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# Calendar

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Honey, it smells just like  
the bread Momma makes!

I need a life.

## ALL GROWN UP, NO PLACE TO GO?

Sure, staying home has its thrills—  
but there's nothing like a night on the town.

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**BOB THE CHEF'S** Fashion yields to practicality as Bruce Cole dines at this South End fixture with his wife, Lady June Hubbard-Cole. Try the Sunday jazz brunch. GLOBE STAFF PHOTOS/JOHN BLANDING

# BEYOND LANSDOWNE STREET

*Don't want to be the oldest in the crowd? These spots are for you*

Just because you've seen the last of your 20s doesn't mean the party's over. Sure, you'd rather get a root canal than hang out on Lansdowne Street with the Christina Aguilera jet set, and PDA stands for your beloved Palm VII and not some public groping with the object of your affection. But you're not out of touch. You've just grown up. ■ It's Friday. You've just called your lawyer friend or your Internet guru buddy on your cell, maybe your wife just phoned to say the sitter can come after all. It's time to hit the town and get your groove on. Here's a sampling of spots that are perfectly suited for someone of your, um, maturity.

## Fine dining

The first stop on your night out is a trip to one of the more refined adult eateries. What better place to start than a Cambridge institution?

### Casablanca

40 Brattle St., Cambridge. 617-876-0999

Massive murals depicting the classic movie starring Bogey and Bergman greet patrons at this stylish and spacious basement restaurant beneath the Brattle Theatre. With its low-hanging green lights, softly spinning fans, and Moroccan flour-

ishes like wicker chairs for two, the only missing elements are Sam on the piano and Peter Lorre's Guillermo Ugarte furtively selling fake letters of transit.

But unlike the customers at Rick's Cafe, you won't want to leave this restaurant to catch the next flight to freedom. Alongside families that cluster around the wooden tables or the couples who sidle up to the bar in back, you'll want to spend some time drinking in the atmosphere and exploring the seasonal menu. The restaurant's been around 30 years, undergone extensive restorations, and emerged as a culinary delight thanks to chef Ana Sortun's creations that walk the fine line between food and art.

**LAUREL GRILL & BAR** During the summer, most entrees are \$10.



By **MICHAEL BOURNE**



"We use a lot of ingredients from local farms and a lot of the menu is designed around what they're growing," Sortun says. Mli mlo, a Corsican appetizer, consists of fried mackerel and snapper accompanied by a salad of watermelon balls lightly pickled in vinegar with chopped onions, minced pepper, lime juice, and lots of cilantro. The melon is the right mix of sweet and tart; the fish is lightly fried and not oily; and the fiery, brilliant green jalapeño puree complements the melon in both taste and color. It goes well with Rioja, one of many wines on the menu.

The baked summer vegetable tart entree suits those seeking lighter fare. The chef starts with a pastry disk; adds artichoke puree; piles on zucchini, beets, potatoes, tomatoes, and onions; then laces it with fresh goat cheese and green olives.

The menu includes several tempting fish selections, as well as roasted chicken and dumplings. The pan-fried dumplings, made of bread stuffed with porcini mushrooms and cheese, rest in a flavorful sorrel sauce beside the chicken, cooked skin-on and seasoned with lemon. Pea tip greens add a splash of summer color.

## Laurel Grill & Bar

142 Berkeley St., Boston. 617-424-6711

According to Russ Berger, owner and chef, the inspiration behind Laurel was a peaceful country inn. The restaurant's previous incarnation, The Blue Wave, was simply too loud. So Berger, a former architecture student, Culinary Institute of America grad, and son of a Manhattan restaurateur, dropped the ceiling 5 feet, turned the music down, changed the name, and crafted a place where you can have a conversation at your table.

"When we opened up Laurel we wanted to offer higher quality food," he says. "People in the South End want a restaurant that they can go to two or three times a week." With their special "frugal nights" (\$10 entrees all summer; weeknights rest of year), it's a definite possibility.

Simplicity rules here. Appetizers – like the house-cured salmon pastrami, with tiny buckwheat pancakes and creme fraiche (best eaten together), and the fresh mozzarella and beefsteak tomato salad with meschun greens and a light balsamic dressing – look like they belong on the plate, not on the wall.

