

Arizona's 50 Best Restaurants 2015

Written by Melissa Larsen



Fine-dining destinations where the bubbly and foie gras grows. Cool casual spots, for kicking back with top-notch pizza and beer. Super-hip fusion restaurants with one-of-a-kind eats. Take a look at 50 of our favorite Valley restaurants.

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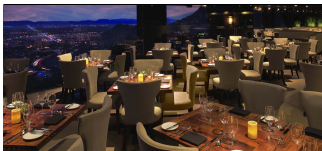
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[Crudo](#)

Dishing up modern Italian cuisine, Phoenix-based Crudo's decadent squid ink risotto has quite the raving reputation among local foodies. The menu is crafted of quality local ingredients, and Crudo puts just as much care and consideration (and [farm](#)-fresh ingredients) into its cocktail menu. The Daring Dutchman, one of Crudo's boldest cocktails, is crafted with Bols Genever, house-made apricot syrup, mascarpone, lemon and fennel pollen. [crudoaz.com](#).

CHEW ON THIS: The team behind Crudo has announced their sophomore effort, Okra Cookhouse & Cocktails, will be coming to Crown on 7th in late summer.



Different [Pointe of View](#)

For more than 31 years, Different Pointe of View at Pointe Hilton Tapatio Cliffs Resort has served as one of the most romantic, special-occasion dining spots, thanks to an eye-popping panorama of the Valley and its swoon-worthy eats. Dig into such indulgent dishes as brandy-lemonbutter-poached Maine lobster and watercress-crusted grilled prime filet before heading to the [outdoor](#) dining area for a selfie with the glistening city lights. [tapatiocliffshilton.com](#).



[Virtú](#)

Virtú may be small, but it sure is mighty. Opened in 2013 at Bespoke Inn, the Scottsdale [restaurant](#) was nominated by the James Beard Award [Foundation](#) as Best New Restaurant. The Mediterranean-inspired menu changes regularly with standout dishes including Chef Gio Osso's house-made pasta and a widely-celebrated starter, charred octopus with lemon, chickpeas, arugula, fennel and a spicy kick of Calabrian chile butter. The cocktail menu is a winner, too. [virtuscottsdale.com](#).



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[Los Sombreros](#)

Los Sombreros' owner and chef Azucena Tovar infuses a bit of San Miguel de Allende—where she was born—into all of her dishes at the North Scottsdale restaurant (there are two locations). Since opening in the Valley in 1994, Los Sombreros is a one-stop shop for divine queso fundido, crispy and soft tacos, hearty soups, refreshing salads and much more. lossombreros.com.

CHEW ON THIS: Come Christmastime, make the season a little extra jolly with Los Sombreros' holiday tamales—a tradition for nearly 20 years—in favors like chocolate and red chile pork.



[Pizzeria Bianco](#)

Afer years of waiting two-hours-plus for a seat at Downtown Phoenix's Pizzeria Bianco, there are now two additional spots for 'za enthusiasts (Town & Country and Tucson) to savor a slice of James Beard Foundation Award winner Chef Chris Bianco's famous Wiseguy. Pizzeria Bianco has garnered many best-pizza-in-the-nation nods and celebrity fans, from Martha Stewart to Oprah. pizzeriabianco.com.



[Joe's Farm Grill/Liberty Market](#)

Long before Gilbert was the packed dining destination it is today, Joe Johnston made it a favorite of Valley families in search of great grub. Joe's Farm Grill impresses with its simple but spot-on eats (think burgers and huge salads) and idyllic, picnic-table-speckled atmosphere while Liberty Market offers mouthwatering weekly specials (perhaps you'll be lucky enough to be there for the hazelnut-crusted scallops with coconut risotto), a jam-packed pastry case and a mighty fine coffee bar. joesfarmgrill.com; libertymarket.com.



[Elements](#)

Star of the Food Network, Chef Beau MacMillan, dishes up incredible, innovative farmfresh American cuisine with Asian accents at elements at Sanctuary on Camelback. Miso salmon, sesame tofu and his beloved bbq short ribs impress diners who visit the sleek, sexy resort restaurant. sanctuaryaz.com.



