



## Cosmic Abundances as Records of Stellar Evolution and Nucleosynthesis

*Thursday, June 17-Saturday, June 19, 2004*

*Downtown Austin offers a variety of restaurants, entertainment, and sights. Sixth Street, east of Congress Avenue, boasts Austin's live music scene; Fourth Street, west of Congress, makes up Austin's warehouse district — full of pubs and other night spots. South of the River, on Congress Avenue, is Austin's SoCo District, which is home to a slew of funky boutiques, restaurants, and coffee houses. The Austin Farmer's Market, which takes place in Republic Square Park every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., boasts locally grown produce and goods and is a great place to take in local life on a Saturday morning. The following restaurants are easily accessible by foot or by riding The Dillo (a free "trolley" bus that runs throughout downtown Austin on a regular, frequent schedule).*

### DOWNTOWN EATERIES

#### **BITTER END**, 311 Colorado St. (512/478-2337)

A slightly industrial interior sets the scene for the see-and-be-seen crowd at this sleek brewpub. Duck liver pâté, wood-fired pizzas, and an ever-updated Italian-tinged menu are all enhanced by outstanding home-brewed ales. The service is fast and friendly, and there's a patio for outdoor dining. AE, D, DC, MC, V. (\$\$)

#### **CHEZ NOUS**, 510 Neches (512/473-2413)

Tired of hamburgers and sandwiches, we hit this downtown French bistro for lunch. A bowl of savory potato-and-leek soup and a special of melt-in-your-mouth trout meunière were just what we needed to recharge our batteries. Lace curtains spiff up the casual decor. Beer & wine. Lunch Tue-Fri 11:45-2. Dinner Sun & Tue-Sat 6-10:30. Closed Mon. Moderate to expensive. AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V. (\$\$\$)

#### **GUERO'S TACO BAR**, 1412 S Congress Ave. (512/447-7688)

Bustling, South Austin Mexican joint wins presidential patronage. Recommended are the queso flameado (broiled Jack cheese served with tortillas) and the chicken especial (with tomatoes, bell peppers, onions and garlic). When he's in town, Bill Clinton orders the El Presidente: one chicken breast taco, one beef taco, a tamale and guacamole. High praise indeed, since Bill's no slouch in the eating department. (\$)

#### **HUT'S HAMBURGERS**, 807 West Sixth Street (512/472-0693)

A legendary Austin Hamburger joint, voted best burgers in town 1987-1996, Hut's also has award winning french fries, onion rings, blue plate dinners and 2 for 1 specials. (\$)

#### **IRON WORKS BARBECUE**, 100 Red River St. (512/478-4855)

From its creekside perch beside the Austin Convention Center, this spot caters to a varied clientele of name-tagged conference attendees, construction workers, and thoroughly starched office workers. Dependable house specialties include tender, pepper-crusted smoked pork loin and Flintstones-size beef ribs. Though the converted sheet metal building isn't air-conditioned, the dining areas (open-air rooms and porches lined with picnic tables) enjoy the highest ceiling fan-to-table ratio in the state. It's a great place to escape for Texas barbecue -- by the plate or by the pound -- without ever leaving Downtown. AE, D, DC, MC, V. Closed Sun. (\$)

#### **LA TRAVIATA**, 314 Congress Ave. (512/479-8131)

Marion Gillcrust has conquered the basics. She set out to serve classic Italian cuisine with an occasional subtle twist and she succeeded admirably. In fact, the fundamentals don't get much better than this. The crisp polenta was served with a Gorgonzola cream sauce. The spaghetti Bolognese was a veal-beef-pork ragu cooked in chicken stock with vegetables and a touch of cream at the end. And the flavorful duck confit was served over a potato-fennel gratin with a Madeira-fig sauce. (\$\$)

#### **LAS MANITAS AVENUE CAFÉ**, 211 Congress Ave. (512/472-9357)

From the outside, you could mistake this for a 1930s-style lunch counter throwback -- and a crowded one at that, thanks to its up-to-date Mexican menu. Business types enjoy lunch specials, such as heavenly ancho- and mushroom-stuffed chile relleno or heady molé enchiladas. Weekend mornings bring out a distinctly less organized crowd of weary musicians and club hoppers looking for late-morning migas (eggs scrambled with crisp tortilla chips and fresh salsa) or huevos con (vegetarian) chorizo. AE, D, DC, MC, V. No dinner. (\$)

