

Serving Up Entertainment more than just dinner at these local establishments

by Suzanne M. Brazil

Not everyone is cruising through the drive-thru for dinner these days. Despite busier life styles, people are finding time to enjoy local eateries and entertainment in the same evening. Some of the hottest places around are offering live bands, karaoke and other entertainment in an effort to provide something extra for customers.

Flatlander's Restaurant and Brewery

Flatlander's Restaurant and Brewery (847) 821-1234 in Lincolnshire offers live music to compliment its popular Midwestern cuisine and award-winning handcrafted beer. Regional bands **Knee Deep Shag** and **Robbie Fulks** are just two of the acts that headline Flatlander's new stage area. General Manager Justin Rolls said the offerings are "community driven" and range from "blues to progressive rock to reggae." The live entertainment is offered every Friday and Saturday evening beginning at 9:00 pm until 1:00 am for a cover charge of \$6. Once a month, usually on Wednesday nights, "open mike night offers something fun for the community," said Rolls, and they are considering a comedy act in the near future. For updates, check out their Web site at www.Flatlanders.com.

60 West American Grill

Recently celebrating their first year anniversary in Vernon Hills is **60 West American Grill** (847) 549-6111. Owners Michael and Ted Holleb, and Arnie Krause opened this location in June of 2001, and are enjoying great success with both their continental cuisine and entertainment menus. Manager Aurelio Chevalier attributes their success to being "very people oriented. They believe managers should be on the floor talking to people, not stuck in an office," said Chevalier. Diners enjoy jazz music with dinner and live bands every Friday and Saturday night. Chevalier

says they listen to demos and try to hire local bands with a following. Two of their standout offerings are **Turnstyles**, a cover-band playing everything from Sinatra to U2 to Van Morrison. Chevalier describes them as "two guys who are just excellent and play great, fun songs." **Nanuco**, a Mexican rock band, plays 50's and 60's music in English and Spanish and are "amazing" according to Chevalier.

Their most popular entertainment may be the **Balloon Picasso** that visits every table from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm on Sunday nights and entertains families with his handmade balloon animals and toys. "Tons of kids come and they love it, just absolutely love it," said Chevalier. Interested patrons can sign up for a newsletter highlighting the coming dinner specials and entertainment. Repeat customers that visit twice in one week can receive up to 20% off their check.

Dover Straits

Dover Straits in Mundelein (847) 949-1550, is anchored firmly by a 24-year history of great seafood and superb entertainment. Bill and Aris Metropulos own both the Mundelein restaurant and the location in Hoffman Estates. They attribute their success to good service, a nice atmosphere, excellent food quality and many repeat customers. There is no cover charge for the entertainment, which consists of five-piece bands playing trombone, synthesizer

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Smooth jazz is the order of the day at 60 West American Grill.

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and guitar among other instruments, and is offered Wednesday through Saturday, year round. Diners can finish off their meal with a twirl on the upscale marble dance floor while enjoying the music of some of their more popular headliners including **Manilla Sound**, **Milt Treneur** and **Emmy and the Sparks**.

Porto Bello Steak House

Chef, Victor Perdue of **Porto Bello Steak House** in Lake Zurich (847) 540-9393, is proud of their "specialty homemade pastas and all prime meats." In addition to this delicious fare, diners can enjoy a variety of bands on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday evenings. The music usually begins at 9:00 pm and goes until 1:00 am. A great piano bar area and dance floor along with dining in the same room makes this a popular spot.

Seasons of Long Grove

Nightlife abounds but there's also plenty to do in the afternoons as well. **Seasons of Long Grove** (847) 634-9150, has hosted special tea parties since they opened almost a decade ago. According to Manager/Owner George Archos, "ladies come to their tea parties to relax and talk." But they'd better not be late to the Mad Hatter Tea Party because reservations are required. The cost is \$10.95 per person and is held Thursday—Saturday at 2:00 pm. Guests can borrow one of the special hats provided and enjoy biscuits, scones and finger sandwiches along with their tea. From late November through December, a harpist plays Christmas carols and holiday ornaments are distributed to guests at the Nutcracker Tea Parties. Children's birthday parties, lunches and brunches round out the upscale offerings at Seasons of Long Grove.

Mickey Finn's Brewery and Restaurant

Mickey Finn's Brewery and Restaurant in Libertyville (847) 362-6688, has frequently scheduled live music ranging from Irish dance to contemporary pop. Call for their schedule.

