

## URBAN LIFE

### CAFÉS, RESTAURANTS, BARS AND NIGHTCLUBS

Today, the Metroplex has a restaurant scene worth talking about, but it wasn't always so. Venues such as Smoke (see p044) and [Lucia](#) (see p051) have helped turn the culinary scene around, drawing rave reviews for their contemporary take on traditional cooking, while Ellerbe Fine Foods (see p046) and [Bolsa](#) (see p042) have championed the locavore movement. At the high end, three chefs dominate Dallas dining: Kent Rathbun, who anchors his mini empire with [Abacus](#) (4511 McKinney Avenue, T 214 559 3111); [Stephan Pyles](#) (1807 Ross Avenue, T 214 580 7000); and Dean Fearing at the Ritz-Carlton's [Fearing's](#) (2121 McKinney Avenue, T 214 922 4848). A new generation of restaurateurs is coming up too, led by Donald Chick, whose venues [Alma](#) (2822 N Henderson Avenue, T 214 827 2820) and [Park](#) (see p050) bookend Dallas' restaurant row, and Fort Worth's Tim Love, who runs burger joint Love Shack (110 E Exchange Avenue, T 817 740 8812) and Lonesome Dove (2406 N Main Street, T 817 740 8810).

When it comes to nightlife, things are less impressive. Most clubs don't make the grade in our opinion, though one exception is Dallas' [PM Nightlife Lounge](#) at The Joule (see p018). For our money, you'll be better off at a casual spot such as The Cedars Social (1326 S Lamar Street, T 214 928 7700), Lee Harvey's (1807 Gould Street, T 214 428 1555) or [Bar Céline](#) (see p059).

*For full addresses, see Resources.*



#### Local

Although Deep Ellum is known more for live music and tattoos than great food, don't let that keep you away from Local, chef/owner Tracy Miller's labour of love. In 2003, Dallas designer Alice Cottrell turned a century-old former hotel into a minimal mod space that respects the building's history, combining brick walls and original wood floors with Eames chairs and commissioned collages by San

Francisco artist Rex Ray; in the main room, a vintage painted advert for 'Cardui, the woman's tonic' serves as wall art. Open for dinner only, Local sticks to a simple, well-executed American menu with a few twists, such as fried green-bean starters and pork chops with maple syrup and sweet potato fries (a seven-course tasting menu offers the full flavour experience). 2936 Elm Street, T 214 752 7500



### Bolsa

Every Dallas neighbourhood should have a restaurant like Bolsa: a well-designed, casual, community-minded place serving outstanding food. Sadly, not every neighbourhood does, which accounts for the crowds at this compact Oak Cliff venue, opened in 2008 in a former garage. The seasonal menu is resolutely locavore (Bolsa has no freezer or fryer so everything has to be fresh), using beef from Waco,

veggies from a nearby farm and honey produced by chef and keen beekeeper Graham Dodds. The space, by local firm Plan B Group, is a pleasing mix of original features, warm wood and plenty of natural light. The best seats in the house are the picnic-style tables on Bolsa's attractive patio (above).

614 W Davis Street, T 214 367 9367,  
[www.bolsadallas.com](http://www.bolsadallas.com)



### Smoke

Barbecue is a religion in Texas, and Smoke is the result of chef Tim Byres' pilgrimage to legendary smokehouses in Mississippi, Tennessee and North Carolina. His hip joint, opened in 2009 at the Belmont Hotel (see p023), serves up dishes containing flavours from Mexico to the Deep South, in a retro-themed space by designer Mike Thompson. Try the pit-roasted *cabrito* – baby goat served

in *masa* (dough) with a tamarind and goat's milk sauce and tangy salsa verde, with one of the house-infused spirits (Smoke seems more serious about its cocktails than wine, so we suggest following suit). If you don't make it for dinner, drop by for the equally excellent breakfast, lunch or weekend brunch. 901 Fort Worth Avenue, T 214 393 4141, [www.smokerestaurant.com](http://www.smokerestaurant.com)



### T Room

Uptown boutique Forty Five Ten draws Dallasites with its selection of high-end clothing, jewellery and homewares. Hidden away at the back of the store is T Room, a gem of a café that has plenty of fans of its own. Open for lunch only, the airy eatery, with whitewashed brick walls, modern furniture and an expanse of glass giving on to a central courtyard, is the ideal midday pitstop, offering

soups, salads, quiches and panini. Everything is available alone or in combos of two or three items; try the cranberry pecan chicken salad and the signature panini with Roma tomatoes, fresh mozzarella and avocado. If you need a sugar boost, there's a deliciously rich flourless chocolate cake. 4510 McKinney Avenue, T 214 559 2332, [www.fortyfiveten.com](http://www.fortyfiveten.com)



### Ellerbe Fine Foods

If the Fort Worth trinity of Tex-Mex, steak and barbecue gets too much, visit Ellerbe, a charming farm-to-table restaurant in the trendy Near Southside neighbourhood. Childhood friends and Louisianians Richard King and Molly McCook opened the venue in 2009, transforming a former petrol station into crisp, sunny dining rooms done out in white and green with a great street-side patio. The seasonal,