## DOWNTOWN RESTAURANTS, *continued*

### **LOUIE'S 106**, 106 E. 6th St. (512/476-1997)

Crisp white tablecloths and polished surroundings make the dressy best of this split-level spot. The Mediterranean-influenced menu features traditional Spanish tapas such as prosciutto-wrapped cantaloupe chunks, grilled sardines on bruschetta, and gazpacho Andaluz topped with lumps of rich crabmeat. The entrée list shows a wider cultural influence, in dishes like seafood risotto and char-grilled jumbo shrimp in a crisp cocoon of pancetta. The stylish bar is an attractive place to indulge in the Iberian tradition of the late afternoon tapas break. AE, D, DC, MC, V. No lunch weekends. (\$\$)

### **MARAKESH CAFE AND GRILL**, 906 Congress Ave. (512/476-7735)

Middle Eastern/Mediterranean fare, modestly priced, quickly and tastefully prepared, served in generous portions in a relaxed setting. (\$)

### **McCORMICK & SCHMIDT'S**, Frost Bank Tower, 401 Congress Ave. (512/236-9600)

Known for its fresh seafood and daily changing menus, this national chain recently opened an outpost in downtown's newest skyscraper. The upscale decor suited the hordes of business executives lunching on the likes of blue crab from Newport, Oregon, and red snapper from Seadrift, Texas. The mahimahi (from Hilo, Hawaii) was fantastic—the delicate, moist fish came perched on a bed of Asian slaw (pineapple!). But our bland bowl of gumbo might as well have come from a mix, and the black mussels were gritty. Bar. Open Sun 4-11, Mon-Thur 11-11, Fri 11-midnight, Sat 4-midnight. AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V. (\$\$)

### **SABA BLUE WATER CAFE**, 208D W 4th St. (512/478-7222)

Saba Blue Water is decidedly urban, but draws inspiration from Pacific Rim, Caribbean and Mexican coastal cuisine. The masa fried oyster tostadas show all the hallmarks of a great dish: color, texture, taste and presentation. Plantain-crust ed shrimp consist of butterfli ed shrimp dusted in ground plantain chips and then deep-fried, giving the shrimp a crispy-sweet coating. Tres leches starts with a Mexican sponge cake soaked in caramelized milk and cajeta, sponging up the sweet, creamy liquids and creating its own special gestalt inside the mouth. (\$\$)

### **SHADY GROVE**, 1624 Barton Springs Rd. (512/474-9991)

On any clear Austin day, expect the stone patio here to be packed with folks fighting the heat with schooner-sized frozen margaritas. Visitors to Barton Springs pool frequent this state park-theme establishment for its funky aesthetic, high profile music events, and huge servings of simple fare. Burgers and hot dogs are big movers here, as are the vegetarian-friendly “hippie sandwiches” (roasted eggplant and grilled vegetables) and impossibly large salads. On summer evenings, the patio becomes an ersatz drive-in showing vintage movies on an outdoor theater screen. Reservations not accepted. AE, D, DC, MC, V. (\$)

### **SHORELINE GRILL**, 98 San Jacinto Blvd. (512/477-3300)

Just steps from the Four Seasons hotel, this restaurant takes full advantage of its lakeside location with one of Austin's most sought-after and intimate terraces. Chef Dan Haverty presents nightly seafood variations that may include grilled tuna with corn noodles and cranberry serrano sauce or salmon glazed with cinnamon and served over red chile polenta. Even if you're seated inside, floor-to-ceiling windows give the dining rooms an airy feel and a commanding view of Town Lake. AE, D, DC, MC, V. No lunch weekends. (\$\$\$)

### **THREADGILL'S**, 301 W. Riverside Dr. (512/472-9304)

Southern food and friendly service make Threadgill's a local legend, having drawn the likes of Janis Joplin to sample its fare. Go for the massive chicken-fried steak; then enjoy some homemade cobbler and live music. D, MC, V. (\$)

### **UCHI**, 801 S. Lamar Blvd. (512/916-4808)

You've heard the term “extreme sports”? Uchi is “extreme sushi.” Respectful of traditional sushi and sashimi methods and makings, but not limited by them, this standout sushi bar starts with splashing-fresh ingredients. After that, anything goes, including touches of the South or south-of-the-border: yellowtail with ponzu sauce and sliced chiles, tempura-style fried green tomatoes, a casa roll stuffed with chicken salad, and unusual salsas enlivening most any dish. You can make a tapas-style meal from the cold and hot “tastings” menu. A seat at the sushi bar includes entertainment: watching the enthusiastic, adventurous kitchen staff at work. Attentive, knowledgeable service seals the deal. AE, MC, V. No lunch. Closed Sun. (\$\$)

### **VESPAIO RESTAURANT**, 1610 S Congress Ave. (512/441-6100)

This cool, elegant Italian spot has become a trendsetter. Luckier folks score a seat at the bar and usually order one of the appetizers displayed behind the counter for the wait. Always boisterous, Vespaio caters to people who don't mind spending \$50 for a bottle of red. (\$\$\$)