ANVIL BAR & REFUGE
1424 Westheimer Houston 77006 713.523.1622

Recently opened on lower Westheimer, The Anvil specializes in hand-crafted drinks from old and new recipes, lovingly created by team of bartenders who work on a long, long bar, designed for exhibition mixing as well as social mixing. Specializing in made from scratch cocktails from fresh juices, herbs, and sometimes spirits heretofore unavailable in Houston, the Anvil cultivates the gourmet, not the gourmand...in other words, as one customer punned: "I don't go there to get hammered." Sample featured cocktails are Gin Gin Mule, gin, lime, house ginger beer, and mint; The Last Word, gin, green Chartreuse, Maraschino, lime; Airmail, rum, honey, lime, Champagne; and Old Pal, rye, French Vermouth, and Campari. Over 29 gins and genevers grace the menu, including Desert Juniper, Monopolowa, Old Raj, and Whitley Neill; Over 26 old and very old Cognacs, Piscos, Grappas, Absinthes, & Pastis, including Pierre Ferrand Ambre, Remy Martin XO, Eau de Vie de Poires, and Laird's straight bonded applejack; Over 25 rums, including Pusser's, Ron Mocambo 20 yrs, Santa Teresa 1796, and Wray & Nephew Overproof; Over 25 American whiskeys, including Elmer T. Lee, Michter's 10 Yr, Old Rip Van Winkle, and Pappy Van Winkle 23 Yr; Ryes; Irish whiskeys; Canadian whiskeys; Scotch whiskeys; Liqueurs & cordials, including Strega, Toschi Nocello, Luxardo Sambuca, Krogstad Aquavit, Chambord, and Benedictine; and beers and ales, specializing heavily in Trappist ones from Belgium, India, and America. The copious menu is rounded out by selections of aperitifs, wines-sparkling and still, digestifs, and light food and snack selections.

GARSON
2926 Hillcroft (Just south of Westheimer) Houston 77057 713.781.0400

With Iran so much in the news lately, Hankamer wanted to review a wonderful Persian restaurant which has served Houstonians delicious dishes from this historic and culturally distinguished region for many years. Appetizers include Marinated and charbroiled quail; Shrimp or scallop kabob, marinated and charbroiled; and Pino shrimp, served with artichoke hearts, mushrooms, fresh tomatoes, crispy polenta, and spicy butter sauce. Vegetarian appetizers include Hummus, mashed chick peas, seasoned with sesame seed oil, lemon juice, and fresh garlic; and Eggplant, pureed and lightly seasoned with mint & Persian spices. Lamb entrees feature Lamb shank cooked in tomato sauce and Persian spices, Lamb shish kabobs, and Lamb chops. Persian stews are comprised of Tomato stew, Persian style, with small chunks of beef, yellow split peas, and topped with fried potatoes; Vegetable stew, fresh chopped vegetables including spinach, leeks, parsley, green onions, cilantro, chunks of beef, kidney beans, and dried limes. Seafood dishes guaranteed to stimulate the palate are Red snapper Pepe, blackened and topped with shrimp, artichokes, mushrooms, and lemon butter sauce, served with rice and vegetables; and Fish kabob, charbroiled pieces of marinated fresh red snapper served with grilled vegetables and Persian dill rice. Various beef, chicken, and pasta dishes round out this menu, which includes various "tasting combinations" for those who want to sample a variety of flavors in one meal.

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Note: By way of qualifications for reviewing restaurants, Hankamer has owned and operated numerous restaurants, coffee shops, hotels, discotheques and banquet halls over the last forty years; he has travelled to over 70 countries and has studied and lived in Europe for over three years; he was co-owner of a home delivery wine of the month club and imported his own wine labels for years. Copyright 2009 Ray Hankamer, Hankamer Commercial/Hankamer & Associates.

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