

## RESTAURANT UPDATE

### Howl at the Moon

612 Hadley (near Spec's Warehouse) Houston 77002 - 713.658.9700

**Music/Entertainment**-Howl at the Moon has taken the concept of dueling pianos to the next step, by adding two or three other musicians, two huge stage mirrors which double as message boards for patrons sending up sometimes naughty notes for posting (attached to folding money), and a standard of interactive bawdiness which makes it the perfect place for bachelorette parties, for singles to mingle, or for couples to drop by to enjoy the music and the overall scene. Most of the musicians are very versatile, rotating around the stage in no special sequence. On a recent night Hankamer marveled at a shapely young blonde first banging out ballads on the piano, then slipping onto the drum set to lay the rhythm for her mates, then bleating out plaintive notes on a saxophone. Her fellow musicians were doing the same, all the while matching every request from the audience with the right song, and the right lyrics, from Hank, Jr., to Elton John, to Neil Diamond.

**The Audience**-Once getting passed the gaggle of stretch limos at curbside and navigating the velvet ropes to gain entry, we were engulfed by an ocean of screaming bachelorette girls, complete with tipsy brides- and wedding attendants-to-be. All were armed with wands, inflatable float devices, chew sticks, pacifiers, and even faux wedding veils, all liberally festooned with the male digit and other symbols of the Wedding Night. Shouting out their requests to the stage, and then joining the performers on-stage, these celebrating bachelorettes pantomimed out – according to the throaty instructions of the pianists – many rituals of the much awaited Wedding Night, to the hilarity of the crowd. The bar and waitstaff occasionally climbed up onto the bar or stage to do a dance routine or conga line, like those performed at that bygone night club chain, Studebakers.

**The Food** - Not. Available from nearby pizza or Chinese joints, menus at the door.

### Tiny Boxwoods Cafe & Espresso Bar

3614 W. Alabama - Houston 77027 - 713.622.4224

Sitting under the broad and graceful Santa Barbara umbrellas at the edge of an exquisitely groomed courtyard, delicately landscaped, and sipping sangria or cool lemonade, one can easily imagine not being in Houston, but in....well...Santa Barbara. The cafe sprang from a small underutilized plot which is part of the elegant Thompson + Hanson Nursery, and has since become a word-of-mouth and iconic getaway, just at the edge of River Oaks. To describe the items on the ever-changing menu, the adjective “artisan” comes to mind. For breakfast, expect Muffins, fresh-baked with seasonal fruit and streusel topping, served warm with whipped honey butter; Breakfast tacos, chorizo/egg/cheese; egg/cheese/avocado; or black bean/cheese depending on availability-served with tomatillo sauce; or Granola and fresh fruit. Smoothies are made with fresh fruit and Texas Guajillo honey and blended with crushed ice. For lunch, in addition to the changing “blackboard menu,” soups and salads include La Provencal, mixed greens, Champagne vinaigrette, goat cheese toast; and Homemade seasonal soup du jour. Sandwiches on the menu include Grilled cheese and pesto, slices of aged Gouda with a light spread of fresh basil pesto, grilled between crisp Panotta bread, served with roasted tomato dipping sauce; The Frenchman, thinly sliced Prosciutto layered between diced tomatoes, goat cheese, and basil pesto served hot on sourdough bread; and Tiny’s buffalo burger, freshly ground, lean buffalo steak from Pete’s Fine Meats, cooked medium with blue cheese crumbles, pesto aioli, pickles, lettuce, tomato on a whole wheat bun. From the pizza oven come Leek and Prosciutto, caramelized leeks, Feta cheese, Prosciutto, and balsamic glaze; and Chicken Portobello mushroom pizza, Fontina cheese, sundried tomato pesto. To wash it all down: coffees, fruit juices, and beer and wine. Parking on-site and just down the street.

**Trips:** Planning your next active vacation? <http://hankamer.com/pdf/alps-travelogue.pdf>

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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. The opinions expressed in Hankamer Commercial RESTAURANT UPDATE are the opinions of Hankamer only and these opinions may not be shared by RED News or any other advertising medium in which UPDATE appears. Copyright 2007 Ray Hankamer, Hankamer Commercial/Hankamer & Associates.*