

Note: Sue Maloney, co-chair of the Let's Do Lunch group for the past 15 years, would like to recommend restaurants that she, her husband, co-chair Sandy Jezl and the lunch group have enjoyed dining at over the years. She will also review new restaurants that continue to appear on the Naperville scene and surrounding areas. Sue will base these opinions on the quality and consistency of the food, atmosphere, and value for your money. Enjoy!

Top Restaurant Favorites
& Sue's Reviews

(Not in order)

1. Catch 35 Seafood and Premium Steaks – Naperville, 630 717-3500
2. Parker's Restaurant and Bar– Downer's Grove, 630 960-5700
3. Francesca's Passagio – Naperville, 630 946-0600
4. Raffi's on Fifth Ave. – Naperville, 630 961-8203
5. Morton's – Naperville, 630 577-1372
6. Atwater's at the Herrington Inn – Geneva, 630 208-8920
7. Meson Sabika – Naperville, 630 983-3000
8. Yerbabuena Mexican Cuisine – Lisle, 630 852-8040
9. P.F. Chang's China Bistro – Lombard, 630 652-9977
10. Rosebud – Naperville, 630 548-9800
11. White Chocolate Grill – Naperville, 630 505-8300
12. Naf Naf Grill – Naperville, 630 904-7200
13. Ivy – Wheaton, 630 904 - 2489

Why we like them:

Catch 35 Seafood and Steaks - We frequent Catch 35 because of the freshness of the ingredients, open upscale atmosphere, friendly service, comfortable chairs, its close by in downtown Naperville, and they are great with small, medium and large parties. If you have out of town guests, a celebration or event, you can count on Catch 35 to treat you very well. Lunch or dinner, cocktails and appetizers in the bar, you'll always have an enjoyable time. **Check with the restaurant for weekday specials on bar food, wine and specially priced surf and turfs.** Parking can be difficult, so leave yourself plenty of time or valet park for \$5.00.

Parker's Restaurant and Bar - We love Parker's! The food is delicious, and their personalized service and country club atmosphere are above and beyond the norm. I really love that they give black napkins for patrons wearing dark or black clothing. It's the little touches that make Parker's a five star experience. The desserts are to die for here but large, so bring your sweet tooth and a buddy. Parker's is a special occasion place, or a casual or business lunch destination. I prefer them for smaller parties up to twelve, to take full advantage of the usual great service. We like being close to their fireplace for a cozy feel.

Francesca's Passagio - I am a huge fan of La Sorella De Francesca in downtown Naperville, but it can be quite noisy, parking can be tough, and larger restrooms would better accommodate the crowd. It is an historic building, so what you give up in amenities, you get in charm. When Francesca's Passagio opened on Rt. 59 and 95th St., just a mile from my house, I was thrilled! Francesca's Passagio has the same great Northern Italian food that its sister restaurant has, but there's plenty of parking, better acoustics, an outdoor patio in the summer, and ample restroom facilities. My husband and I frequent Francesca's on our own, dine with friends or bring a group. They make us feel like part of the family. Also a plus here, you can get half orders of most entrees and can personalize your order as well. I often change to a different pasta, add chicken, change a sauce or add a vegetable. They are very flexible. This is a family friendly restaurant with menus for the kids. Check out their separate room for larger parties.

Raffi's on Fifth Ave. - If you want a unique atmosphere that's quiet, with wonderful food, try Raffi's. There are Mediterranean, Italian, French and Spanish influences. It's close to downtown, near the train station on 5th Ave. Unlike downtown, there is plenty of parking. I bring 25-30 women with the lunch group in September every year. Many go back with their

husbands and friends and put it on the top of their own favorites list. Raffi's is great for larger parties, and the upstairs can be used for a private event. Keep in mind, the stairs are steep and there is no elevator.

