

Note: Sue Maloney, co-chair of the Let's Do Lunch group for the past 12 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 Ten Restaurant Favorites & Sue's Reviews

(Not in order)

1. Catch 35 Seafood and Premium Steaks – Naperville, 630 717-3500
2. Parker's Ocean Grill – 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. Wildwood Steaks, Seafood and Pasta – Geneva,  
630 377-8325
6. Morton's – Naperville, 630 577-1372
7. Atwater's at the Herrington Inn – Geneva, 630 208-8920
8. Meson Sabika – Naperville, 630 983-3000
9. Yerbabuena Mexican Cuisine – Lisle, 630 852-8040
10. P.F. Chang's China Bistro – Lombard, 630 652-9977

Why we like them:

**Catch 35 Seafood and Steaks** – We frequent Catch 35 because of the freshness of the ingredients, open upscale atmosphere, 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. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, appetizers are half price in the bar. Parking can be difficult, so leave yourself plenty of time or valet park for \$5.00.

**Parker's Ocean Grill** – 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 95<sup>th</sup> 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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.

**Wildwood Steaks, Seafood and Pasta** – After Naperville, Geneva is my favorite local town. Why? Geneva has a nice selection of restaurants, great shopping, the beautiful Fox River and the quaintness of the area. Wildwood just adds the icing on the cake. My husband and I went in August to celebrate our wedding anniversary and sat outside on the patio. The courtyard with newer shops was colorful yet peaceful and the professional guitarist serenading us made it a perfect

evening. The lunch group enjoyed our visit last summer. It's across the street from Little Traveler and the popular 3<sup>rd</sup> Street shopping. Parking is a breeze. What's not to like? This is a large restaurant, so groups are welcome. No private rooms though.

**Morton's** – Morton's is all about the perfect steak and freshest seafood, which they do extremely well. Morton's is in our top ten 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, 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 ten 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. 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. Unfortunately, Main St. in downtown Lisle is under construction right now, so parking is dicey. Still, in a short time, Yerbabuena will be the centerpiece of a new and improved downtown and access to the restaurant and outdoor patio will be easy. 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.

Coming: Top Ten Family Friendly Restaurants

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

