

Arizona's 50 Best Restaurants 2011

Written by Written by Ashley Pearlstein

Being an editor with *AFM* and *AZFoothills.com* means visiting some of the best restaurants in the state. (Not too shabby, right?) After tempting you with *AZFoothills.com*'s roundup of our 50 favorite Valley restaurants last year, we decided to give your taste buds a few more of the latest and greatest restaurants to visit this year. While we wish we could feature every last one of our favorites and though there may be a few omissions, we present 50 of the Valley culinary scene's best and brightest, featuring a updates on last year's faves and new must-tries.



Prado

Montelucia Resort & Spa's signature restaurant, Prado, showcases healthy, fresh ingredients in every dish. The restaurant puts a bold, Mediterranean twist on bright, farm-to-table meals. Within Prado is Mbar, a contemporary bar featuring tequila, tapas, cocktails and more. 480.627.3004, www.pradolife.com.



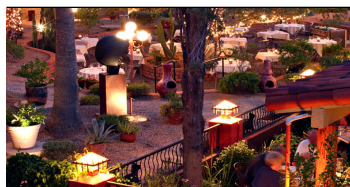
Joe's Farm Grill

Common foods at an uncommon level. Joe's Farm Grill concentrates on the favorite American classics like burgers, fries, pizza and salad and prepares them in a way that is unique to the restaurant and delicious to customers. Each freshly made entrée will have your mouth watering for days. 480.563.4745, www.joesfarmgrill.com.



La Grande Orange

With a perfectly put together menu of favorite breakfast foods as well as light lunch dishes, La Grande Orange screams trendy. As a favorite Phoenix hotspot, La Grande Orange has had people talking since it opened. Part grocery and part restaurant, LGO has the ingredients to satisfy any craving. 602.840.7777, www.lagrandeorangegrocery.com.



Carefree Station

This quiet, "carefree," restaurant is tucked away in the Spanish Village, giving it not only an authentic atmosphere, but a romantic feel as well. Influenced by the Southwest deserts, the food here is filled with the genuine, bold flavors that Arizona is known for. Whether you stop in for cocktails, Sunday brunch or dinner with friends, Carefree Station is bound to impress. 480.488.8182, www.carefreestation.com.

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True Food Kitchen

True Food Kitchen, conveniently located at the Scottsdale Quarter and the Biltmore Fashion Park, creates delectable eats using only the freshest, healthiest ingredients. This new-age restaurant practices simplicity and sustainability without forgoing flavor. Staying true to the natural flavors of the ingredients, True Food Kitchen provides one delicious meal you can indulge in guilt-free. www.truefoodkitchen.com.



Tuck Shop

This 50's style building, located in the heart of Phoenix, is a true Arizona gem. Beautiful architecture and convenient location aside, Tuck Shop's food is enough to keep you wanting more. With a broad range of wines and a rich, unique menu, this is the perfect place for a romantic date or a dinner with friends. 602.354.2980, www.tuckinphx.com.



Over Easy

This exceptional restaurant gives a contemporary flare to the classic eats that breakfast-lovers have grown to adore. Open from 6:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Over Easy is the perfect place for both early birds and late risers to satisfy their breakfast cravings. Try "The Over Easy," for an extra kick of flavor that made this restaurant so well-known. www.eatatovereasy.com.



Iruna

While located in the heart of Old Town Scottsdale, this distinctive eatery will have you believing you are in the Plaza Mayor in Spain, sipping Sangria and indulging in authentic tapas. This lounge style, fine dining experience is sure to impress. 480.398.3020, www.irunaaz.com.



The House at Secret Garden

Experience Phoenix's best patio dining, surrounded by beautiful gardens and tall shade trees. This romantic treat is nestled next to Phoenix's South Mountain, and provides a comfortable place for dining under the stars. Equipped with large shade umbrellas, or heaters for the winter, they help you to find comfort and tranquility in all desert climates. 602.243.8539, www.houseatsecretgarden.com.

