

RESTAURANT UPDATE

RDG / BAR ANNIE

1800 Post Oak Blvd (BLVD PLACE) 77056 713.840.1111

The reinvention of Cafe Annie/Bar Annie as the anchor tenant in the first phase of BLVD PLACE has been a stunning architectural and business success, with huge crowds jamming the premises since opening day. We are guessing three to four times the area of the former restaurant has been newly created, trending away from the more austere and buttoned down old premises to an airier, more casual layout which features a larger seating area devoted to casual (read less expensive!) dining. A large outside balcony with seating overhangs the glamorous entrance, and provides views of the action on THE boulevard-Houston's Park Avenue: Post Oak. Bar Annie special drinks include Lemon Melon Martini, Mojito fresca w/ Barcardi limone and fresh mint, Mojito anejo, El dorado 21 rum, mint, and lime, and Sangria Paco's Espana deluxe. On the appetizer/hors d'oeuvre menu are Black bean dip w/ Spanish chorizo, Gulf crab beignets w/ crab spice sauce, Shrimp at balls w/ gulf coast cocktail sauce, Yellowtail sashimi skewers w/ red chile & spicy ginger dressing, and Bacon wrapped quail w/ buttermilk dressing. Also Chilled mussel cups w/ cilantro broth, Escargot w/ caramelized garlic & parsley butter, and Pork carnitas on skewers w/ salsa verde. Main dining room dinner first and second courses include Chopped gulf shrimp & potato salad, Sea scallop roasted in corn husk w/ poached egg & bacon grits, Wild mushroom soup w/ smoked duck & croutons, Mediterranean sea bass w/ Maine lobster crepe & asparagus salad, Wood grilled salmon w/ salsa verde and bacon cracklings, Roasted Guinea hen w/ sweet potatoes & cocoa bean sauce, and Wood grilled Colorado lamb chops w/ spicy tomato jelly and pan roasted white hominy. For dessert why not try Fresh berries w/ creme fraiche, Rocky road brownies w/ almonds, or Mocha pudding w/ caramel coffee crunch & coffee Anglaise?

VINOTECA POSCOL

1609 Westheimer Houston 77006 713.529.2797

Opened recently in the former Cafe Montrose location opposite Hugo's in Lower Westheimer, Vinoteca Poscol is Chef Marco Wiles' third venture in the immediate area. Think: Italian tapas, or small plates offering a wide variety of provincial Italian dishes...nearly sixty of them, divided into eleven sections including cheeses, panini, salumi, verdura, insalata, risotto, al forno, bruschette, tramezzini, fritto, and pesce. (Good chance to practice your menu Italian!!) Very friendly wait staff will translate these categories and the individual dishes, and will suggest wine pairings and will also counsel as to portion sizes, so that you will not over-order your appetite: a common mistake with SO many delightful choices the minute you take your table. Prices range in the \$8-\$11 for a small plate of food and many wines are reasonably priced also. Some of the "tapas" selections in no certain order are Braised baby octopus w/ light brown sauce & cannellini beans w/ carrot chunks; Creamy zucchini risotto w/ fried chicken livers on top, Plates of cured Italian meats, Fried polenta and salami cubes, Beet squares roasted with hazelnuts and goat chees, served in parchment paper bag, Pot roast panini w/ salsa verde & horseradish, Home-made pickles, Thin cut veal tongue w/ pickled red pepper slices, and Fried spaghetti w/ sweet-sour tomato relish. Poscol and RDG's chefs represent the cutting edge in menu creativity, and always delight their loyal diners.

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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.