Standouts from the entree list include grilled lime-chile marinated salmon on buckwheat noodles covered with a snow pea, red pepper, and leek salad; the 14-ounce ribeye "cowboy steak" cooked on an iron skillet with sauteed oak mushroom hash in heavy cream and heavenly golden onion rings; and the crispy rotisserie duck with toasted corn cakes. A cocktail at the limestone bar, like the strong, brimming cosmopolitan, makes time flash by if you have to wait for a table.

The desserts by Berger's wife, Sherry (manager of Hazel Country Kitchen), are heaven. The wait staff is unusually friendly, and regulars can expect a warm greeting from Eryl, the Welsh bartender.

## Mistral

223 Columbus Ave., Boston. 617-867-9300

"There's no question that this city is somewhat divided among age groups and only occasionally do you see young and old crossover in the clubs and restaurants,"



**PEANUT MAN** You know Little Joe Cook will be playing the Cantab in Cambridge when his peanut-colored Caddy is out front. GLOBE FILE PHOTO / JUSTINE ELEMANT

says Seth Greenberg, part owner of Mistral and 20-year veteran of the club and dining scene. "An adult crowd frequents places like the South End, and the bars of Brighton attract the younger crowd. Of course, the older the crowd, the more money they tend to spend on entertainment."

And spend they will at Mistral, though Greenberg notes that "it's possible to get a pizza and a beer for under \$20." (Try the pizza filled with beef tenderloin and mashed potato.)

But if you really want to be pampered, reserve a table in the main room and don't look at the prices. (The same menu is offered in the front bistro, where reservations aren't necessary.) Chef Jamie Mammano pulls out all the stops on French and Mediterranean-inspired dishes like Dover sole Meuniere, a healthy portion of white, flaky fish seasoned with lemon sprinkled with capers and served over sauteed spinach. The roast rack of Colorado lamb with potato gratin and king oyster mushrooms from New Hampshire is a savory, plentiful helping of meat. The wine list is about as long as a novella, but the wait staff is happy to advise.

The decor – with high ceilings, dramatic columns, large windows, a slate floor, plant-like lights – is as memorable as the cuisine; for at Mistral image matters. And no where is that more apparent than the bar, where people come to see and be seen.

## Show time

Toss that Billy Blanks Tae-bo fitness tape; these spots will get you moving.

### Cantab Lounge

738 Mass. Ave., Cambridge. 617-354-2685

A Central Square fixture, the Cantab is best visited on Thursday through Sunday nights when Little Joe Cook, the "Peanut Man," takes the stage backed by the Thrillers. Cook got that handle from his

famed "Peanut" song, which he sings with a voice as brassy as a horn. You'll know that the godfather of peanut soul is in the house because his peanut-colored giant Caddy (tail fins, horns, and more) is parked outside. Little Joe certainly hasn't allowed his 77 years or the giant gold peanut pendant hanging round his neck slow him down, and he exudes more cool than a truckload of Shafts.

The Thrillers take you on a journey through rhythm and blues and funk classics by Otis Redding, Al Green, and other greats. It's impossible not to dance when Little Joe shouts, "Can I get all you hamburgers and cheeseburgers to give me a little of that soul power?" The crowd complies and soon the dance floor is packed.

In addition to the main level, with its long bar and Clydesdale Budweiser clock, the Cantab has a basement rec room with a bar, dance floor, and a soundtrack of soul. The room is emblazoned with red paint and the words "The Third Rail" – the Red Line's right next door.

On your way out, don't forget to buy some peanuts at the 25-cent machine.

### Club Passim

47 Palmer St., Cambridge. 617-492-5300

A veteran of the local music scene and recent Boston Music Award nominee, Megan Toohey particularly likes performing at this little club with the big reputation.

"When you go to a place like the Middle East or T.T. the Bears, you're going to have people who come in off the street for a beer, they're not really caring about what's going on or who's playing. But that's not the case with Passim," she says. "It's definitely a more mature crowd... when you play there people really listen."

People have been going to Passim to listen to folk, blues, rock, and poetry for decades now. The seminal club played a role in the rise of legends like Bob Dylan and Joan Baez and provided a proving

ground for newer artists like Ellis Paul, Jess Klein, and Faith Soloway.

"You know you have arrived when you can headline at Passim," says Toohey, "and it's great that musicians who bring their own CDs can sometimes make more from those sales than they make from the door."

There's not a bad seat in this small basement room. Plant yourself at one of the tiny tables, munch on stuffed grape leaves or falafel, and enjoy the show.