Morton's - Morton's is all about the perfect steak and freshest seafood, which they do extremely well. Morton's is in our top twelve because they also offer extras that no one else does. On a recent visit with another couple to celebrate a birthday and an anniversary, we were pleasantly surprised to see that we all had personalized menus. Our names and the occasions were printed on the tops of our menus to take with us if we wanted. To top off our excellent dinner, the maître d stopped by our table, took a group picture, and then returned to give each couple a framed photo to take home as well. Wow! The best crab cakes and flourless chocolate lava cake, **and** mementos of our evening too? When my mother came to Naperville to visit and celebrate her birthday, you can bet we were back at Morton's. Mom was elated!

Morton's can be expensive, even by Naperville standards, but they do have a couple of special menus, one called the seafood and steak special, that gives you choices of salads, steaks, seafood, a side and dessert. My husband and I split one special and had more than enough food for both of us. Another option is to dine in the bar and order off the bar menu. Save a little money and have a fantastic meal as well. Or. . . splurge!!!

Atwater's at the Herrington Inn - Atwater's is located in the Herrington Inn overlooking the Fox River in Geneva. This is a small, quiet restaurant. No large groups here, but when I went up with 6 friends for a leisurely lunch, we had a ball. We all ordered something different and after some taste-testing, all agreed that everything was delicious, coffee, wine and desserts, too. The scenery at the Herrington Inn cannot be beat. Inside, you're reminded of a lovely French Inn. When you look through the windows of the restaurant to the outside, you see the river, the wildlife, the flowers across on the other bank, it's gorgeous! I've been with a group for afternoon tea, which is also a delight. As an afternoon or evening destination or even an overnight stay, The Herrington Inn and Atwater's is only a 40 minute drive up from Naperville. It will seem like a mini-vacation getaway. And by the way, the Spa at the Inn is heaven.

Meson Sabika - The historic mansion that houses Mason Sabika is interesting in itself. Add Spanish tapas, sangria and a beautiful day or evening on their outside courtyard and you have a top twelve eatery. I will say that Mason Sabika is more fun with more people, but a couple will enjoy themselves too. Tapas are little dishes that are meant to be shared. You can order for yourself, but ordering several little dishes to savor together is more the point. There is a large variety to choose from, cold and hot. There's chicken, beef, pork, fish, lamb, shrimp, etc. You can eat inside or outside, on busy nights the upstairs will open as well. Meson Sabika can handle

most any size group or party, in the restaurant or adjoining banquet facility. They also have a Sunday brunch that I hear is fantastic. Keep this restaurant in mind for an experience that's a little out of the ordinary.

Yerbabuena Mexican Cuisine - You probably have not heard about this family owned restaurant, located in downtown Lisle. The lunch group has not been here, but I eat at Yerbabuena quite often. There have been fast food Mexican restaurants cropping up in Naperville and a chain or two for a sit down lunch or dinner. I much prefer Yerbabuena for their comfortable ethnic ambiance, fantastic chips and salsa (not too spicy), table side guacamole preparation, and darn good chicken tacos. Prices are very reasonable and service is friendly and usually swift. Yerbabuena is the centerpiece of a new and improved downtown and the outdoor seating in the warmer months is a plus. If you love Mexican food, give Yerbabuena a try.

P.F. Chang's China Bistro - Newcomers to Naperville often ask where the best Chinese restaurant is in town. I have to say that there really is no standout Chinese restaurant here, but there is in Lombard on Butterfield Rd. P.F. Chang's is a favorite of ours because it's really good and the atmosphere is contemporary and lively. The lunch group loves it because we can go and share and try a variety of dishes or you can do your own thing if preferred. Many of dishes do not come with a vegetable, but veggies can be added on request. Desserts are fun here, because they are only \$2.00 a piece and served in a tall shot glass. Since P.F. Chang's is a chain, you may already be familiar with it. They are consistent in quality no matter the location.

