

dining

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**NEW
ON THE
SCENE**

Fresh bites

**15+ new
restaurants
and more
on the way**

By Lisa Arnett

REDEYE

From a massive Mexican eatery in River North to the revamp of a historic supper club, this month brings plenty of new restaurants to arouse your appetite.



The Pump Room

1301 N. State Pkwy. 312-601-2970

Bigshot hotel developer Ian Schriager made over this legendary restaurant as the centerpiece to his oh-so-deck hotel Public, and yes you will actually want to go there now. A cushy bar area gives way to a sunken dining room glowing with dozens of globe lights. And though the whole place still looks luxe, the prices don't seem overdone. A menu headed up by Jean-Georges Vongerichten (of NYC's uber-popular ABC Kitchen) ranges from a \$49 four-course farm-to-table dinner to late-night snacks such as beef carpaccio pizza (\$14). Though it's hard to gauge at this stage (it opened in preview mode Monday), we can only assume the scene will swell as the Oct. 11 grand opening approaches. **JOSÉ DE COORCO/THURNE PHOTO**

Cantina Laredo

508 N. State St. 312-955-0014

Forgive us for being wary of a Texas-based "gourmet Mexican" chain moving in just a few blocks from Rick Bayless' Frontera Grill and Topolobampo. But in addition to fairly decent margaritas, tasty ahi tuna tacos and a stylish (and massive) interior devoid of any of the usual cantina kitsch, this two-story restaurant has something you can't find at Frontera or Topolo: enough space for an impromptu group outing.



The upstairs lounge and a Nightshade cocktail at Morso.



Morso

340 W. Armitage Ave. 773-690-9280

Matt Maroni, the brains behind the roaming Gastro-Wagon food truck and companion storefront, has put down roots with this shared-plates spot in Lincoln Park. In the downstairs dining room, the menu is divided into six sections—raw, offal, veggies, shellfish, game and fish—and upstairs, there's a cute little lounge serving fun craft cocktails.

Nookies

1100 W. Bryn Mawr Ave. 773-516-4188

The Edgewater location of Nookies serves the same hearty breakfast and lunch fare as the local diner's other three locations, plus 15 wines by the glass and dinner dishes such as smoked ribs and rotisserie chicken. For brunch, nosh on lemon poppy seed pancakes or a croissant Napoleon with strawberries and vanilla-bean mascarpone.

New England Seafood Company and Fish Market

3341 N. Lincoln Ave. 773-671-3474

This market-eatery combo brings a taste of New England to Lakeview, with Cape Cod potato chips and the buns for lobster rolls brought in from the East Coast, plus seafood flown in daily. Lobster bisque, clam chowder and steamers (soft-shell clams) round out the offerings.

Toni Patisserie & Cafe

65 E. Washington St. 312-726-2020

With marble-topped bistro tables and a pastry case lined with silky salted caramel tarts and crayon-bright macarons, this Loop cafe from Toni Marie Cox (of the southwest suburban Hinsdale bakery of the same name) is a breath of French air. Croissants and Metropolis cappuccino beckon for breakfast, while lunch brings crusty baguette sandwiches and tartines.