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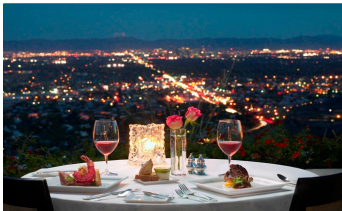
Roaring Fork

Using wood fired cooking to capture bold flavors typical of American cuisine; the Roaring Fork's menu is inspired by the Old West. With an inviting atmosphere, friendly service and a mouth-watering selection of food, the Roaring Fork is the ultimate satisfier for nearly any craving. 480.947.0795, www.eddiev.com.



Renegade Canteen

Chef Robert McGrath has created the perfect menu to accompany the comfortable, Arizona-inspired décor of Renegade Canteen. Whether you are craving a steak dinner or looking to tackle Bob's Big Burger, you will feel at ease and comfortable at this American Western eatery. 480.614.9400, www.renegadecanteen.com.



Different Pointe of View

Different Pointe of View is not only a hot spot for fine dining, but also a memorable experience for all diners. With its breath-taking views atop North Mountain in Phoenix, its innovative and bold menu, and its floor to ceiling windows that capture the elegance that is Phoenix, Different Pointe of View is a distinctive treat for the eyes as well as the taste buds. 1.800.685.0550 , www.tapatioclifshilton.com/dining/different-pointe-of-view.



Modern Steak

This innovative dining experience promises to add an entirely unique, "modern," spin on the classic dishes, salads and beverages that traditional steakhouses offer. Conveniently located in Scottsdale Fashion Square, Modern Steak is all about adding glamour and modernism to your meal. 480.423.7000, http://www.foxrc.com/modern_steak.html.





Jalapeno Inferno

This longtime family-owned and –operated Scottsdale eatery has been a favorite to locals because it serves up authentic Mexican fare in a lovely setting. The friendly service and Best of Our Valley-winning salsa and chips and fab patio are what set Jalapeno Inferno apart. www.jalapenoscottsdale.com.



T. Cook's

Inspired by colonial Spanish architecture and nestled within the Royal Palms Resort & Spa, T. Cook's provides an elegant ambiance unlike any other. This, along with its delectable Mediterranean menu and superb service, makes this Phoenix restaurant a triple threat. **602.808.0766**, <http://www.royalpalmshotel.com/restaurant>.



Frank and Albert's

This Arizona Biltmore restaurant serves as a creative den for healthy discussion and eating. Inspired by art and 1920's architecture, Frank and Albert's pushes the artistic boundaries, creating a cool, calm ambiance perfect for Arizona's sophisticated population. Join them for "High Five" happy hour daily from 5 to 7 p.m. **602.381.7632**, www.frankandalberts.com.



Fred's

Fred's at Barney's in Scottsdale overlooks Scottsdale Road on one side and Camelback Road on the other. This convenient location makes Fred's the perfect place to break from a day of shopping or to dine before catching a movie. This sophisticated, yet friendly restaurant has been

Arizona's 50 Best Restaurants 2011

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a growing Scottsdale gem since its opening in 2009. **602.337.6111**,
[http://www.barneys.com/Store-Locations/STORE REST FREDSSCOTTSDALE](http://www.barneys.com/Store-Locations/STORE_REST_FREDSSCOTTSDALE).



Lon's

Lon's at The Hermosa Inn offers artful American cuisine and a detailed wine list that will excite even the pickiest of eaters. With delectable entrees such as the Braised Beef Short Ribs and a plethora of side dishes to choose from, Lon's is as diverse as it is delicious. **602.955.7878**, www.hermosainn.com/lons.



J&G Steakhouse

This stylish Scottsdale steakhouse offers steakhouse classics as interpreted by Chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten. Atop the Phoenician Resort, diners can enjoy romantic sunsets and awe-inspiring views of Arizona, creating the perfect romantic ambiance for a quiet date or dinner with friends. **480.214.8000**, www.jgsteakhousescottsdale.com.



Petite Maison

Nestled in the center of Old Town Scottsdale, this cozy country bistro serves traditional French cuisine. Dine inside surrounded by wood-paneled walls and sparkling chandeliers, or take it outside in the thriving garden patio. Either way, the French cuisine will leave you wanting more every time. **480.991.6887**, www.petitemaisonaz.com.



