

RESTAURANT UPDATE

RED ROOM

2736 Virginia St (at Westheimer) Houston 77098 713.520.5666

Ever finish a lovely dinner with your one and only, and, still floating on a nice buzz, ask “since it is too early to go home and since we do have a baby sitter, where can we go to finish off a wonderful evening with a nice nightcap and perhaps a little dancing?” Well folks, Hankamer’s got you covered in this issue of Restaurant Update. Our first recommendation is the hot new venue, the Red Room. Stunningly decorated by owner Beau Theriot – think The Brownstone, Café Adobe, and The Oasis on Lake Travis- the Red Room reminds us of Castel in Paris, a sedate club with disco dancing, which has survived at least thirty years of trendy competition. Expect a highly fashionable ambiance, with a choice of patio or upstairs inside seating (yes, there is an elevator), and a high energy disk jockey who creates the electricity on the weekend. And did we mention the well-dressed Beautiful People? A variety of martinis headlines the drinks menu, and just about every other flavor of adult bev is available. Intimate, warm, with striking décor items and art, the Red Room is the ideal way to begin, or to end, an evening. Reservations are recommended weekends, or else you may well be politely turned away by the British chap who mans the velvet ropes curbside. Open Tues-Sat.

THE GALLANT KNIGHT

2511 Bissonnet Street Houston 77005 713.815.6474

Once upon a time there was a Gallant Knight (night club) which resided on Holcomb Boulevard in a little former residence with low ceilings. It was jammed with gyrating dancers, and swaying musicians, sometimes fifteen or more standing in a couple of parallel lines, blowing on their horns or pounding out soulful sounds on their vocal pipes. Well, the Gallant Knight has ridden back into town, and has re-created the atmosphere of yore in the West University Village neighborhood. Same ambiance. Same packed dance floor on weekends. Same black and white musicians belting out soul and rhythm and blues from the ‘70’s and ‘80’s. (Remember Soul Man, and Don’t It Make You Want to Shout!?) You might even see a college boy – or your middle aged next door neighbor- doing the alligator on the dance floor while his significant other is standing eyeball to eyeball with the band, trying to “sweat it in” or otherwise energize it (as if this band ever needs energizing). Local musicians often “stand in” with the rotating bands, and the atmosphere is one of improvisation and excitement, on the bandstand as well as on the dance floor. There is a modest cover charge, an outside deck, some food service, but the real draw here folks is the dancing and the music. Open Mon-Sat.

FACTOID: Ever wonder where the word "restaurant" came from? During the French Revolution in the late 1700's (with the French following the spirit of their allies the American colonists, who had just gone independent from their king), many of the Parisian nobility who were not executed fled the country. This put many private cooks/chefs out of work. Until this time, the common people who were mostly poor, dined at home under humble circumstances. The out of work chefs, desperate to earn a living, began cooking simple fare in Paris, and one put a sign in his street level window: Potage Restaurant, which in French means "hearty soup." The word "hearty" caught on with the peasant and working and tradesman class, and soon many chefs began advertising hearty fare. The word "Restaurant" stuck, even though in French it is a adjective. Now of course "restaurant" has become a noun around the world, used to describe a place where one can have one's meal prepared by a professional cook.

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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.