

141
GREAT FINDS

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THE

BEET SET

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Reel Meal

» It shows movies and serves popcorn. But there ends any comparison between the typical cineplex and the six-screen **Hollywood Blvd.** (1001 W. 75th St., Woodridge; 630-427-1880). Equal parts diner and movie theatre, the Hollywood screens new movies while offering a full menu, which includes chicken fingers, burgers, and martinis. Waiters take orders, diners sit in cozy, leather-covered swivel seats, and food and drinks flow until the last 20 minutes of the movie. Settling in for a taxing three-hour epic? Order the steak sandwich, a half-pounder that will stick to your ribs until Troy finally falls.



BEST WAITER

Tip Top

Shane Hendrix has been waiting tables for 20 years, so he has paid his dues. Repeatedly. "I used to be a singing waiter in Chattanooga, and I had to sing 'Chattanooga Choo Choo' three or four times each shift," he laments. "Maestro Limpio" (which translates to "Mr. Clean"), as he has been dubbed by a co-worker for his striking resemblance to the bald and muscular icon, might not sing at **Jin Ju** (5203 N. Clark St.; 773-334-6377), but he does pretty much everything else. He is prompt, funny, and informative, demystifying Korean food for his patrons—and he does an uncanny Katharine Hepburn impersonation. "As a frustrated actor," he says, "this is my only venue."



MY BESTS

PAUL KAHAN, the 41-year-old chef at **Blackbird** (619 W. Randolph St.) and co-owner of the neighboring **Avec** (named one of the city's best new restaurants in the May 2004 issue of *Chicago*), won the coveted James Beard Award for best chef of the Midwest in 2004.

» **BEST DINING VIEW:** In the heart of Lincoln Park, **North Pond** (2610 N. Cannon Dr.; 773-477-5845) looks out on luscious greenery and city scenery. "It's just beautiful—a real escape."

» **BEST DINING AMBIANCE:** Kahan considers **Tru** (676 N. St. Clair St.; 312-202-0001), with its impressive collection of pop art, its high ceilings, and its islandlike tables, the ideal dining setting. "The room is the most exquisite I have ever seen. Everything is perfect."

» **BEST FARMERS' MARKET:** Kahan shops at **Green City Market** (1750 N. Clark St.; 847-835-2240) because its produce is guaranteed fresh, and its vendors go through a heavy screening for quality control. "I'm an ingredients guy. I am most inspired by great seasonal products."

» **BEST ORIENTAL GROCERY:** **Viet Hoa Plaza** (1051 W. Argyle St.; 773-334-1028) bustles with foodies in search of all things exotic. "It's mayhem inside—a little creepy, but in a good way. There's stuff there I didn't even know existed."

» **BEST BUTCHER:** A tie between two Old World stalwarts. Kahan admires the service at **Paulina Market** (3501 N. Lincoln Ave.; 773-248-6272) and the choice sausages at **Joe's Market** (4452 N. Western Ave.; 773-478-5443).

» **BEST WINE SHOP:** Kahan applauds the family-owned **House of Glunz** (1206 N. Wells St.; 312-642-3000) for its selection of quality global wines. "The guy who runs the store likes to help customers find the right wine at the right price."

» **BEST KITCHEN SUPPLIES:** At **Northwestern Cutlery & Supply** (810 W. Lake St.; 312-421-3666), home cooks browse beside restaurant chefs. "The place boasts the largest selection of knives in the area, as well as products from peelers to pans."

» **BEST RARE LPS:** An avid record collector, Kahan frequents **Dusty Groove America** (above; 1120 N. Ashland Ave.; 773-342-5800) for its "topnotch selection of rare jazz, soul, and R&B records in very good condition. I could easily spend \$500 every time I go there."

—Dorothea Hunter