Bourbon Steak

Experience an upscale Scottsdale steakhouse while indulging in an alluring modern menu that features the finest cuts of beef, poultry and fish. Michael Mina is said to bring a fresh new concept to the typical Arizona steakhouse, making Bourbon Steak a unique must try for all lovers of

Arizona's 50 Best Restaurants 2011

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fine foods. 480.585.4495, www.scottsdaleprincess.com/dining/bourbon-steak.



Matt's Big Breakfast

Matt's Big Breakfast believes that great flavor comes from simplicity and natural ingredients. They stick to these ideals by using only humanely-fed chicken eggs and local organic produce to construct the delicious food Matt's is known for. Whether you're in the mood for a Salami Scramble or creamy oatmeal, Matt's variety and tastiness is sure to intrigue you. 602.254.1074, www.mattsbigbreakfast.com.



BLT Steak

Short for Bistro Laurent Tourondel after Chef Tourondel, BLT Steak offers his interpretation of the American steakhouse. His signature style and classic French inspiration shines through his every meal. Try the Roasted Organic Chicken or Filet Mignon for an upscale, flavorful taste. 1.800.582.2169, www.bltscottsdale.com.



Los Sombreros

Authentic Mexican cuisine meets upscale Scottsdale. Committed to honoring the traditional flavors of her homeland, owner and chef, Azucena Tovar, proves that Mexican food can be as delectable and sophisticated as classic American cuisine. Indulge in favorites like the tortilla-crusted snapper while enjoying the classic Mexican-inspired ambiance. 480.994.1799, www.lossombreros.com.



Lolo's Chicken and Waffles

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Diners rave over Lolo's authentic soul food, cooked up by Larry "Lo-Lo" White. His golden brown waffles and fried chicken are a must-have. Add a final kick of flavor to an already superb meal with the famous Sandy Sand's Red Velvet Cake for dessert. Locations in both Phoenix and Scottsdale. www.loloschickenandwaffles.com.



Gallo Blanco

This café and bar is located in the Clarendon Hotel in Phoenix. The food is cooked daily from scratch by chef and owner Doug Robson. Experience innovative and regional Southwest foods that are fresh, tasty and effortless. Pair any meal with a cooling margarita and your experience is perfectly completed. 602.327.0880, www.galloblancocafe.com.



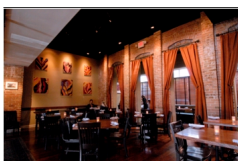
Fogo de Chao

Brazilian tradition meets American steakhouse. This distinctive restaurant offers brilliantly prepared entrees created by gaucho chefs, a gourmet salad bar, authentic Brazilian side dishes and a gold medal wine list. With all of this atop superb service, who could pass up this ultimate dining experience? 480.609.8866, www.fogodechao.com.



Heirloom

It's all in the name. "Heirloom" is used in the culinary world to describe naturally evolved foods. These are precisely the ingredients that Chef Michael De Maria uses when preparing the delectable menu offered at Heirloom. Stop in for a Friday night dinner party, an evening with friends or a date for two; Heirloom is perfect for every occasion. 480.515.2575, www.mculinary.com/heirloom.



Caffe Boa

As one of Mill Avenue's top dining destinations, Caffe Boa has been dishing out seasonally inspired fare (made in large part from ingredients from local purveyors) since the early 1990's. To further treat Valley taste buds, Caffe Boa recently opened a sister location, Boa Bistro, in Mesa. 480.968.9112, www.cafeboa.com.



The Mission

Indulge in the Modern Latin cuisine offered at The Mission while in a sophisticated yet casual setting. Tradition is mixed with originality in the signature dishes and cocktails of Chefs Matt Carter and Brian Raab. The dim lights, fresh food and candles create a destination fit for date night. **480.636.5005**, www.themissionaz.com.