Southern-inspired menu makes the most of local produce – you might be presented with a wild boar burger topped with Brazos Valley cheddar, or a delectable bread pudding with a whisky sauce and praline Texas pecans. Before you go, check out the delights at Ellerbe's small but well-stocked market. *1501 W Magnolia Avenue, T 817 926 3663, [www.ellerbefinefoods.com](http://www.ellerbefinefoods.com)*



### Good 2 Go Taco

This Lakewood taqueria was a hit as soon as it opened in a petrol station in summer 2010 – so much so, that Good 2 Go soon moved to its own premises. What keeps locals coming back is the ever-changing selection of gourmet tacos from owners Colleen O'Hare and Jeana Johnson, both veterans of upscale Dallas kitchens. For breakfast try the Honey Bear, with egg, chilli-honey bacon and goat's cheese on

a bed of spinach, or for summer lunch, the Picnic, a mix of barbecued chicken, coleslaw, mash and blue cheese. Good 2 Go closes at 3pm, so there will almost certainly be a queue, but there's a fast turnaround on seats, and artisan coffee bar Stir (T 214 556 1394) is on hand to keep you fuelled up while you wait. 1146 Peavy Road, T 214 519 9110, [www.good2gotaco.com](http://www.good2gotaco.com)



### Hattie's

With its bright, airy dining room, American comfort food and reasonable prices, it's hard not to fall for Hattie's, which likely accounts for why this Oak Cliff eaterie has been buzzing since it opened in 2002. Credit for the chic yet homey interiors goes to co-owner Hal Dantzer, who turned to his native South Carolina (the large-scale screen print of a Blue Willow plate is very American Low

Country) and New York for inspiration. The menu updates Southern classics, with staples such as shrimp and grits sitting alongside more inventive dishes like a black-eyed pea and endive salad with a bacon vinaigrette, and jalapeño-stuffed quail on mashed sweet potato with braised greens. 418 N Bishop Avenue, T 214 942 7400, [www.hatties.com](http://www.hatties.com)



### Park

Stepping into Park, which opened in 2009 at the southern end of Henderson Avenue, is like walking into a modernist home, and it's meant to be: designer Breck Woolsey's inspiration was the Eames House in California. The interior, all midcentury furniture and George Nelson's 'Bubble' lights, opens on to a covered patio (above) that in turn spills out to a lush garden. There's a solid

kitchen behind the SoCal cool. Chef Garreth Dickey's menu is firmly in the local/organic camp, with meat-and-fish-centred entrées and a wonderful array of small plates (the spiced lamb and pork meatballs are a popular order), as well as an imaginative drinks list. Park is open for dinner and Sunday brunch only. 1921 N Henderson Avenue, T 214 824 3343, [www.parkhenderson.com](http://www.parkhenderson.com)



### Lucia

Tucked away in the Bishop Arts area, this cosy Italian restaurant has generated a lot of interest since it launched in late 2010, pulling in 'best in Texas' tags and a month-long wait for weekend tables. And with good cause – chef David Uygur, a Dallas restaurant scene veteran, has created a casual neighbourhood eaterie impressive enough to keep foodies coming back. The dinner-only menu

is seasonal and based on house-cured meats and handmade pastas; try the *salumi misti*, then something a little unusual, such as fluke served with Brussels sprout leaves and a purée of sunchoke, a type of sunflower. The wine list draws heavily from Italy with a few domestic bottles for good measure. 408 W 8th Street, T 214 948 4998, [www.luciadallas.com](http://www.luciadallas.com)

**Bolla**

The stylish Bolla, which opened in 2008, exudes a sense of glamour befitting its home in The Stoneleigh Hotel. A series of seating areas designed by Dallas' Plan B are separated by gauzy drapes, creating a nice blend of intimacy and openness. Cesar Gallegos is responsible for the fine New American food.

2927 Maple Avenue, T 214 871 7111,  
[www.stoneleighhotel.com](http://www.stoneleighhotel.com)



### Urban Taco

There are lots of places to get cheap, tasty tacos in Dallas, but few are as good-looking as this homegrown mini-chain. Markus Pinyero opened his first Urban Taco in Mockingbird Station (T 214 823 4723) in 2007, expanding to San Antonio and this spot, in the heart of McKinney Avenue's restaurant strip, in 2010. Pinyero's goal was to create a taqueria with the feel of his native Mexico

City, and he succeeded. Architect Hatsumi Kuzuu's space is sleek and clean-lined with an open kitchen and white brick walls. The tacos are gourmet versions of Mexican street food, with fillings including pepper-crusted ahi tuna, roasted pineapple and chilli-spiked vegetables, great with a margarita or *cerveza*. 3411 McKinney Avenue, T 214 922 7080, [www.urban-taco.com](http://www.urban-taco.com)



