

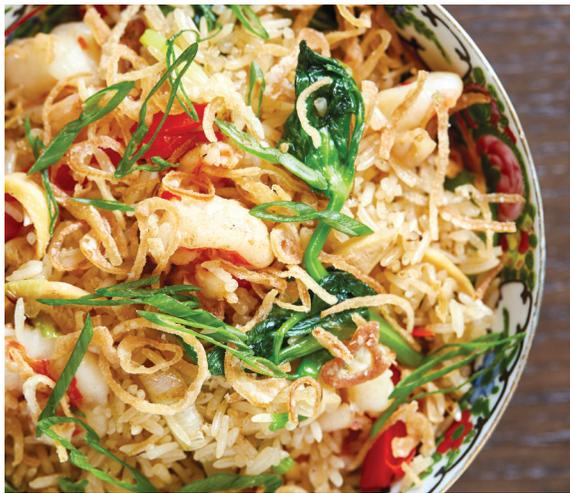
CHICAGO

CONCEPTS TO SCOUT

What to see in Chicago during the NRA show

WHERE TO DINE FOR STEALABLE IDEAS

IT'S BEEN A BUSY 12 MONTHS for the Chicago restaurant scene since last year's NRA Show. Emerging chains ShopHouse Southeast Asian Kitchen and Nando's Peri-Peri came to town, multiconcept operators Lettuce Entertain You and Boka Restaurant Group added to their portfolios and local leader Brendan Sodikoff expanded his empire. Here, in our third annual non-dining guide of concepts to scout while in town for the show, we've rounded up the restaurants operators should scope out to look for inspiration and ideas to take to their businesses back home. —Sara Rush Wirth



1

DUCK DUCK GOAT

Currently the hottest ticket in town, Stephanie Izard has taken the goat theme from her famed Girl & The Goat and given it a Chinese spin, with hand-pulled noodles and housemade dumplings. It's her third restaurant in the expanding West Loop neighborhood. While reservations are tough to come by, Izard plans to add a takeout window for street food soon.

857 W. Fulton Market | duckduckgoatchicago.com

SWIFT & SONS
PAGE 100

ROISTER
PAGE 94

KEY

- RETAIL ELEMENT
- FROM THE BIG NAMES
- CAN'T-MISS BOOZE
- CHAINS TO HIT
- EATERTAINMENT
- HYPERFOCUSED MENU

CONCEPTS TO SCOUT

2

SPIN

● ● The 18,000-square-foot ping-pong spot, backed by actress Susan Sarandon, includes 20 tables and two bars, as well as lounge spaces for those who don't want to play—avoiding that veto vote. This first Chicago location of the now five-unit concept offers passed food service as well as stationary.

344 N. State St. | wearespin.com

3

OYSTER BAH

● Lettuce Entertain You is proving that East Coast-quality seafood can be done in the Midwest, as long as the relationships are there. While Chicago may not be near the ocean, the company has teamed up with oyster growers to serve eight to 12 cold-water varieties daily.

1962 N. Halsted St. | oysterbah.com



4

SMACK SHACK

● Operators have been clamoring to get into Chicago's West Loop as it expands, both with residents and businesses—including Google. Enter the Twin Cities lobster roll specialist, who partnered with local Four Corners Tavern Group to set up a counter-service shop for its lobster rolls and andouille po' boys in the Google building, a contrast to the fancy steakhouse that also calls the building home.

326 N. Morgan St. | smack-shack.com



5

PASTORAL (ANDERSONVILLE)

● ● The fourth location of Chicago's popular wine and cheese shop is its biggest yet at 3,800 square feet. While one has had a sandwich counter before, this location includes a full restaurant, cheese bar and wine bar inside, showing how retail is encroaching on restaurant business.

5212 N. Clark St. | pastoralartisan.com

6

CRUZ BLANCA CERVECERIA

● ● Frontera's Rick Bayless launched a flagship beer last May. Now, the industry vet is promising a brewpub—complete with a 10-barrel brewing system, tasting room and growler program (with an open date before the NRA Show as of this printing).

900 W. Randolph Street | rickbayless.com

7

3 GREENS MARKET

● ● Local wunderkind Brendan Sodikoff has been busy with hybrids this year. His latest brings together the food that made him famous, including Au Cheval-style burgers. A large salad bar, coffee drinks and cocktails round out this casual restaurant and cafe blended with a grab-and-go market.

354 W. Hubbard St. | 3greensmarket.com



8

LATINICITY

● ● This Eatery of Latin street food from chef Richard Sandoval is cranking out massive volumes from food stalls, a full restaurant and a bar.

108 N. State St.
latinicity.com

9

CHICAGO ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION HOTEL

● ● The swanky yet vintage hotel has multiple dining options, catering to the different ways people want to eat. It boasts Chicago's second Shake Shack location; The Game Room, an open space with pool tables, foosball and Chicago mixology icon Paul McGee of Lost Lake overseeing the cocktail program; Cindy's, a fancier rooftop spot for trend-seekers who want a view of the city; and supper club-style Cherry Circle Room.