Harry's of Arlington

Harry's of Arlington in Arlington Heights (847) 577-2525, has live music with a mix of oldies, Elvis and a bit of everything, every Saturday and most Friday evenings from approximately 9:30 pm until 1:45 am. Cover charges range from \$5-\$10 for entertainment, unless you're dining—then there is no additional charge. They also offer karaoke on Wednesday evenings beginning at 9:30 pm.

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More great places to be entertained while you dine

Allgauer's <i>Fri. & Sat. in lounge jazz & pop</i>	847-664-7999 Northbrook
American Smokehouse <i>Thurs. karaoke</i>	847-726-2272 Lake Zurich
Burning Ambitions <i>Thurs. a solo act Fri. & Sat. variety of bands</i>	847-358-0200 Palatine
Firkin <i>Wed. Nicolette the Magician</i>	847-367-6168 Libertyville
Gators <i>Some Thurs., Sat. live bands variety</i>	847-705-0555 Palatine
Grill 21 <i>Thurs. karaoke, Fri. keyboard, Sat. DJ</i>	847-549-9100 Libertyville
Hackney's <i>Sat. night piano player</i>	847-537-2100 Wheeling
King's Wharf, The <i>Fri. & Sat. night DJ</i>	847-634-0100 Lincolnshire
Max and Erma's <i>Sun. balloon artist and magician</i>	847-816-6700 Vernon Hills
Medieval Times <i>Live Jousting Tournaments</i>	888-935-6878 Schaumburg
Mia Cucina <i>Sat. night piano player</i>	847-358-4900 Palatine
P.J. Willicker's in Lincolnshire <i>Fri. & Sat. karaoke</i>	847-634-2730 Lincolnshire

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Luigi's

Luigi's in Palatine (847) 991-7006, is new to the area, opening their doors this past November 2001. Luigi's has had a great beginning and recommends reservations on the weekends to ensure seating. Live entertainment is available every Wednesday beginning at about 6:00 pm and on Thursday's beginning at approximately 8:00 pm. Ending times vary for each act. The entertainer is **Mario**, a singer who plays the accordion with synthesizer, and belts out ballads from Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and other "old world" favorites. You can join regulars and diners from more distant suburbs who venture to Luigi's when they know Mario will be playing. Another favorite of Luigi's regulars is **Frank Lamphere and Trio** who will return in September for Friday evening performances. Call ahead for reservations and times. There is never a cover charge and dancing is encouraged!



Dishin' out the hits at Porto Bello Steak House

Bellini's


If karaoke is your style, then try out **Bellini's** in Libertyville (847) 367-8088. With wonderful Italian items on the menu and no cover charge, you can indulge your musical tendencies from 9:00 pm to 1:00 am on Friday and Saturday evenings.

Portofino Italian Bistro

Portofino Italian Bistro in Vernon Hills (847) 680-4300, has live entertainment every Friday and Saturday evening with different groups ranging from duets singing Frank Sinatra to jazz and reggae bands. Friday nights the entertainment is on their beautiful back deck overlooking Big Bear Lake. There is also a designated dancing area. There is no cover charge for entertainment. Call for specific band and performance hours.

Poppa Clemenza's

Poppa Clemenza's in Palatine (847) 358-3385, offers live entertainment on Saturday evenings from 9:30 pm to 1:00 am. **Mike Cann** is a solo performer singing standards by Frank Sinatra, Bobby Darin, etc. There is no cover charge.

Entertainment adds to the atmosphere and provides something extra for customers. Cuisine may be the main focus when dining out, however, patrons looking to get more for their money will find plenty of choices in the area. Next time you're in the mood to eat out, call first and checkout the headliners at your favorite restaurant. 

Pop Highwood <i>Nightly piano and jazz trio</i>	847-266-1313 <i>Highwood</i>
Poppa Clemenza's <i>Sat. nights live music</i>	847-358-3385 <i>Palatine</i>
Ravina Bistro <i>Sat. night piano player</i>	847-432-1033 <i>Highland Park</i>

Signature Room, The <i>Fri., Sat. & Sun. brunch live jazz</i>	888-234-6395 <i>Chicago</i>
Uncle Freddy's <i>Car shows</i>	847-705-7750 <i>Palatine</i>
Village Grill <i>Karaoke</i>	847-459-5522 <i>Buffalo Grove</i>