



Race to Indy for the
2016 PRSA International Conference
October 23 - 25



Welcome To Indianapolis! Food and Booze Center of The Midwest Universe!

David L. Shank, APR, Fellow PRSA, totally unaffiliated, non-commissioned and purely taste bud and stomach-driven good eats freak offers observations about Indianapolis fooderies as viewed as an Indianapolis-opolitan. Find me as your PRSA Regional Representative at the Member Services booth at ICON!

The gastronomic life of Indianapolis has improved beyond belief in the last 10 years. Where gourmet dining was once considered only a Chicago-style hunk of cow at St. Elmo's and a Hoosier mongo-tenderloin at Mug and Bun, we now have great dining neighborhoods. Rather than give specifics, although I've given you a few of my favorites, I'll guide you to areas. With this guide is a list of several lists of recommended eateries and links.

You need to know something about transportation in Indianapolis. Bus service is unfortunately virtually non-existent. You cannot hail a cab on the street. You'll need to find a cabstand or call ahead. However, Lyft and Uber have a fairly robust presence and will be worth the effort.

Now with that said here are a few of my favorites:

- ❖ [The Jazz Kitchen](#) – The Kitchen is rated one of the top 10 Jazz Clubs in the World by Downbeat – y'all, can't get much better than that! It's a half hour from the hotel but depending on what national or local act playing it's worth it. The Kitchen is also known for its Cajun-fusion fare, hmmm, see a trend here? If you go, save room for the rum bread pudding. You should make reservations. \$\$\$
- ❖ [The Slippery Noodle](#) – good solid live act blues bar with a great history as a stop on the Underground Railroad and a railroad brothel – the latter are unrelated. Walking distance of ICON. \$\$
- ