

## 50 Favorite Restaurants in Phoenix 2018

Written by Melissa Larsen and Alyssa Tidwell

Wednesday, 15 August 2018 11:58 - Last Updated Saturday, 18 August 2018 11:00

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Photo by [Stefan Johnson](#) on [Unsplash](#)

**Anyone who's ever stuck a fork or raised a glass locally knows the Valley is brimming with dining destinations as epic as our cotton-candy sunsets and towering saguaro. Here are 50 of our favorites, in no particular order.**

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### [Talavera/Proof, an American Canteen](#)

Recently, Four Seasons Resort Scottsdale at Troon North revamped its fine-dining outpost, Talavera, into a Spanish steakhouse where diners can dig into indulgent paella and wallet-busting-but-worth-it jamón ibérico de bellota. One of our favorite additions is the Gin Tonic Bar that churns on cocktails as pretty as they are tasty. The resort's welcoming Proof, an American Canteen, takes down the decadence and kicks up the casual—in a good way. We can't get enough of Proof's buttery pretzel knots or crazy-good milkshakes.

### [Kai](#)

Kai at Sheraton Grand at Wild Horse Pass holds the distinction of being the only AAA Five Diamond/Forbes Five Star restaurant in Arizona. The menu is rich in creativity, history and Native American culture, and we recommend booking a Journey tasting menu (which can go up to more than a dozen courses) to truly immerse yourself in the Kai experience.

### [Prado](#) (pictured)

Whether for a romantic night on the patio enjoying Spanish-influenced fare or for a casual, easy evening at the restaurant's Tapas Bar, Prado at Omni Scottsdale Resort & Spa at Montelucia is bursting with flavor and ambiance (hello, fire pits and water features!). The paella, jumbo lump crab salad and Moroccan lamb tagine are favorites, and keep an eye on special dining events throughout the seasons.

### [elements](#)

Sexy meets scrumptious at elements at Sanctuary on Camelback. Chef Beau MacMillan dishes up American dishes with Asian accents that you have to see (and savor) to believe as presentation is as much a part of the allure as the taste. Settle in for Chilean sea bass or wagyu New York strip before popping next-door to jade bar for some of the area's tastiest creative cocktails.

### [Little Miss BBQ](#)

Fans of Phoenix's Little Miss BBQ are hardcore; they can be seen waiting two or more hours for a taste of the popular spot's Central Texas-style barbecue. While diners aren't overcome with a posh presentation—the eats are served by weight on butcher paper with onions, pickles, jalapenos and white bread—the freshly barbecued meats are where it's at.

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[Chula Seafood](#) (pictured)

The poke bowl trend has overcome the Valley, but one spot does it the best: Chula Seafood. In addition to the lunchtime staple, seafoodies can pop in for a rotating sandwich of the day, an incredible smoked fish platter with all the fixings and much more. Be sure to stock on Chula's candied salmon when available.

*\*\*Chula Seafood will open an all-new storefront this fall inside Uptown Plaza featuring an expanded menu of line-caught fish and prepared dishes.*

[J&G Steakhouse](#)

For a decadent night on the town, J&G Steakhouse has been one of the most handsome, high-end spots to indulge in high-end steakhouse fare. And come this fall, we can't wait to see the changes the restaurant has in store as it unveils its renovation in time for its 10-year anniversary. The changes include wall treatments, light fixtures and furniture, including a show-stopping glass wall with a gold sculpture treatment added to the Mountain View private dining room. Plus, the patio will offer refinished fire pits and the addition of ceiling fans.

[Nobuo at Teeter House](#)

Born and raised in Tokyo, Nobuo Fukuda has cultivated his craft as a chef in Arizona for more than 30 years. Known for his visionary food combinations and masterful presentation, Fukuda's Teeter House offers dishes that simultaneously challenge and honor traditional Japanese cuisine. During daytime hours, Teeter House is reminiscent of an elegant Japanese teahouse—a charming 20th century bungalow with baby blue walls and hardwood floors—then transforms into a funky and lively izakaya by night. The restaurant has a lunch and dinner menu, serving dishes like house-cured salmon, tuna tataki and pork belly buns, as well as a summer bento lunch menu.

[Pizzeria Bianco](#)[Pizzeria Bianco/Tratto](#)

James Beard Award-winning Chef Chris Bianco's eponymous pizzeria, with locations in Heritage Square and 20th Street and Camelback, serves up some stellar slices. The pizzas, which are crafted with ingredients from local farmers, are cooked in a wood-fired oven and rely on the simple knowledge of what makes a superb pizza: great dough, flavorful sauce, fine cheese and the right balance of all three. Tratto, another Bianco gem located at Town & Country in Phoenix, is fresh and beguiling with an ivory color scheme and a full view of the kitchen, complete with shelves full of fresh produce and bottled ingredients. This Italian eatery and cocktail bar channels the spirit of the Southwest with Bianco's dedication to Arizona-grown foods, including dishes like wood-roasted eggplant with caciocavallo cheese and salsa verde.

[Barrio Café](#)

It's hard to compete with the variety of fantastic Mexican fare in Arizona, but Barrio Café easily stands out as one of the best. The folk art murals on the outside walls are unmistakable, but it's the food created by Chef Silvana Salcido inside that make this Valley restaurant shine. Iconic menu items include the cochinita pibil, chiles en nogada, chef's tableside guacamole and the churro rellenos. Barrio Café offers some 300 choices of hand-selected tequilas, Mexican wines and beers, as well as traditional Mexican soft drinks like horchata and housemade jamaica, a type of hibiscus tea. Guests can also enjoy live music every Thursday through Sunday evening and Sunday afternoons.



[Sushi Roku](#) (pictured)

Do yourself a favor when dining at the super-chic Sushi Roku in Scottsdale—just go ahead and order half of the menu. And save the other half for your next visit. Kick things off with simple yet scrumptious kimchee cucumber sunomono salad before letting the chefs craft your ultimate

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sushi vision board via the ume (six pieces) or matsu (eight pieces). Don't forget to cap of your meal with one of Sushi Roku's amazing cocktails.

### [El Chorro](#)

A true historic hot spot. El Chorro was reopened in 2009 and has since become a local favorite for celebrating special events, hosting desert weddings and nibbling on those famous sticky buns. Diners dig into traditional dishes like shrimp cocktail, fried chicken and beef stroganoff on the P.V. restaurant's spacious patio.

### [Michael Mina's Bourbon Steak/La Hacienda by Richard Sandoval](#)

Fairmont Scottsdale Princess excels in everything it does—and dining is no different. Michael Mina's Bourbon Steak is a modern fine-dining mecca with some of the finest cuts of beef and fanciest digs in the state (and the duck fat fries are heaven on earth). La Hacienda by Richard Sandoval is currently undergoing an extensive renovation that will touch on every part of the beloved restaurant. Though diners can expect some of their favorite dishes to stay on the menu, the bill of fare will see can't-miss newbies like a larger-than-your-face pork chop. Come see the fresh dining destination this fall.

### [FnB](#)

Gaining national acclaim as the first restaurant to curate an Arizona-only wine collection, FnB at the historic Craftsman Court in Downtown Scottsdale is a culinary treasure for more reasons than one. Owners Chef Charleen Badman and front of house manager and beverage director Pavle Milic join forces to combine a menu of thoughtfully prepared, locally inspired dishes with the perfect selection of beverages. Serving seasonal, new American cuisine, this upscale gastropub offers entrées as diverse as Peruvian chicken spring rolls, gilfeather rutabaga with ginger crème fraîche and guinea hen and pork terrine. FnB is best experienced at sundown or later when a warm glow of light floods the restaurant, illuminating the floor-to-ceiling windows.

### [Roka Akor](#)

Just south of Gainey Ranch in Scottsdale, Roka Akor is a swanky Japanese restaurant serving steak, sushi and seafood. A contemporary style gives off electric vibes at this Scottsdale hot spot, from the glowing bar to red backlighting at the bar-style seating in front of the kitchen, where guests can watch the chefs at work. Dishes are just as aesthetically pleasing as the restaurant itself—we're talking ornately crafted fresh seafood and shellfish plates with various adornments exuding a rainbow of colors. And Roka Akor is known for killing it when it comes to excellent steaks, including bone-in and dry-aged cuts, as well as premium domestic and Australian wagyu beef.

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### [The Parlor](#)

For those in the mood for the uniquely smoky flavors of authentic wood-fired pizzas, look no further than The Parlor on Camelback and 20th Street. Their menu changes seasonally, so you never quite know what toppings and combinations will be available (which is honestly part of the fun). Their summer menu currently offers options like summer corn (roasted corn, roasted chiles, cilantro and spicy crema) and funghi (roasted mushrooms, goat cheese, truffle oil and chives). Happy hour runs from 3 to 6 p.m. daily, where guests can order 8-in. pizzas and a selection of cocktails for \$8 each, or \$2 off sangria, draft beers, well liquor and glasses of wine.

### [Beckett's Table](#) (pictured)

Comfort meets sophistication at Beckett's Table in East Phoenix, a culinary creation dreamt up by four friends—Chef Justin Beckett, his wife Michelle, and sommeliers Katie and Scott Stephens. The result: an elegant restaurant heightened by its genuinely warm hospitality, superb New American cuisine reminiscent of a home-cooked meal, and an expansive collection of hand-selected wines from Arizona and beyond. And the cocktail menu simply can't be overlooked: the seasonal Perfect Pear, a simple blend of Lillet blanc, pear simple syrup and lemon juice with

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thyme garnish, is phenomenal. Every Wednesday is BT Bottleshock Wednesday, where guests can taste unique wine by the glass from Beckett's Table's secret wine list, normally only available by the bottle. Stay up to date by searching #BTBottleshock on Instagram.

### [Los Sombreros](#)

Los Sombreros is a cantina-style restaurant in Downtown Scottsdale whipping up authentic dishes from central Mexico in a relaxed, easygoing atmosphere. Everything from tamales to enchiladas to chile rellenos are available to satiate your cravings for something spicy, and they have a brunch menu, too (check out the torta de pollo or the Mexican-style French toast). The patio is a favorite hangout spot and happy hour runs Monday through Friday from 3 to 6 p.m., where restaurant-goers can order \$3 cervezas and house, mango or strawberry margaritas for \$6, among other libations.

### [Pomo Pizzeria](#)

A pizza-style originating in Campania, Italy, foodies can enjoy Neapolitan pizzas at Pomo Pizzeria, which has locations in Scottsdale, Phoenix and Gilbert. These pies have gratuitous amounts of tomato sauce and fresh mozzarella, making for a soft, slightly wet texture toward the center—but don't fret, this is the mark of a truly spot-on Neapolitan pizza, so you know you're getting the authentic experience. Pomo's handcrafted pies use slow-rising sourdough with highly refined organic wheat flour from Naples, proofed for a full 24 hours and stretched by hand, then cooked in a wood-burning oven at 905 degrees.

### [Blue Hound Kitchen + Cocktails](#)

Chic and lounge-y Blue Hound Kitchen + Cocktails is the epitome of cool amidst the bustling cosmopolitan streets of Downtown Phoenix. Blue Hound offers seasonal New American cuisine paired with handcrafted cocktails by passionate bartenders, including sherry, vermouth and table wine, as well as one of the Valley's most extensive menus of brown spirits. Indulge in crispy, savory corn grit fries, snack on shishito peppers with Sriracha aioli, or savor the blackened salmon with garden vegetable and Meyer lemon in an atmosphere of warm, ambient lighting and deep, dark woods. It's also the Year of the Dog in the Chinese zodiac, and the restaurant recognizes this through a sizeable cocktail compendium.

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### [Bitter & Twisted Cocktail Parlour](#) (pictured)

Though it is the best cocktail spot in town (we dream about the creamy Cocaine Cowboy), this Phoenix hot spot offers some incredible eats to complement its zillion-page drink lineup. The Momo burger, with a crispy ramen bun, is as weird and delicious as it sounds while you won't think twice about licking the gochu cheese sauce—which tops the Korean nachos—off of your fingers.

### [St. Francis](#)

Admired for its excellent staff and hospitality, St. Francis is a classic, family-owned neighborhood restaurant with rustic sensibilities. Gleeful gourds sit comfortably on the countertops, and shelves of cooking ware and freshly baked bread adorn the brick walls. Wood-beamed ceilings with scattered bistro lights cast a warm glow over guests, who can dine on dishes like filet mignon, roasted beets, herb-crusted swordfish and arugula and strawberry salad. Brunch runs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on weekends with live jazz from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., featuring local musicians like Felix Sainz, Dennis Rowland and Diana Lee.

### [T. Cook's](#)

T. Cook's is located at the five-star Royal Palms Resort & Spa on Camelback Road in the Phoenix/Scottsdale area. The resort is luxurious with mission-style architecture, and T. Cook's only serves to enhance the experience. Patrons at T. Cook's can pamper themselves with a candlelit date on one of the restaurant's two patios, while taking in the scenic Camelback Mountain views in the light of Arizona's golden sunsets. Inside, guests can sip drinks in the glass enclosed Wine and Tequila tasting room or spend a long, laid back evening with friends by the fireplace. Executive Chef Todd Allison creates Mediterranean-inspired dishes, focusing on seasonal ingredients and uncomplicated preparation.

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### [Postino WineCafe](#)

There's no denying that the main draw at Postino is their fantastic bruschetta and wine menu, perfect for sharing with a group of friends. With several locations across the Valley, the bistro lighting, colorful art-adorned accent walls and plushy couches make finding a place to lounge around for the night a no-brainer. The bruschetta boards, in which guests can choose four options from a large list, include varieties like brie with apples and fig spread; bacon, burrata, arugula and tomato; and smoked salmon with pesto. Other dishes include paninis, soups, salads and desserts. The wine list comprises varieties from around the world, but usually lesser known varietals and producers that allow novices and experts alike to discover entirely new regions they love.

### [LON's at the Hermosa](#)

The historic Hermosa Inn, a luxury boutique hotel just minutes from shopping and entertainment in Scottsdale and Phoenix, is the perfect staycation for Arizona locals and visitors alike. And the cherry on top of this establishment known for its impeccable service is the AAA Four Diamond restaurant: LON's at the Hermosa. Lead by executive Chef Jeremy Pacheco, LON's offers fine dining for brunch, lunch or dinner, where guests can savor dishes like tempura maitake mushroom and pecan grilled filet mignon (crisp potatoes, creamed greens, Nueske bacon, red wine demi).

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### [ZuZu](#)

ZuZu at the sophisticatedly spunky Hotel Valley Ho makes us jump for joy—and it's definitely not just for the \$10 unlimited mimosa and Bloody Mary bar. Between the fantastic weekend brunch with items like red velvet waffles and brioche french toast and dinner entrées like truffle stuffed petaluma chicken breast, ZuZu is a colorful, lounge-style space, often with jazzy live music in the lounge during the evenings. And the lounge stays open until midnight, so guests can keep the good times going. Happy hour runs Monday through Friday from 4 to 7 p.m., including \$6 signature cocktails and \$6 featured red or white wine.

*\*\*Don't miss out on ZuZu's ever-changing Showstopper milkshake—an over-the-top dessert that you'll want to 'gram before digging in.*

### [Mora Italian](#)

Chef Scott Conant's Italian delicacy is a delightfully elegant affair. Bright red seats, brass chandeliers, brick walls and distinctly warehouse-style wooden ceilings make up this modern, upscale space, which serves handmade pasta, Neapolitan wood-fired pizza, antipasti and other entrées. Simplistic though it is, the pasta al pomodoro is divine, with a richly flavorful, slightly creamy tomato basil sauce; be sure to pair it with a glass of the Sangria Mora, an infusion of blackberry, house sage brandy, passion fruit and table wine. Or channel your playful side with the rosé snowcone.

### [Tomaso's](#)

Tomaso's may be located in the prestigious Camelback Corridor and Biltmore area in Phoenix, but once you step inside, this chic Italian restaurant transports guests straight to Italy. The restaurant, which opened in 1977, was dreamt up by culinary maestro and Italian-born chef Tomaso Maggiore (family-operated The Maggiore Group has a host of excellent establishments across the Valley). And Tomaso's When in Rome, a culinary concept branching off the original restaurant, is defined by superb cuisine inspired by the Eternal City, with refined yet relaxed vibes.

### [Twisted Grove Parlor + Bar](#)

Offering up tapas-style plates, Twisted Grove Parlor + Bar is perfect for a group looking to share and experiment with a wide variety of flavors. The eatery, which has locations in Scottsdale and Phoenix, has an upbeat, contemporary bar-style feel to it and great patio seating, namely at the Scottsdale spot. Options for small plates include salmon poke, California artichokes, French onion soup and shishito peppers, or go your own way with full-size dishes like cavatelli carbonara and Tuscan pork porterhouse. Top it off by treating yourself to a strawberry bellini (Stearra sparkling wine, homemade strawberry purée and vanilla sugar rim).

### [Gertrude's](#) (pictured)

We think it's pretty safe to say that brunch is the best meal of the day. The brunch menu at Gertrude's encompasses locally grown, seasonal ingredients whenever possible and delights with simplistic dishes with beautiful presentation. Named for environmentalist Gertrude Divine



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Webster who founded the Desert Botanical Garden, the restaurant is located just inside the entrance to the garden, so you can make brunch or dinner a full-fledged outing. And have a little extra fun with the variety of pink cocktails offered, like the Tombstone Tea, rosé sangria and the Garden Rita (margarita), or the berry-basil lemonade (safe for all ages).

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### [Binkley's](#)

Dining at Binkley's isn't simply a food affair—it's an engaging fine-dining experience complete with a literal change of scenery at every stage. The outing begins on the terrace next to the garden, with charming wooden planter boxes and bountiful produce that gets incorporated into their dishes. Guests then move on to the bar, before rounding out the experience in the dining room, which feels like you've stepped directly into the rustic, elegant kitchen of Chef Kevin Binkley. Reservations must be made and paid for in advance.

### [Dominick's/Steak 44](#)

Smart and luxurious with an air of refined maturity, Dominick's Steakhouse at Scottsdale Quarter specializes in premium quality cuts of steak, brilliantly cooked to enhance the natural flavor, as well as fresh seafood like Alaskan king crab or Maine lobster. Among the ornate chandeliers and dark leather furniture, surely one of the most alluring elements is the rooftop, where guests can dine underneath the moonlight. Another Mastro Family gem is Steak 44, a beautifully artistic, modern space serving top quality steaks, fine wine, seafood and other dishes in a warm and friendly atmosphere. What's more, guests get to walk through Steak 44's elaborate 3,000-bottle wine vault as they are lead to their table.

*\*\*The dining group's seafood concept, Ocean 44, opens soon in Scottsdale!*

### [Litchfield's](#)

Located at The Wigwam, the fare at the resort's signature restaurant is bursting with local ingredients and farm-to-table goodness. We're completely content spending an evening with wine and the Chef's charcuterie on the pretty patio, indulging in any of the restaurant's satisfying entrees, like Arizona filet mignon, Maple Leaf duck and simple spaghetti.

### [deseo](#)

Spanish for "desire," deseo at the four-star Westin Kierland Resort and Spa highlights contemporary Latin cuisine, pairing traditional Latin American ingredients and a new-age approach to cooking, resulting in dishes entirely their own. Along with a substantial list of South American wines, diners can indulge in ceviches, grilled and roasted fish, and a number of carne dishes prepared with marinades impassioned by South American flavors.

### [The Gladly](#) (pictured)

The Gladly in the Biltmore district is light and fresh, both in food and appearance. Plentiful windows allowing natural light to flow in makes the space feel open, but for a slightly darker, more sophisticated vibe, guests can also explore the restaurant's Whiskey Room. A sequel to Chef Bernie Kantak's Citizen Public House, The Gladly serves contemporary American food inspired by his worldly travels, as well as 250 whiskies and craft cocktails. It's also a great option for large gatherings with a private banquet room seating up to 60 guests.

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### [Quiessence at the Farm](#)

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Offering one of the foremost farm-to-table experiences in the Valley, Quiessence at the Farm at South Mountain focuses on uncomplicated cuisine via a menu that changes daily. It dishes up charm in spades, surrounded by towering trees, twinkle lights and fire pits that will transport diners lightyears away from the desert. Tasting menus are served on the weekend, while a la carte dishes are available during the week.

### [Virtú Honest Craft/Nico Heirloom Kitchen](#)

Whether you are looking for a memorable date night or a more casual outing with the family, Chef Gio Osso's pair of incredible dining destinations are there for you. Virtú Honest Craft in Scottsdale, home of the Valley's best octopus dish, is itty bitty but offers big flavor and impeccable presentation. Gilbert's Nico Heirloom Kitchen (yep, you can get the octopus there too) is a bit more family-friendly, dishing up incredible pasta dishes, a killer brunch and an inviting patio along Gilbert Road.

### [The Mission/The House Brasserie/Zinc Bistro/Fat Ox](#)[The Mission/The House Brasserie/Zinc Bistro/Fat Ox](#) (pictured)

There's really only one way to put it: Chef Matt Carter is killing it. Whether at his remarkable Latin-inspired The Mission (two Scottsdale locations), the super-elegant The House Brasserie (that patio—swoon!), the French-fare must, Zinc Bistro, or the modern-Italian beauty, Fat Ox, Chef Carter is the forefront of many memorable dining experiences in the Valley.

### [Crudo](#)

The only thing we like better than Crudo's modern take on Italian dishes are the crazy-cool events it hosts throughout the year, like its Barh Mi pop-up, Tiki Takeover, cocktail-paired dinners and much more. And if you haven't tried Chef Cullen Campbell's crispy pig ears, what are you doing with your life?

### [House of Tricks](#)

In a blink-and-you'll-miss-it 1920's cottage in Tempe is House of Tricks, an incredible restaurant that has topped local best-of lists for the past 30 years. On any given night, you'll find revelers clinking bubbly-filled glasses on the vibrant patio under twinkle light and couples cozying up with foie gras poutine in the art-filled interior space. Tip: House of Tricks is a perfect pre-show dinner if you're headed to Gammage.

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### [Different Pointe of View](#) (pictured)

Nothing says "date night" quite like Different Pointe of View at Pointe Hilton Tapatio Cliffs. The Valley city-light views, the upscale eats, the first-class service, the must-attend winemaker dinners—the AAA four-diamond restaurant has made its mark in local dining history for more than 35 years. There is a reason why weddings are hosted here on the regular.

### [Andreoli Italian Grocery](#)

At this no-frills market/restaurant in Scottsdale, the emphasis is on authentic, quality eats that can be enjoyed in a comfortable atmosphere. The porchetta sandwich is an utter dream, though you can't go wrong with the pasta of the day. While there, peruse the market for take-home ingredients you can't find anywhere else—oh, and don't forget a sfogliatelle for breakfast the next morning. Or to eat in the car on the way home because you simply cannot wait.

### [True Food Kitchen](#)

You'd be hard-pressed to saunter into a True Food Kitchen and be seated immediately (Oprah is a fan, for Pete's sake!) The restaurant's two Valley locations—Scottsdale Quarter and Biltmore Fashion Park—are always bustling with diners in search of healthful eats, morning, noon and night. The rainbow-hued crudité, organic kale salad and lasagna Bolognese are forever favorites. And we can't get enough of the refreshing mocktails that make you and your Instagram feed both feel good.

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Tarbell's serves a unique variety of seasonal seafood dishes, from Georges Bank scallops to butter-poached lobster, as well as fixed menu items like pan-roasted chicken and center-cut tenderloin filet, for a casual upscale dining experience. And the housemade desserts are not to be ignored: an extensive menu that would make any sweet tooth's head spin, treats like the profiteroles (cream-filled French choux pastry with vanilla gelato and ganache) and cheesecake with rosemary caramel sauce are perfectly decadent and just the right amount of excessive. The barrel-aged cocktails also make a bold statement—Tarbell's Top Shelf Green Point is Tarbell's Whistle Pig 12-year blend, Carpano Antica and Yellow Chartreuse, aged for three months.

### [Vincent on Camelback](#)

The enchanting, glowy ambience of Vincent on Camelback is almost fairytale-like, perfect for an evening out for two. Providing impeccable service since 1986, Vincent on Camelback serves fine French cuisine while incorporating Southwestern ingredients. Stone wall accents and simple crystal chandeliers set the tone of Chef Vincent's culinary vision of classically prepared haute French cuisine blended with the zest only the Southwest can muster. For more laidback dining, guests can mosey over to the Vincent Market Bistro for lunch, dinner or Sunday brunch, directly adjacent to the main restaurant.

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### [Marcellino Ristorante](#)

Few places do pasta as well as Old Town's Marcellino Ristorante. Fancy words like "toothsome" and "corpulent" even fill the menu to describe Chef Marcellino's pasta masterpieces. For a truly special affair, book a seat at Chef's Island to see him at work, and Chef will create four to six amazing courses just for you.

### [Clever Koi \(pictured\)](#)

At its two local spots (Central Phoenix and Gilbert), Clever Koi impresses guests with impeccable ramen (the seasonal option is always a favorite), unique steamed buns and dumplings and, interestingly enough, one of our favorite burgers in the Valley. Don't skip out on the cocktails; you'll be head over heels for Riding the Pine and Unholy Alliance.

*\*\*This fall, Born & Raised Hospitality, the restaurateurs behind the [Clever Koi](#), will open Fellow. The casual Italian-style osteria and craft cocktail bar will be housed inside a stylish, custom-designed space at SkySong in Scottsdale.*

### [Artizen. Crafted American Kitchen & Bar](#)

Artizen, Crafted American Kitchen & Bar, at The Camby in Phoenix manages to be both sleek yet comfy, sexy yet down-to-earth. Guests are treated to some serious good looks upon entering the restaurant, which is drenched in bronze accents, bold lighting and a deep-blue palette. Standout dishes include the Parisian gnocchi, the yellowtail crudo and smoked lamb neck bucatini.

### [Ocotillo](#)

Boasting some serious indoor/outdoor dining goodness, Ocotillo is Phoenix is a super-cool spot to linger once the temperature is right—and it doesn't hurt that the food is top-notch, too. The menu has a stocked salad and veggie lineup for light eaters, while those with a hearty hankering can dig into housemade pastas and larger entrees. Try the grilled Spanish octopus or wildly simple but stunning sun-dried strawberries with ricotta.

### [Palo Verde](#)

The signature restaurant at The Boulders offers the Southwestern cuisine that visitors crave when visiting Carefree—but with a modern twist. The elegant restaurant offers hearty meat and seafood entrees as well as a selection of lighter offerings that get the taste party started. Must-tries at the recently renovated restaurant, which overlooks the golf course, include the chargrilled octopus.

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When tummies start rumbling around the office, here is where the **AZ Foothills** staff can be found.

"**Sapporo** is my go-to spot for a wow-worthy teppanyaki experience. It's cool, sexy and perfect for date night or group celebration. **Spiga**: the chicken parmesan is by far the best I ever had in my life and the portion is much more than needed; I am always taking some home. **DC Ranch Country Club** has one of the best burgers, hands down. **Four Seasons Scottsdale at Troon North** is my favorite to enjoy a seafood app along with a signature martini with my beautiful wife as the sun sets." —*Michael Dee, president and publisher*

"My favorite restaurant in the state is **Pizzicletta**, a no-frills gem in Flagstaff that offers the most magical dining experience. The pizza is insanely delicious—I usually opt for the daily special—and there is something so special about being warmed by the wood-fired oven when snow is falling outside. And don't snooze on the delicious apps.

My family are regulars at **Joe's Farm Grill**. It is this lovely slice of heaven with picnic tables, grass for energy-packed kiddos and great burgers and shakes. Then, dessert is a glitter-topped cupcake from the **Coffee Shop at Agritopia** a few steps away.

My husband and I love spending a free night with **Fire and Brimstone's** namesake pizza on the super-laidback patio of next-door **12 West Brewing**. Because pizza and beer.

And though not a restaurant, my favorite date night is enjoying a pint at **Wren House** while playing a game of Battleship. The ambience at Wren House is like a relaxed house party—welcoming and packed with friends, but the beer is way better. I love any of the Wally releases." —*Melissa Larsen, AZ Foothills editor in chief*

"**Diego Pops**. Three words: Brussels. Sprouts. Nachos. Sounds weird, tastes amazing. Plus, I like to pretend I'm being healthy with a dose of veggies (nevermind the mountain of cheese). Super cool décor, snow cone margaritas and happy hour seven days a week...what's not to love?

**Canal Club**. This Havana-inspired eatery inside The Scott Resort is what my design dreams are made of. Well, the whole resort is, if we're being honest. Their libation list is to die for; I'm a big fan of the smoky, mesal-fueled Salt River Society.

**Chula Seafood**. It may not look like much from the outside but Chula is hands down the Valley's best seafood spot, IMHO. Do yourself a favor and visit ASAP for one of their fresh-off-the-boat poke bowls or ooey-goey green chile tuna melts (available on Wednesdays only) and then thank me later.

**Shift**. This Downtown Flagstaff gem has a killer cocktail program and insane menu that changes daily. It feels like a casual yet chic San Francisco cafe (think lots of white subway tile, modern décor, intimate dining room), and the staff treats every customer like family. In fact, on my last visit the chef gave me a box of local mushrooms he foraged himself after I mentioned how amazing they were in the featured dish.

**Elote and Mariposa**. I was born and raised in Sedona, meaning I've eaten at 99.9 percent of the restaurants in town, so trust me on this one. Two major Sedona standouts are Elote and Mariposa. Elote is totally worth the two—or more—hour wait, and you can't get a more picturesque Red Rock view than Mariposa." —*Karah Van Kammen, director of communications and marketing*

"One of my favorite local spots for feel-good Italian food is **Rigatony's**. I also love **Doughbird** (pictured) because I'm a sucker for their chili oil; it's good on everything! And one of the best meals I've had in the Valley was at **Different Pointe of View** during their wine dinner series." —*Suzanne Koch, InMexico editor in chief and AZFoothills.com writer*