[Talavera/ Proof](#)

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At Four Seasons Resort Scottsdale at Troon North, diners get the best of both worlds. Talavera is a modern take on the classic steakhouse and piques the interest of palates with Chilean sea bass and lobster bouillabaisse (did we mention Talavera has one of the best views in the Valley?) while Proof, an American Canteen is fun and casual—with a quirky interior—that dishes up melt-in-your-mouth pretzel knots, the Valley's best lobster roll and a can't-miss lineup of shakes, sundaes and from-scratch baked goods. fourseasons.com/scottsdale.



[The Mission](#), [House Brasserie](#), [Zinc Bistro](#)

Three very different restaurants; one amazing chef. Chef Matt Carter dishes up some of the area's most impressive cuisine in the kitchens of Scottsdale's The Mission, The House Brasserie and Zinc Bistro. Pozole and pork shoulder tacos are tops at The Mission, which focuses on Latin American cuisine—as well as stellar cocktails. The House Brasserie boasts a dreamy outdoor dining space and high-end eats, like duck bolognese and tenderbelly pork chops. To get a dose of Chef Carter's take on French fare, there is nothing quite like the onion soup at Zinc Bistro. themissionaz.com



[Deseo](#)

Showcasing favors of South America, deseo ("desire" in Spanish) at Westin Kierland Resort & Spa is well-known for its fresh, favor-packed ceviches, uniquely prepared meat and seafood plates and its popular chocolate cigar. Order a fruity drink at the Muddle Bar for a pre-dinner delight. kierlandresort.com.



[Prado](#)

The Spanish-inspired [menu](#) at Prado of Omni Scottsdale Resort & Spa at Montelucia spotlights a daily paella and delicious wood-fired options, from lamb chops to branzino. Start your meal with a few tapas to wake up the taste buds; the saffron steamed mussels with chorizo and shaved fennel are a must. omnihotels.com/hotels/scottsdale-montelucia.

[CHEW](#) ON THIS: Omni Scottsdale Resort & Spa at Montelucia recently unveiled the Chef's Kitchen & Herb Garden that not only provides fresh ingredients for Prado, but also hosts private dining events.

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[POSH Improvisational Cuisine](#)

Feel like embarking on a culinary adventure? Head to POSH [Restaurant](#) in Scottsdale, which specializes in improvisational cuisine. Once the kitchen is aware of dietary restrictions and preferences, it whips up a multi-course tasting menu using unique ingredients—from quail to wild boar bacon—and beautiful presentations. Come with an open mind; leave with happy taste buds. [poshscottsdale.com](#).

CHEW ON THIS: POSH switches to a simple ramen bar menu every Tuesday from 5 to 9 p.m.



[Binkley's Restaurant](#)

A four-time James Beard Foundation Award finalist, Chef Kevin Binkley is a bit of a culinary god, which is evidenced by his edible masterpieces at Cave Creek's Binkley's Restaurant. Though any menu item can be ordered solo, dig into a four-, five- or six-course spread to truly get a taste of what Binkley's is made of. Highend ingredients like foie gras and sweetbreads sprinkle the menu, and the dessert cheese board is what dairy dreams are made of. [BinkleysRestaurantGroup.com](#).

CHEW ON THIS: For a more casual but just-as-delish dining experience, reserve a spot at Binkley's other establishments: Bink's Scottsdale, Bink's Midtown and Café Bink.



[Sushi Roku](#)

Though its menu still features its sushi and sashimi favorites, Sushi Roku at W Scottsdale recently rolled out a new menu that spotlights Garden, Sea and [Farm](#) sections that include the likes of grilled octopus and braised short ribs. The baked lobster roll with creamy miso sauce is an indulgent favorite. Plus, Sushi Roku is one of the most fashion-forward feasting spots in the Valley. [innovativedining.com](#).

CHEW ON THIS: Every Sunday, Sushi Roku offers Red Sun Sundays, a happy hour all night long in the bar and lounge.



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[Christopher's And Crush Lounge](#)

Chef Christopher Gross is far from deprived of outstanding accolades for his culinary works. He won the illustrious James Beard Foundation Award and is often among both local and national top-10 listings. From the seemingly simple truffle fries and red bell pepper soup to a section of the menu dedicated entirely to foie gras, Chef Gross is a master of classic French cuisine—with a modern twist. [christophersaz.com](#).



[Vincent on Camelback](#)

For more than 30 years, locals have turned to Vincent on Camelback for Chef Vincent Guerithault's impressive French cuisine—made with Southwestern ingredients. Though the menu changes daily to reflect what is in season, with rotating dishes like duck confit and roasted veal loin, Vincent on Camelback is always consistent in the quality of its food. [vincentsoncamelback.com](#).