For schedule: [www.clubpassim.org](http://www.clubpassim.org)

### Johnny D's Uptown

17 Holland St., Somerville. 617-776-2004

Johnny D's is everything the Hard Rock Cafe in Boston is not: homey, funky, eclectic, historic – and it features hot live music seven nights a week. This Davis Square institution has been run by the DeLellis clan for over three decades.

Who hasn't performed here? The walls and tabletops are covered with the visages of varied artists, from the famous – Luther "Guitar Jr." Johnson – to the infamous – El Vez, the Hispanic Elvis "simulator" ("not Elvis, not an impersonator," his business card takes pains to point out).

The club started off as a spot for country music, but morphed into a scene where on any given night you can see and dance to blues, rock, jazz, or salsa bands.

By the entrance is an immense, oval bar with vinyl chairs on either side. It overlooks the main dining and dancing space, which has a small stage. Off to the right is a raised, dimly lit section ideal for chilling out.

Music changes daily: Sunday afternoon, for example, you can go to a blues jam, then dance to salsa that night. The food is eclectic, too: burgers, Cajun catfish (with red rooster sauce); Jamaican jerk chicken, even pasta.

For schedule: [www.johnnyds.com](http://www.johnnyds.com)





**JOHNNY D'S** Fans, including Dave Shaowski and Amy Lewis (on floor), applaud guitarist Marshall Crenshaw.

GLOBE STAFF PHOTO / JOHN BLANDING

## The Lizard lounge

1667 Mass. Ave., Cambridge. 617-547-0759

Most lizards can be found sunning themselves on warm rocks. But that rarest of breeds, the lounge lizard, prefers dimly lit and cozy environments like this basement spot below the Cambridge Common restaurant just north of Harvard Square.

The Lizard Lounge is about as close as most folks get to feeling like they're on the set of VH1's "Storytellers." That's the show where aging classic rockers go acoustic and entertain the crowd with tales about their ribald pasts. This place improves on that genre by decking the tiny room out with red-light lamps and oriental rugs and throwing in a bar to boot. It's sort of like seeing a live show in your cousin's basement. And instead of tolerating Ray Davies blathering on and on about the Kinks, you can sip a Blue Moon while tuning in to emerging artists like Jennifer Kimball and regularly performing local acts like Kevin So and Jim's Big Ego.

## Ryles Jazz Club

212 Hampshire St., Cambridge. 617-876-9330.

At Ryles in Inman Square, you can catch some of the best jazz talent in this area, and the occasional big-name performer, several nights a week.

Both the first floor, a simple room with wood tables, and the upstairs, with its large bar and slightly more ornate decor, have spaces for bands to jam. The bare-bones look tells you this is a club where serious musicians get down to business.

The schedule varies nightly: swing or salsa dancing, a lesbian dance night, an Amazon Slam for poets, and a jazz brunch on Sunday. See: [www.rylesjazz.com](http://www.rylesjazz.com)

## For a nightcap

Your evening has almost come to a close, but you still have enough energy to take in a lounge. The following offer

enough culinary treats to make them one-stop-spots for dining and drinking.

## West Street Grille

15 West St., Boston. 617-423-0300

On a bizarre evening that saw moon-like sun showers with tiny hail and rainbows breaking through the storm clouds, we ducked into this downtown haven. Crossing the threshold was like entering a new country where the natives are friendly and the skies always blue.

West Street creates this soothing environment with its yellow, teal, and black color scheme; an enormous second floor skylight; wood floors; exposed brick walls; high ceilings; and a long, inviting mahogany bar.

Plush red velvet couches and tables with assorted fluffy seat cushions practically beg you to unwind with one of bartender C.J.'s specialties like the kamalata, a tropical concoction of Absolut Mandarin, Malibu, Midori, Cointreau, orange, pineapple, and cranberry juices.

The tropical atmosphere is all the more amazing in contrast with its origins. Built in the 1800s, it has been everything from a bookstore (it's next to the renowned Brattle Book Shop), home to the Peabodys (whose daughters married Nathaniel Hawthorne and Horace Mann), and a publishing house for Ralph Waldo Emerson's periodical of the transcendentalist poets.

Now, the closest thing here to transcendental poetry may be the Ziggy Marley coming out of the speakers or the mixing of DJ Gabe, but it all works.

