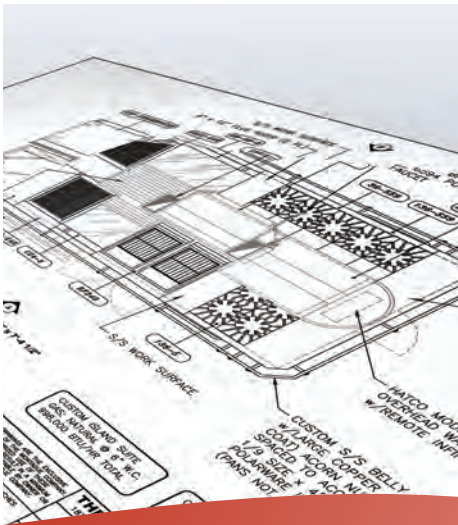
Take away the soy sauce, the wasabi, the wine vinegar and the tartar, and you're left with a super-healthy, high-protein, omega-3-fatty-acid mother-lode of low-fat power food to feed your heart, brain and body. Sushi lowers the risk of depression, Alzheimer's and diabetes. This is the primary difference between sushi and hot dogs, which are basically a blend of ground cow lips, gristle and sphincters, increasing the risk of self-loathing. Hot dogs spring from a fine German tradition of not wasting the things that by all rights you ought to.

The Japanese are the opposite. They invented “Krab” sticks, imitation crab meat formed from surimi, which is to say they made fish out of fish. That's like making cookies out of Oreos.

As an experiment, I ate sushi without the usual slathering of sauces. Naked sushi tastes buttery, floral and light, with a delicate, fragile flavor. Yawwwn. Plain sushi is anti-climactic once you've discovered the joy of wasabi burning off the tip of your nose.

While researching this story I made a discovery: if you deep-fat-fried it, drizzle enough wine vinegar on it and smear it with tartar sauce, Wonder Bread tastes like fish!

# Foodservice Design, Equipment and Supply, Since 1908.



DESIGN • SUPPLY • SIMPLIFY

In **OMAHA** • 7002 'F' Street, Omaha, NE 68117  
402-339-8900 • FAX: 402-339-9232 • 800-228-6102

In **LINCOLN** • 2135 Cornhusker Hwy., Lincoln, NE 68521  
402-477-7800 • FAX: 402-477-7667 • 800-869-0414



At Anthony's Steakhouse, we believe your dining experience should always be *well done*, because special occasions are *rare!*

STEAKS & SEAFOOD • ITALIAN SPECIALTIES • PASTA DINNERS • ORDERS TO-GO • RECEPTIONS & PARTIES



**ANTHONY'S**  
*Steakhouse*

[www.anthonyssteakhouse.com](http://www.anthonyssteakhouse.com)

Our large banquet facilities are perfect for Bridal Showers, Rehearsal Dinners, Receptions and Parties from 30-600.

*Book your next event with us today!*

**402-331-7575**

72nd & F Street Omaha, NE



**OZONE**

[www.ozoneomaha.com](http://www.ozoneomaha.com)

Inside Anthony's, Omaha's premier live music venue offers free music six nights a week with no cover!

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT • DANCING • DRINKS • FOOD