CHEW ON THIS: From October to May, stop by The Camelback Market for Chef Guerithault's famed wood-fired pizzas.



[Barrio Cafe](#)

With a menu of authentic Mexican cuisine, diners in the mood for cochinita pibil or pollo en mole head to Phoenix's Barrio Café, where James Beard Foundation Award nominee Chef Silvana Salcido Esparza works her magic. Her signature dish, chiles en nogada, spotlights a roasted poblano pepper filled with chicken, apple, pear, dried apricot and pecans in almond cream sauce. [barriocafe.com](#).



[Tarbell's](#)

Chef Mark Tarbell has cooked for the likes of the Dalai Lama and Muhammed Ali. He was nominated for a James Beard Foundation Award. He has earned more than 50 best-of food awards. And after just a bite of Mark's Famous Spaghetti and the Meatball, you will understand why. [tarbells.com](#).



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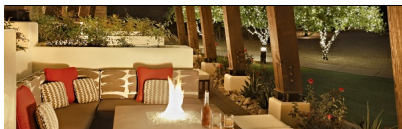
[SASSI](#)

Very few places can completely transport you based solely a bite of pasta or the babble of a fountain. SASSI in North Scottsdale has the ability to make diners think they are on holiday in Italy. In one of the romantic respite's many dining spaces, please your palate with the likes of orecchiette pasta with spicy sausage and rapini (a longtime staple at SASSI) or fresh fish with eggplant puree and baby squash. [sassi.biz](#).



[Kai](#)

Kai, one of the Valley's most highly rated restaurants, is located at Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort & Spa. The world-class menu incorporates the essence of the Pima and Maricopa tribes created with locally farmed ingredients. The ultimate in first-class dining (don't wear denim, shorts or have your cell phone out), reserve a spot for the decadent 13-course Journey Tasting Menu. Dishes may include foie gras elixir, grilled tenderloin of tribal buffalo and escargot. [wildhorsepassresort.com/kai](#).



[Bourbon Steak/ La Hacienda](#)

A5 wagyu is the best cut of beef a person can stick a fork in—and you can find it at Chef Michael Mina's Bourbon Steak at Fairmont Scottsdale Princess. Try the black truffle mac and cheese on the side. Just a short stroll from Bourbon Steak is La Hacienda, the Princess' other gourmet gem. Sip on more than 200 types of tequila, savor divine lobster tacos and finish with warm churros. [scottsdaleprincess.com](#).



[House of Tricks](#)

Once a run-down dwelling, House of Tricks in Tempe is a charming [restaurant](#) with one of the area's best patios, decked with pots of flowers, arbors, beautiful ferns and a pond. While House of Tricks could easily rely on its enchanted setting to get by, the Contemporary American eats are just as amazing, as evidenced by the green chilichorizo oysters and molasses-braised pork osso buco. [houseoftricks.com](#).



[FnB](#)

At the helm of the Old Town kitchen of FnB is James Beard Foundation Award nominee, Charleen Badman. The talented chef dishes up tempting seasonal menus using local ingredients while the super-charismatic Pavle Milic curates the restaurant's Arizona-only wine program (which happens to be the first of its kind). Check the FnB Web site for a schedule of the Local Winemaker Summer Series events. [fnbrestaurant.com](#).

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[Roka Akor](#)

With a super-sleek dining space and a see-and-be-seen shochu bar, Roka Akor in Scottsdale could easily be a spot to just hang out and savor the surroundings. However, the [menu](#) contains some of the best sushi and steaks in the Valley. Order the butterfish tataki, a steak fight (a favorite is the New York strip loin with truffle aioli) and black cod for a mouthwatering spread. [rokaakor.com](#).



[St. Francis](#)

Though you're sure to be impressed with any of the dishes on St. Francis' lunch or dinner menu (like the pork chile verde or decadent parmesan risotto), the brunch menu at the family-owned restaurant has gained much acclaim. The iron skillet pancake is heaven sent, concocted of olive [oil](#), dark chocolate, caramel apples, maple syrup and whipped crème fraîche. [stfrancisaz.com](#).

CHEW ON THIS: Kids 10 and under eat for free!