### Grace

As you might anticipate given its bovine roots, Fort Worth is a city that loves its meat. And when it comes to grillhouses, few in town are as smart as Grace, opened in 2008 by veteran restaurateur Adam Jones. Local designers Firm817 used a combination of white and chocolate with accents of granite and dark wood – a slick update on an old-school steakhouse. The steak is spot on, and is splendid on its own

or with anything from Béarnaise sauce to a fried egg. Chef Blaine Staniford's butter-rich menu, featuring dishes such as potato ravioli with a brown butter sauce, bacon and Parmesan, or bacon-wrapped onions with blue cheese, is a throwback to the days before the Texan cognoscenti worried about cholesterol. 777 Main Street, T 817 877 3388, [www.gracefortworth.com](http://www.gracefortworth.com)





### **Tillman's Roadhouse**

When Texans say 'roadhouse', they usually mean a rather seedy beer joint, which Tillman's is not. Sara and Ricky Tillman opened their venue in 1992, and after Ricky's death in 1997, Sara teamed up with decorator Rob Dailey and party planner Todd Fiscus to turn it into a cheeky take on a Texas honky-tonk. Chef Sean Cahill serves up a 'Texas vernacular' menu – Frito pie with white cheddar

cheese and venison chilli, for example – in surroundings that are as fun as the food. Chandeliers and stylised hunting trophies in the main space (opposite) make way for birch trees and stuffed peacocks in the private dining room (above).

324 W 7th Street, T 214 942 0988,  
[tillmansroadhouse.com](http://tillmansroadhouse.com)



### The Common Table

Uptown's going-out scene is buzzing, but the crowd of young professionals can be overbearing. If you're looking for a change of scene, head to The Common Table, where owners Corey Pond and Brian Twomey attract a calmer, less pretentious clientele with their modern twist on a tavern. Find a seat on the red-upholstered banquette and start making your way through the 24 American beers on tap,

a handful of them Texan, or the list of cocktails tied to events that share the venue's birthday on 2 June: The Mick, a mix of Jameson whisky, Chambord, cranberry syrup, raspberries and hibiscus juice, celebrates its opening in 2010. A West Coast-heavy wine list and some passable pub fare are also on offer. 2917 Fairmount Street, T 214 880 7414, [www.thecommontable.com](http://www.thecommontable.com)



### Bar Céline

It would be easy to miss Bar Céline, the lounge tucked away behind popular Lower Greenville eaterie Park (see p050), but this is part of Céline's charm. Designer Breck Woolsey (who was also behind Park's interiors) wanted the place to resemble a back-alley Parisian bar, and with its rich colour scheme, velvet drapes and mismatched plush furniture, it certainly doesn't look or feel like Dallas. The cocktails

are well crafted and there's a limited menu of bites from Park. Céline's real appeal, though, is the vibe. The crowd is more mature than at most Henderson Avenue nightspots, but that isn't to say that the bar doesn't get packed at the weekend – escape to the back porch, complete with a bocce court. 1921 N Henderson Avenue, T 214 824 3343, [www.barceline.com](http://www.barceline.com)

**Meddlesome Moth**

Shannon Wynne's Design District gastropub should win over beer lovers, with its 130 brews, 40 of them on draught, plus a menu of rare and custom beers tapped once a week. The best seats are beneath the three stained-glass windows salvaged from the original Dallas Hard Rock Café. 1621 Oak Lawn Avenue, T 214 628 7900, [www.mothinthe.net](http://www.mothinthe.net)

# INSIDER'S GUIDE

LINDSEY COLLINS, BUSINESS CONSULTANT

Except for time away at university, Irving-born Collins has lived in the Metroplex all her life – and, like most locals, she keeps up with the Dallas retail scene. Standout boutiques on her hit list include jewellery shop [The Shining](#) (1904 N Henderson Avenue, T 214 370 9292) and, for clothing, [Archive Vintage](#) (2912 Maple Avenue, T 214 999 8921), where a browse ‘is like going back in time’. Fort Worth’s ML Leddy’s (2455 N Main Street, T 817 624 3149) gets her vote for its custom-made cowboy boots.

When it comes to sustenance, Collins can’t resist the breakfast at Mama’s Daughters’ Diner (2014 Irving Boulevard, T 214 742 8646) or the *salumi*, pasta and pizza at [Nonna](#) (4115 Lomo Alto Drive, T 214 521 1800). For Tex-Mex, she visits Ojeda’s (4617 Maple Avenue, T 214 528 8383) or Fort Worth’s Joe T Garcia’s (2201 N Commerce Street, T 817 626 4356), a local institution which has a great patio for sipping margaritas and people-watching. After hours, Collins might drop by [The Old Monk](#) (2847 N Henderson Avenue, T 214 821 1880) for a drink, or [Sons of Hermann Hall](#) (3414 Elm Street, T 214 747 4422) for live music.

An art fan, she rates [The Public Trust](#) (2919c Commerce Street, T 214 760 7170) as a good place to catch artists on the up. She also recommends [The Nasher Sculpture Center](#) (2001 Flora Street, T 214 242 5100), and its James Turrell installation, *Tending*, (*Blue*).  
*For full addresses, see Resources.*