Noca

Pamper yourself with the delightful sophistication that is Noca. Start off with Chilled Asparagus Soup, enjoy Pappardelle (white wine braised pork) and finish with a warm, sticky toffee pudding. Don't forget to pick your poison from the lengthy wine list, guaranteed to please the taste buds of any wine lover. **602.956.6622**, www.restaurantnoca.com.



La Hacienda

Located at the Fairmont Scottsdale Princess, La Hacienda Mexican Restaurant offers heavenly modern Mexican cuisine. The bold flavors of Mexico are no strangers to the upscale deliciousness that is La Hacienda. Eat amongst old Spanish architecture and wood-beamed ceilings, giving the restaurant an atmosphere as good as the food. **480.585.4848**, <http://www.fairmont.com/scottsdale/GuestServices/Restaurants/LaHacienda>.



Arizona's 50 Best Restaurants 2011

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POSH

This restaurant takes modern cuisine to a new level: improvisational. You are given a menu and asked to cross off items you do not like. Your menu is then taken to the chef, who cooks up a surprise meal, or "improvisational meal," that perfectly fits your taste. This uniquely styled restaurant is a must try for the diverse eater. **480.663.7674**, www.poshscottsdale.com.



FnB

This frequently changing menu is built around seasonal ingredients, giving bold, ever-changing flavor to their every dish. This charming restaurant is a great place to unwind while experiencing the comfort foods that are prepared right before your eyes by Chef Charleen Badman. **480.425.9463**, www.fnbrestaurant.com.



Talavera

With comforting desserts, a variety of steak and seafood dishes and a cool, chic atmosphere, Talavera is the ideal fine dining experience. Located in the beautiful foothills of Pinnacle Peak in Scottsdale, Talavera has a view as awe-inspiring as the menu. Stop in for a dinner date, or check the website for one of many upcoming events held in the restaurant. **480.513.5085**, www.talaverarestaurant.com.



Roka Akor

A stylish sushi restaurant and Japanese robata grill, Roka Akor offers superb eats in a contemporary, yet relaxed setting. Sip on one of the endless signature cocktails while sampling some of the finest sushi in Arizona. Don't miss out on the paradise of signature dishes offered at Roka Akor. **480.306.8800**, www.rokaakor.com.



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Sassi

Discover breath-taking views while indulging in fine Italian cuisine at North Scottsdale's Sassi restaurant. The old world architecture inspired by the traditions of Southern Italy provides an authentic, timeless setting to the already awe-inspiring views from the base of Pinnacle Peak. This true wine-lovers paradise also offers a selection of over 200 wines to accompany your meal. **480.502.9095**, www.sassi.biz.



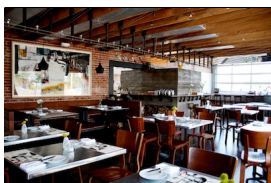
Pizzeria Bianco

Experience the utter deliciousness that is Pizzeria Bianco. Equipped with enough pizza and beverages to stretch the waist of your pants, this authentic Italian eatery proves that pizza can be sophisticated and mouth-watering at the same time. Pair any entrée with a fine wine for the perfect cap to your date night. **602.258.8200**, www.pizzeriabianco.com.



Christopher's Restaurant and Crush Lounge

Hip, contemporary and casual; three perfect words to describe the true elegance of Christopher's Restaurant and Crush Lounge. For the ultimate dining experience, gather a few friends and reserve C-144, the "Chef's Table." With glass walls and a view of the open kitchen, this unique table gives an intimate feel perfect for a night out with friends. **602.522.2344**, www.christophersaz.com.



St. Francis

This urban eatery set in the heart of Phoenix is the perfect meeting spot for friends and family to relax together. This family-owned establishment prides itself on being the ultimate neighborhood eating place. With an all day long happy hour, reasonable prices for great food, and free kids meals, St. Francis proves that the needs of its customers come first. **602.200.8111**, www.stfrancisaz.com.



Arizona's 50 Best Restaurants 2011

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Kai

Located at the Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort & Spa, Kai restaurant features a creative menu that is influenced by historic Native American culture. Chef Michael O'Dowd captures the essence of the Pima and Maricopa tribes in his dishes. Be sure to dress to impress, as Kai restaurant prides itself on its fine dining experience. **602.385.5726**, <http://www.wildhorsepassresort.com/dining-wild-horse-pass>.