[Marcellino Ristorante](#)

Italian-born chef Marcellino Verzino is not only one of the most charming people in the Valley, but his dishes are some of the most memorable. Housemade pasta, hearty steak and fresh seafood fill the menu, and you can't go wrong with the simple but stunning caprese. For a one-of-a-kind tasting experience, saddle up to the Chef's Island for a four- to six-course menu prepared right before your eyes. [marcellinoristorante.com](#).

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[J&G Steakhouse](#)

Featuring steakhouse classics—kicked up a luxurious notch—and incredible mountain and citylight views, J&G Steakhouse at The Phoenician is one of the top spots in the state for delicious seafood and steak selections. Dig into grilled swordfish, Maine diver scallops, prime porterhouse and six-peppercorn prime NY steak with scrumptious sides like salt-and-pepper baked potato and warm beets. jgsteakhousescottsdale.com.



[Andreoli Italian Grocer](#)

Part store, part restaurant, Andreoli Italian Grocer offers some of the area's best and most authentic Italian eats (plus the makings for you to create such dishes at home). Porchetta panini with roasted pork seasoned with garlic, fennel and black pepper always tempts the taste buds at lunchtime while one of Chef Giovanni Scorzo's ever-changing pasta specials is a must come dinnertime. andreoli-grocer.com.



[True Food Kitchen](#)

True Food Kitchen, Sam Fox's restaurant with locations at Scottsdale Quarter and Biltmore Fashion Park, expands our idea of health food (as in, not just kale and lean chicken). The veggie crudité may sound like a bore, but the plate is a nutritious masterpiece of heirloom [vegetables](#) of every color of the rainbow. The grass-fed bison burger satisfies hearty appetites, and you can even feel good about eating the pizza as it is made with spelt and fax dough. truefoodkitchen.com.



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[SumoMaya Mexican Asian Cuisine](#)

The concept is unique (blending favors from across Latin America and the Far East). The look is gorgeous (hello, faux tree that occupies the center of the restaurant). And the eats and drinks are spectacular. Start your spread at Scottsdale's chic SumoMaya with the pomegranate guacamole before moving onto the miso Chilean sea bass. [sumomaya.com](#).



[Litchfield's](#)

One of the top dining destinations in the West Valley, Litchfield's, located at The Wigwam in Litchfield Park, can satisfy cravings from high-end fare as well as beyond-delicious comfort food (it happens to be [home](#) to some of the best mashed potatoes in the Valley). Dig into pork belly nachos or cast-iron duck breast and order up an old-school cocktail. [wigwamarizona.com](#).



[Matt's Big Breakfast](#)

Plan on making yourself comfortable outside of Matt's Big Breakfast; there will be a wait, but it'll be worth it. Though it is hard to imagine such deliciousness on a small, simple [menu](#), Matt's is brimming with it. From the cracked-to-order cheese omelet to Phoenix's best griddlecakes, served with sweet cream butter and real maple syrup, you'll leave with a smile on your face— and knowing you won't be hungry for another bite until dinnertime. [mattsbigbreakfast.com](#).



[La Grande Orange Pizzeria and Grocery](#)

La Grande Orange Grocery is several concepts in one: grocery store, pizzeria, casual café, coffee bar, bake shop, gelato shop. Folks stop by for [market](#)-style breakfast or lunch or full-service dinner in the pizzeria after 4 p.m., and the menu is brimming salads and sandwiches that have a devote following, like the rotisserie turkey Rueben and shredded kale and quinoa salad. There are many vegetarian, vegan and gluten free options, to boot. [lagrandeorangegrocery.com](#).

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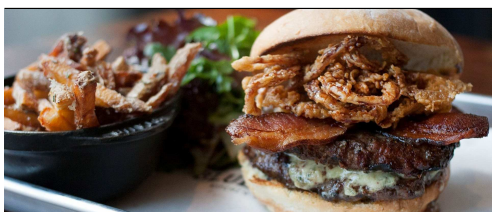
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[T. Cook's](#)

Located at Royal Palms Resort and Spa, a Destination Hotel, it is no surprise that T. Cook's is one of the Valley's most romantic dining destinations. Dine on stone seared foie gras and antelope alfresco among the greenery and blooming bougainvillea. And be sure to pop in on the weekend for an incredible brunch of crab-stuffed omelets and hazelnut- and graham cracker-crust French toast. royalpalmshotel.com.

CHEW ON THIS: Come late August, T. Cook's will be rolling out a new fall menu.



