

# BAR BULLETIN

KING COUNTY BAR

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## Where We Go to Treat Ourselves on Special Occasions

When it comes to dining out, we like to avoid the tricks and focus on the treats. This month we review locations that we turn to for special occasions, or for when we just feel we need a treat. And as the weather turns from summer to fall, we turn increasingly to comfort food. As you will see below, when we want treats, we tend to go for carbs.

### A treat before or after the game

There are many dining options near CenturyLink Field and T-Mobile Park, but for either before or after a game we like to stop by the happy hour at **Matsu** (501 Stadium Place S.; 206-257-4259; <https://www.matsuseattle.com/>).

Some of you may recall this location as the Korean restaurant Kirin. Matsu has the same owners, but an updated menu. We find its happy hour to be a real treat. What do we need to say other than: a choice of either baby back ribs or garlic short ribs, accompanied by a fine tempura platter and crispy calamari.

If you want to stay vegetarian, the seaweed salad and the fried tofu in dashi broth were both quite flavorful, even for the meat eaters in the group. There is also a good selection of sushi and sashimi available on the happy hour menu with a number of sakes, beers and even craft cocktails included — we can vouch for the old fashioned and the Sapporo draft.

There is more to try on this varied and cost-effective happy hour menu, so we will be back. With a happy hour we like this much, we do not know when we will actually get into the restaurant itself.

### A hidden gem

If you are traveling north of Seattle, stop by **Francisco's Kitchen & Cantina** (1915 Hartford Dr., Lake Stevens; 425-512-8587; <https://www.franciscoskitchenandcantina.com/>) and treat yourself to a Cadillac margarita, bacon-wrapped scallops, and steak and lobster.

Although it may be a bit out of the way for some, Francisco's boasts a wonderful (and everyday) happy hour from 3 to 6 with drinks, appetizers and shared plates. Guacamole, ceviche tostaditos and the sliders are the real standouts from the happy hour menu, along with the aforementioned Cadillac margarita and a variety of mojitos.

When you are ready to enjoy something more substantial, we recommend pairing the ribeye steak with two lobster tails. This delicious combination is served with mashed potatoes or a twice-baked potato, roasted vegetables and crispy onions. To finish up the meal, be sure to enjoy Francisco's strawberry cheesecake or chocolate lava cake. You will not be disappointed!

### Craving Pasta

Treats do not have to be high-end and expensive; they can be situational. For two of us who recently came off diets, we both craved pasta and, more specifically, in both cases, pad thai. One of us was lucky enough to come off a diet while visiting Ashland, and so we review a new favorite, **Sesame** (21 Winburn Way, Ashland, Oregon; 541-482-0119; <https://www.sesameasiankitchen.com/>).

We enjoyed the sweet potato fries

and wok-prepared edamame before the meal. In addition to enjoying the spicy pad thai with duck confit, which is served with an egg (sunny side up), we got to try the spicy "Dragon Noodles," served in a green curry sauce. We would have both again, but the rave goes to the "Dragon Noodles." We had them with chicken, but they also come with a vegan/gluten-free option. The restaurant is very flexible for special dietary needs; even the Thai iced tea is served with coconut milk and is vegan.

Located across from Lithia Park and less than a block away from the Shakespeare Festival, Sesame is a new favorite for a treat either before or after one of the matinees.

### Comfort in a Bowl

**Pho Than Brothers** is a guilt-free (if you do not mind carbs) treat, both for the waistline and the wallet (Fremont; 626 N. 34th St.; 206-915-1928; <http://thanbrothers.com/#/>). Than Brothers serves comfort food in its truest sense: steaming hot, satisfying, rice noodle soup in a rich bone broth. We find ourselves regularly heading to Than Brothers on cozy rainy days and it never disappoints.

Do not expect great service or luxe surroundings, but that's not what you come for. The menu is simple. You select the size and protein (e.g., chicken, tofu, various beef cuts), and within minutes you are presented with a generously sized portion of some of the best pho we have ever had. It comes served with a side of bean sprouts, sliced jalapeño, lime and fresh basil. The pho here is so good that

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our out-of-town family insists on going every time they are in town.

If that were not a good enough plug, our five- and seven-year-old dining companions also slurped it down with glee. And, for a real treat, every bowl comes with a homemade cream puff.

### **Welcome to downtown Seattle**

Locally owned Chinese restaurant **Dough Zone Dumpling House** (815 Pine St.; 206-682-6666; <https://www.doughzonedumplinghouse.com/>), arrived on the Seattle lunchtime scene this summer at Ninth and Pine, taking the place of Sansei Seafood Restaurant and Sushi Bar.

The Seattle location serves the same

menu of specialties as its Bellevue predecessor, including xiao long bao (soup dumplings), and their cousins, crispy-yet-juicy, pan-fried pork buns, plus various noodle dishes, rotating varieties of congee, appetizers such as green-onion pancakes, and a few desserts such as red bean bao.

Our order included the pork buns, which had a half-fluffy, half-crispy dough, with a crispy crust. We dipped each piece in the accompanying black vinegar that helped bring out the cooked-in flavor of the pork. We also tried the vegetable and chicken pot stickers. They are delicious dumplings with juicy fillings of chicken and cabbage, paired with a soy and rice

vinegar dipping sauce. The bite-sized 10 pieces were slightly crispy and well cooked. Our quick, happy hour treat paired with a Sapporo, was tasty and light on the wallet. ■

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*Schwabe, Williamson & Wyatt is a multiservice, Northwest regional law firm with offices in Seattle, Vancouver, Portland, Bend, Eugene, Salem, Mountain View and Anchorage. For comments on this article or to share your favorite places to eat or drink with Schwabe, Williamson & Wyatt attorneys, contact Molly Henry at 206-405-1969 or [mhenry@schwabe.com](mailto:mhenry@schwabe.com). Molly represents maritime, appellate and financial services clients.*