Rosebud of Naperville - Naperville has opened its' arms with enthusiasm for the newly reopened Rosebud! That means it's packed, especially on weekends. I like the open feel of the restaurant. It's very nicely decorated and I love the tiled pizza oven with open kitchen as well as the homey checkered tablecloths. As with previous tenants in this space, it is very noisy. If you want an intimate, romantic dinner, this would not be the place to go. On the up side, the food is classic Southern Italian, which Rosebud has always done well. When my husband and I visited, I ordered a mixed green salad to start. I noticed, since I could see the food coming out of the kitchen, that their salads are huge. I asked for a half salad and did get it. Mike ordered ricotta cheese filled ravioli and it was good. I ordered veal parmesan with mozzarella melted over the top and it came with a side of pasta which was delicious. Portions are generous. I noticed a lot of crispy thin crust pizzas going by and they looked very good too! In the old location, service was an issue, waiting for food, waiting for the check. I'm happy to say that this is no longer the case. Service was efficient and the wait staff friendly. We did not wait for bread, drinks, food or the check. They really got it right this time. Thank goodness!

White Chocolate Grill - Naperville - Since WCG is my personal favorite and most frequented restaurant at the moment, it has to be on the Top 12 list. Yes, it's noisy, but the varied Contemporary American menu and "downtown Chicago" Frank Lloyd Wright atmosphere make it a winner. I absolutely love the WCG salad, exchanging blue cheese for goat cheese and adding warm grilled chicken. It's huge but I make my way through it with no problem. Other delightful dishes are any of their burgers, popular Prime Rib French dip, crab cakes, and I'm partial to their Citrus-Soy Glazed Salmon. There's so much to choose from and it's all so good! As the name suggests, desserts here are incredible. I have tried/shared the White Chocolate Brownie, served warm with French vanilla ice cream, chocolate sauce and white chocolate shavings, yummm. And also the Silky Chocolate Soufflé Cake served warm on crème anglaise with whipped cream on top. Sigh. I highly recommend WCG, but make sure to call for reservations on a weekend, way in advance. The White Chocolate grill seems to be a favorite of many.

Naf Naf Grill - Naperville - I love the Naf Naf! You may already be a fan of the Naf Naf Grill, an entirely unique faster food restaurant that used to be in the old Taco Bell building on Ogden. It's Middle Eastern, so they have falafel, schwarma, kabobs, hummus, lentil soup, and other good stuff, some that I had never heard of, before discovering the Naf Naf. Their food is always fresh and cooked to order, so there is a little wait, but it's perfectly seasoned and piping hot. You have a choice of sides like their basmati rice and Israeli salad. I've tried to like their fries, but they just aren't crispy so therefore not great. The star here is the freshly made, warm and pillow soft, yet chewy pitas. They are wonderful! Portions are big enough to share or take home for another meal. The pita's can be reheated for a few seconds in the microwave and are just fine again. Since the Naf Naf is very busy for weekday lunches, the ambiance is harried but enthusiastic. They really have a great system here, of moving people through with efficient ordering, picking up and busing. I have to admire most everything about this restaurant. It's done well, and with care.

Ivy, Steaks, Chops, Seafood, - Wheaton - Let's Do Lunch went to Ivy on Tuesday, April 12th, 2011 and it was perfection! We loved it all: the gorgeous atmosphere (lots of stained glass), personable waiter, incredible entrees and of course, the delectable desserts. Everything including the warm bread served in its own wrapper, crisp salads with homemade dressings, flavorful soups, delicious lamb chops, crab cakes, tilapia and salmon, pastas and sandwiches were all appreciated and enjoyed. We loved the option of mini desserts for \$3 or full size servings, big enough to share. Service was prompt and prices were reasonable. This two year old restaurant, with a chef trained by Wolfgang Puck himself, is now at the top of our favorites list and we can hardly wait to go back!

Return visit on Wednesday, April 27th. My second visit to Ivy was almost as wonderful as the first. It happened to be Secretary's Day and it was very crowded and louder than our first visit. I was impressed with our waiter again, as he handled our table as well as many others with the same graciousness as before. The food was again exceptional and we had a great time. This time I tried the Black Pepper Shrimp appetizer and it was fantastic! It was a little spicy and savory and I'd highly recommend it.

Facts about this restaurant: Built as a church in 1928, it also served at one time as a mortuary. It has the first elevator in Du Page County and there's the ghost of a little girl, aptly named Ivy, seen wandering the employee stairs and bathroom late at night.

I would appreciate your feedback and input on your own favorite restaurants. I'm available at 630 904-5629 or mmal8175@aol.com. Thank you, Sue Maloney