

More

SEARCH



THE MAGAZINE FROM THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

INSIDE WSJ. Magazine



1 of 12 Great Vintage

[Jean Pigozzi: Into Africa](#)



2 of 12 The Partnership

[Double Vision](#)



3 of 12 Icon

[Play On](#)



4 of 12 Editor's Letter

[Summer Online Issue](#)



5 of 12 The Specialist

[Caviar Dreams](#)



6 of 12 The Phenomenon

[Tea Totaller](#)



7 of 12 Fashion

[Summer Essentials](#)



8 of 12 How Much Is It Worth?

[Old Masters](#)



9 of 12 The Face

[Bell & Ross' Aviation Watch](#)



10 of 12 A Very Good Year

[1981](#)



11 of 12 Chemical Attraction

[Easy on the Eyes](#)



12 of 12 The Nose

[Novelist Zoë Heller](#)

[prev next](#)

- [Travel](#)
- [July 30, 2009](#)

Footprint: Chicago

Where to stay, where to eat and what to do in Chicago

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Ben van Berkel and UNStudio's pavilion

It's been the subject of much fanfare and even more delays over the past few months, but Zaha Hadid's much-anticipated pavilion (photo, top left) nestled in Chicago's Millennium Park is finally set to open on August 4th. Alongside Ben van Berkel and UNStudio's creation (which opened nearly on time, ahem), the pavilion was created to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the 1909 Plan for Chicago—at the time a huge feat in city planning by its architect Daniel Burnham. Hadid's digitally-designed pavilion features fabric stretched across aluminum ribs that give it an eerie solar-looking space ship effect. A video installation inside the structure features a narrative video by [Thomas Gray](#), the director of a London-based agency that specializes in moving images and projection design, that's meant to show the transformation of the Windy City and the hopes and plans of Chicagoans for their future. At night, the video will be blasted on the fabric walls to create an all-encompassing effect.

We asked Chicago food writer, Emily Nunn, who blogs at the very entertaining, M.F.K. Fisher inspired, [Cook the Wolf](#), to show us around town:

Chicago is "a city of neighborhoods," according to people who live here. Translated, that means you really travel if you plan on having breakfast at [Mindy's Hot Chocolate](#) followed by shopping in the hipster Wicker Park area in the morning, sampling great Mexican food in Pilsen or soul food on the South Side at lunch, then traveling back to Bucktown to catch a drink at the city's coolest cocktail lounge, the [Violet Hour](#).



Above, the new Renzo Piano-designed Modern Wing at the Art Institute.

But for the art and architecture fan in town to see the new additions to [Millennium Park](#), fitting in a visit to Renzo Piano's dazzling new [Modern Wing](#) at the Art Institute of Chicago should guide all other decisions. And luckily, the location makes it easy; there are plenty of walking-distance or short-cab-trip diversions nearby.

[The Wit](#), a brand new boutique hotel in the gritty old-school Loop, is the spot young architects and designers were buzzing about it long before they knew it would have absolutely the best [roof lounge](#) in town, thanks in part to its stunning angle on the Chicago River and the close-up one-stop visual tour of landmark architecture it offers. From the Wit, it's a breeze to check out Millennium Park, where, in addition to the new pavilions, Frank Gehry's spectacular bandshell, Anish Kapoor's 110-ton stainless steel kidney bean ("Cloud Gate"), Jaume Plensa's populist-video-wading pool Crown Fountain and the Lurie Garden are plunked down with the casual grandeur of pearls on a string.

Right next door is the Art Institute of Chicago's new Modern Wing; act like the Obamas, and dine on a Midwestern-farmed lunch at the museum's indoor/outdoor restaurant [Terzo Piano](#), the locally sourced sleekly designed café headed by Chef Tony Mantuano—whose Spiaggia is Barry and Michelle's fave (reservations are required). The crescenza cheese raviolotto with Nichols Farm green beans, new potatoes and pesto is lovely.

If you want more art after taking in the Modern Wing's headlining Cy Twombly exhibit, modern treasures, and photography, obviously you have the rest of the original Art Institute to peruse, and it's grand. But for architecture: honestly—even if it seems too touristy for your taste—the most spectacular mode of landmark architectural absorption available is the Chicago Architecture Foundation's summer-only 90 minute [river tour](#)



Afterwards head up to the Gold Coast and ring the buzzer at Michelle Obama's once-secret high fashion source, [Ikram](#), which is sort of like visiting an art gallery actually, and is curated with the same ethos by proprietor Ikram Goldman, whose selections include not just Gaultier, Alaia, Watanabe, and Proenza Schouler, but also vintage clothing and jewelry. Just peeping through the Rush street windows elevates your view of the fashion's creative possibilities. Stay the northern path on Rush Street for a few blocks to shop at the brand new and expanded Chicago home of [Barneys](#) on Oak Street, a short stretch that also happens to be Ground Zero for upscale Chicago shoppers. After a glass of champagne at Fred's (inside Barneys, of course), you've got Prada, Jimmy Choo, Kate Spade, Jil Sander, and a lot of other fashion friends to visit.



The main room at the Publican; photo courtesy of Bob Briskey

For dinner, forget haute cuisine for a night and join the serious Chicago-style foodies at [The Publican](#). It's the beer-centric, pristinely prepared pork and seafood extravaganza from James Beard winning chef Paul Kahan, whose [Blackbird](#) and [Avec](#) have long been at the forefront of locally farmed haute cooking in Chicago. A crazy, robust array of oysters, aged hams, and other organic, locally sourced haute meats from Dyersville, Iowa (pork rinds, beef heart, potted rilletes, ham in hay)—not to mention the interesting artisanal menu of Dutch, German, Belgian and local beers—will remind you of why Carl Sandberg ever thought to call Chicago "The City of Big Shoulders."

Emily Nunn is a freelance food writer who lives in Chicago. She also blogs at [cookwolf.blogspot.com](#)

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Ikram; photo courtesy of Ikram [Printer Friendly](#)

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