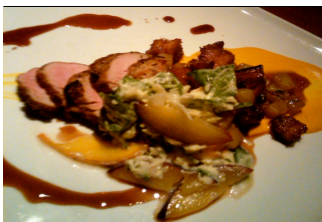
Tarbell's

With white tablecloths and light wood accents, Tarbell's adds a fine dining feel to a friendly, neighborhood restaurant. The restaurant, owned by world-renowned chef Mark Tarbell, also features an extensive wine list along with its entirely delectable dinner menu. **602.955.8100**, www.tarbells.com.



elements

Located within Sanctuary, a beautiful Scottsdale resort and spa, elements is a stunning experience that specializes in luxury dining. With a comfortable, contemporary atmosphere and more than enough wines and entrees to choose from, elements is quickly becoming a hotspot in the world of fine dining. **480.607.2300**, <http://www.sanctuaryoncamelback.com/food/food>.



Cork

A popular spot for any romantic special occasion, Cork prides itself in its modern yet comfortable atmosphere. Equipped with a full bar, extensive wine list and award-winning chef Brian Peterson, Cork was a success from the start. This popular East Valley restaurant, owned by a husband and wife duo, establishes an important intimate feel to a gold-medal menu. **480.883.3772**, www.corkrestaurant.net.

Arizona's 50 Best Restaurants 2011

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Vincent on Camelback

This restaurant by Vincent Guerithault focuses on a refined version of Southwest cooking. The friendly neighborhood feel and superb service adds even more greatness to the already shining restaurant and menu. For a heavenly end to your meal, don't forget to try one of the assorted soufflés that are unique to the Vincent menu. **602.224.0225**, www.vincentsoncamelback.com.



Binkley's Restaurant

Binkley's Restaurant in Cave Creek is an artful expression of Chef Kevin Binkley. A unique aspect of the menu is that anything can be ordered as an individual item, or as part of a tasting menu. These items are smaller and allow you to enjoy a variety. All dishes are fresh and cooked to order, giving a bright taste to the bold menu. **480.437.1072**, www.binkleysrestaurant.com.



Quiescence

Located at the Farm at South Mountain, Quiescence offers one of the Valley's only true daily menus. This favorite hidden dining spot offers a fresh daily variety of contemporary American eats inspired by tradition and season. Accompanied with a diverse selection of wines, Quiescence meals are as delicious as they are beautiful. **602.276.0601**, www.quiescencerestaurant.com.



Out of Town:



L'Auberge Restaurant on Oak Creek

L'Auberge Restaurant on Oak Creek is a necessary experience for Sedona visitors. With the area's most extensive wine menu and breath-taking views of the majestic Oak Creek Canyon, L'Auberge sets a high ambiance standard. Top this off with the to-die-for Mediterranean-American cuisine, and you have the ultimate experience in Sedona's world of dining. **928.282.1661**,

Arizona's 50 Best Restaurants 2011

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<http://www.lauberge.com/sedona-fine-dining>.



CORE Kitchen & Wine Bar

Located within the Ritz-Carlton, Dove Mountain in Marana, CORE Kitchen & Wine Bar offers true American cuisine from new Executive Chef Clayton van Hooijdonk. Influenced by all flavors from coast to coast, CORE presents a diverse and delicious menu to its guests. Priding itself on fine service and fresh ingredients, CORE is a must try for all Marana guests. **520.572.3000**, http://www.ritzcarlton.com/en/Properties/DoveMountain/Dining/core_kitchen.



Janos

Janos in Tucson is one of the most popular locations for a fine dining experience. A wine room, dimly lit intimate atmosphere and a simple yet delectable main menu make Janos unique. Try the Roasted Bacon Wrapped Quail to start off and the Creamy Lobster Bisque as a soup prelude to any of the mouth-watering main dishes. **520.615.6100**, www.janos.com.



Jalapeno Inferno