[Blue Hound Kitchen + Cocktails](#)

Blue Hound Kitchen & Cocktails at Kimpton's Hotel Palomar Phoenix not only dishes up incredible kicked-up comfort food by Executive Chef Sean Currid (some of his favorites include deviled fried oysters and prime fat-iron steak with garlic-[cherry](#) glaze), but it boasts one of the best cocktail [programs](#) in Phoenix. Try one of the [sips](#) of of the "Wild Cards" section of the cocktail menu by award-winning head bartender, Stephanie Teslar, for something you've never had before but will be sure to remember fondly. bluehoundkitchen.com.



[The Clever Koi](#)

Dishing up Chinese-American comfort food, 2-year-old The Clever Koi is a real trip for the taste buds. Pig Face dumplings and roasted pork belly steamed buns are the perfect ways to kick off The Clever Koi meal, followed by whatever seasonal ramen dish is on tap (this summer's spring pea ramen is a bright season-friendly pick). Whetting your whistle is a must at the Phoenix [restaurant](#), as its cocktail program is tops. thecleverkoi.com.



[LON's at the Hermosa](#)

LON's at the Hermosa is home to one of the prettiest patios in the Valley, with a fountain and fireplace, and it serves Artful American cuisine with dishes like roasted halibut and jidori chicken. Opt for a chef's tasting menu to enjoy the likes of foie gras dumplings and roasted duck breast. hermosainn.com.

CHEW ON THIS: For a truly memorable affair, host an intimate dinner at LON's underground wine cellar.

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[Beckett's Table](#)

Whether you're saddling up at the Grown-ups Table on Wednesday nights or enjoying dining deals during Social Hour Tuesday through Sunday evenings at the community table or bar, you always feel like family at Beckett's Table. The cozy neighborhood haunt dishes up comfort fare—shepherd's pie, deviled eggs, [mac](#) and cheese—by Chef Justin Beckett. For the happiest of endings: chocolate-dipped bacon s'mores. [beckettstable.com](#).



[Quiessence at the Farm](#)

Like out of a fairytale, Quiessence at the Farm comprises a charming old home among towering trees and a beautiful patio—complete with firepits and twinkling lights—where folks can order simple but sophisticated farm-fresh eats. The ever-changing menu, complemented by top Arizona wines, features local ingredients (think McClendon's Select and Maya's Farm) in dishes that may include potato gnocchi with Arizona's Blue Oyster mushrooms or pistachio soup topped with goat cheese mousse. [qatthefarm.com](#).



[The Parlor](#)

With toppings that range from roasted summer corn to calamari, Phoenix's award-winning The Parlor pizzeria is one of the Valley's favorite stops for stellar 'za. For the freshest fixings, check out the market pizza, which utilizes seasonal ingredients in an innovative way. The pasta plates—the pasta is made in-house—are likewise delicious, whether you're going traditional with pappardelle bolognese or a little out of the box (see cavatelli di mare with tarragon-infused cavatelli and grilled octopus). [theparlor.us](#).



[Cibo Urban Pizzeria](#)

With brick walls and a twinkle-light-lined patio, Downtown's Cibo Urban Pizzeria has charm for days—and amazing Neapolitan-style pizza. Though the simple, straightforward margherita is a purist's dream, the procida, with mozzarella, prosciutto crudo, arugula, goat cheese and Asian pears, brings a little sweetness to the plate. For dessert, dig into Cibo's homemade crepes with fillings like Nutella, orange marmalade

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and mascarpone. cibophoenix.com.



[Postino Winecafe](#)

Bruschetta. When it comes to Postino, that is all you need to know. Though the longtime winecafe now has four Valley locations, you'll find the same great bruschetta offerings at each, from the sweet ricotta with dates and pistachios to smoked salmon with pesto. (Come by Monday and Tuesday evenings after 8 p.m. for a bruschetta board and bottle of wine for \$20.) Brunchtime is also a big draw where diners can feast on massive slices of ciabatta French toast and the cheesy [Farm](#) Scramble. [postinowinecafe.com](#).

CHEW ON THIS: Upward Projects recently announced that Postino WineCafe is expanding to Scottsdale, with new locations coming to both Downtown and North Scottsdale.



[Cowboy Ciao](#)

Since 1997, when Cowboy Ciao opened its doors in Old Town, it has been a beloved stop for enjoying Modern American fare and a wine list that is nearing 2,000 bottles. Regulars come back time after time for the Stetson chopped salad and exotic mushroom pan fry, and the lengthy list of desserts is where you'll find everything from Japanese-style cheesecake and chocolate budino to birthday cake and a Cereal, Killer!, a saccharine setup of malted oatmeal cookie, Frosted Flake ice cream and brittle, and caramel sauce. [cowboyciao.com](#).