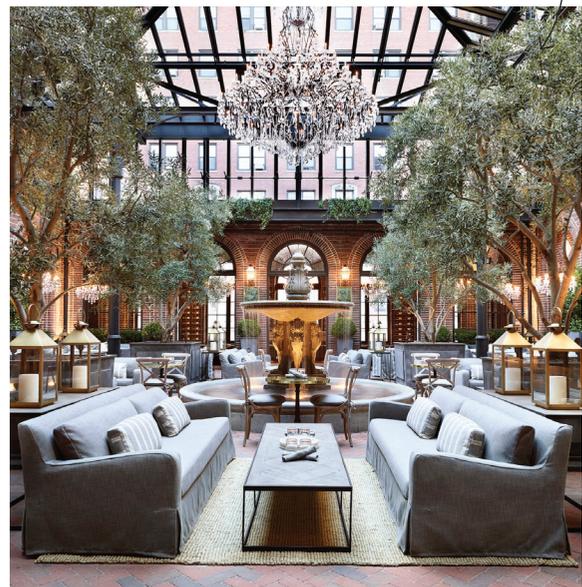
12 S. Michigan Ave. | chicagoathlethotel.com

10

3 ARTS CLUB CAFE

● Sodikoff also launched a café-espresso bar-wine room combo inside a Restoration Hardware retail store that integrates seamlessly with the high-end furniture shop below, thanks to a glass-top roof, in-restaurant fountains and trees and chandeliers. Notably, most of the furniture is plush chairs and sofas, catering to the sociable, lingering millennial crowd.

1300 N. Dearborn St. | 3artsclubcafe.com



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11

GREENRIVER

● ● Danny Meyer paired up with the team behind NYC cocktail bar The Dead Rabbit to open a restaurant atop a medical building at Northwestern Hospital that showcases craft cocktails, a seasonal menu and design inspiration from local architect Mies van der Rohe.

259 E. Erie St. | greenriverchi.com



12

MEZCALERIA LAS FLORES

● A weekend hotspot, the mezcal-focused bar plays with interesting presentations of its cocktails, including serving some in a bowl versus a traditional glass. With a complicated drink menu, it's been touted for its knowledgeable staff and good service. It doesn't have food of its own, but imbibers can order from the restaurant next door.

3149 W. Logan Blvd. | mezcalerialasflores.com

13

AMPERSAND WINE BAR

● Affordable small plates still can be profitable in small spaces. With only 24 seats, plus 16 at the bar, alumni of late Chicago legends Charlie Trotter and Homaro Cantu teamed up to serve shareables, funky desserts and wines at a price point appealing to millennials.

4845 N. Damen Ave. | ampersandchicago.com



14

FORBIDDEN ROOT

● Located in a former theater in Chicago's up-and-coming West Town neighborhood, the brewpub has been lauded for its 12 rotating taps of herbal, botanical beer. In fact, every Tuesday night (so the last day of the NRA Show), it dedicates three hours to a launch of a new beer, elixir or beer-tail. But it's the elevated take on bar food that's gaining notice of both the local media and hipsters, using on-trend ingredients such as gochujang as well as revamping local favorites like a fried giardiniera as a small plate.

1746 W. Chicago Ave. | forbiddenroot.com

15

SNAGGLETOOTH

● If you're not grabbing breakfast on the show floor, head here to see how a restaurant can get away with charging \$8 for an open-face bagel sandwich. The trick: cured fishes and a schmear bar for customization.

2819 N. Southport Ave. | snaggletoothchicago.com



16

BEATRIX STREETERVILLE

● ●

In Northwestern Hospital's lobby, Lettuce Entertain You's second location of Beatrix is part gastropub, part grab-and-go area with a salad bar, hot bar and coffee bar to cater to visitors and workers.

671 N. St. Clair St. | beatrixchicago.com



17

THE NORTHMAN

● Chicago's long-awaited first hard-cider bar opened this March with more than 100 ciders, as well as a menu that sticks to the one-booze theme with bistro dishes such as cider-braised onion soup and escargot with cider butter.

4337 N. Lincoln Ave. | thenorthman.com

18

GUS'S WORLD FAMOUS FRIED CHICKEN

● ● The counter-service Memphis chain famous for its breading laced with cayenne pepper has made its way to Chicago's popular Fulton Market district. The one change for Chicago: It'll serve booze.

847 W. Fulton Market | gusfriedchicken.com

19

BOEUFHAUS

● A change of pace from extravagant Chicago steakhouses, the spot recently added an outdoor patio as well as a butcher and deli counter. Offerings include dry-aged steaks and house-cured pastрами that mimic the menu, a way for diners to try out its food on a smaller budget.

1012 N. Western Ave. | boeufhaus.com

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