Summer weekends, the crowd thins out and it becomes quite intimate. If you choose to nosh, the menu is eclectic and dining tables are plentiful on the second level. Warm, fresh baguettes grace the white linen tables, and the starters, like calamari fritti or shrimp ravioli, could be meals on their own.

## B-Side Lounge

92 Hampshire St., Cambridge. 617-354-0766

Entering the B-Side is like falling through a rift in the space-time continuum and landing in the era of '50s cool. Above the darkened bar and intimate dining hall an art deco model airplane with electric fans for propellers seems ready to touch down.

On the walls, the aeronautical theme continues with an array of propeller-like lamps and landing lights. Cozy leather booths line the walls, and glass brick windows allow the slightest rays of evening sun to filter through. John Coltrane's "A Love Supreme" sets the score.

But before you start imagining you've been transported to the set of the latest Nick Cage action flick, a quick scan of the premises reveals that the B-Side is not your usual retro-chic watering hole. Atop the sizable bar in a special holder are hard-boiled eggs. Yes, eggs. And customers who line the wooden banks are wolfing them down along with drinks like the famed Mojito, a chilling blend of white rum, limes, and mint that will slake the most stubborn thirst (it's like tasting summer in a glass).

For such a tiny place, the B-Side offers up a wide selection of dishes, from sauteed mussels to grilled baby lamb chops.

## Les Zygomates

129 South St., Boston. 617-542-5108

If you're the type who stocks his cellar with vintage wine and can passionately debate the benefits of cork stoppers, then Les Zygomates can be your home away from home. But even the tippler who can't tell merlot from shiraz would feel at ease in this chic Leather District locale.

The wine list, updated frequently, ranges from a \$13 bottle of sake to an \$872 magnum of 1996 Robert Craig Cabernet Sauvignon. A number of other wines are available by the glass or by the "taste" to educate your palate.

And the ambience? Well, if it's good enough for Kevin Spacey, then it's good enough for us. Last week, the Oscar-winner was seen relaxing with pals in the large jazz bar section of the restaurant. As he ate and drank and generally acted like, well, Kevin Spacey, a satin-voice singer and her small combo sweated and bounced their way through their set. How cool is the crowd? The whole time he was there, no one seemed the least bit surprised.

They were probably too busy enjoying their wines, music, and food. You can stick with appetizers like the three cheeses with fruits and nuts plate of morbiere, rebellchon, and tellegio (weren't they the Three Musketeers?), or enjoy an entree like pan-seared golden trout and smoked halibut in a savory sauce of raisins, white wine, and fennel, accompanied by grilled chanterelle mushrooms and a white anchovy radish sprout salad. Or skip the preliminaries and go for dessert: maybe raspberry chocolate truffles and lemon mascarpone glace.

For at least one night, the wine, the old French posters, and the food will convince you that you're in the City of Light and not a block from the Big Dig.

## Biba

272 Boylston St., Boston. 617-426-7878

Biba was named after chef Lydia Shire's favorite London store from the swinging '60s. And like its namesake, the bar maintains a distinctly European charm and feel. When the warm summer breezes waft in from the Public Garden across Boylston Street, it's hard not to feel like you're in Paris, London, or Prague.

Bar tender Marcello is a master mixologist and takes pride in his "Lydia's Hot Tub," a combination of vodka, Chambord, pineapple juice, sour mix, and champagne. A native of Brazil, he fits right in with the vaguely South American touches like the tiled floor and the detailed murals.

Low lights in funky fixtures illuminate the faces of customers occupied with keeping their Cohibas well lit. For advanced lounging, Biba has plush chairs and a large sofa in the back that offer comfortable vantage points from which to people watch.

## Bob the Chef's Restaurant and Jazz Cafe

604 Columbus Ave., Boston. 617-536-6204

There's nothing quite like Sunday brunch to remedy any ill effects of the previous night's revelry. Better still: a place with music. Bob the Chef's is that rare restaurant that manages to deliver both style and substance.

The restaurant has the requisite scrambled eggs, bacon, ham and home fries, but the grits, collard greens, green beans, yams, and red beans and rice are what earn it the title "Home of the Soul Food." Ribs, fried chicken, and macaroni and cheese are standout items that will make you feel like you're back in the South, even if it's just the South End.

And then there's the band - installed in the back of the long room lined with photos of jazz legends and local talent. As the players trade off licks, you may find yourself tapping your fork like Gene Krupa.

The whole experience is best wrapped up with a slice of their homemade apple pie with whipped cream.

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