CHEW ON THIS: Wine fan? Reserve a spot at a Cowboy Ciao Sommelier Showdown for a multi-course, multi-wine feast that pits various winemakers against Cowboy Ciao owner, Peter Kasperski.



[ShinBay](#)

Chef Shinji Kurita, a James Beard Foundation Award semifinalist, creates both traditional and contemporary Japanese fare at Scottsdale's ShinBay. A favorite feasting spot among local chefs craving sushi, Shinbay specializes in a chef's tasting course (that can start at \$100 per person) and requires at least a day's notice. [shinbay.com](#).



[Arizona Wilderness Brewing Co.](#)

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Though it isn't even two years old yet, Gilbert's Arizona Wilderness Brewing Co. has won international acclaim for its incredible, innovative beers that are created using local ingredients. While diners sip on the likes of Pine Mountain Sour Pale Ale, made with spruce tips, or Pistachi-yo Saison, they can savor eats that break bar-food standards. Try the mouthwatering burgers (the Good Mornin' burger is something to behold) and chicken wings conft. azwbeer.com.



[El Chorro](#)

El Chorro in Paradise Valley is a bit of a local treasure. It opened as a school in 1934, became a [restaurant](#) and lodge in 1937 and was acquired by Jacquie Dorrance and Kristy and Tim Moore in 2009 to further preserve the restaurant's rustic charm. On the [menu](#), you'll find beloved classics like beef stroganof and trout almondine—and be sure to save some room for El Chorro's can't-get-enough sticky buns. elchorro.com.



[Nobuo at Teeter House](#)

At Nobuo at Teeter House, Chef Nobuo Fukuda, who won the James Beard Foundation Award in 2007, elevates Japanese cuisine with his omakase, which he became famous for when he was heading up his former restaurant, Sea Saw. Using only the best, most high-quality ingredients, Chef Fukuda creates a luxurious multi-course tasting menu. On the everyday dinner menu at Nobuo at Teeter House, guests might find yellowtail ceviche, tuna tataki, coconut curry lamb and more. nobuofukuda.com.



[Frank & Albert's](#)

At Frank & Albert's at Arizona Biltmore, a Waldorf Astoria Resort, diners can dig into comfort food with a Sonoran twist. Mole-braised short ribs and dulce de leche-seared scallops are a few of the sleek restaurant's hearty offerings while breakfast calls for [cherry](#)-almond focaccia French toast and chocolate brownie waffles to satisfy the sweet tooth. arizonabiltmore.com.



[THE GLADLY](#)

Two words: chopped salad. Phoenix's The Gladly, along with its sister restaurant in Old Town, Citizen Public House, serves the Valley's

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tastiest salad in the form of The Original Chopped Salad. While the medley of freeze-dried sweet corn kernels, pepitas, currants, smoked salmon, Israeli couscous and more is reason enough to visit, dishes like duck meatloaf and roasted Brussels sprouts on corn grits will make you linger. thegladly.com.



[Pomo Pizzeria](#)

The pizza at Pomo Pizzeria, with locations in Scottsdale, Gilbert and Phoenix, proves that perfection doesn't always take eons to create. The Neapolitan-style pies are baked for 60 to 90 seconds in a 905-degree oven that was built by hand in Southern Italy. Pomo's big-as-your-head paninis and homemade pasta dishes are likewise delicious. pomopizzeria.com.



Publisher's Picks:

In addition to being a fan of The Mission, Tarbell's, Christopher's and Crush Lounge, Zinc Bistro, deseo and BLT Steak, MICHAEL DEE, ARIZONA FOOTHILLS MAGAZINE PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER, dishes on a few of his other local faves:

[ISABELLA'S KITCHEN](#): "By far the best patio setting in Arizona. The back patio leads to the Grayhawk golf course and is a great gathering spot to make memories." isabellaskitchen.com.

[STEAK 44](#): "Great place to grab happy hour after [work](#) or have a private dinner while looking into the kitchen with a private glass wall. Not to mention, the food is amazing!" steak44.com.

[FÂME CAFE](#): "Best breakfast in Arizona, period. Fresh, organic and original. Love the pancakes and original [recipes](#)." famephx.com.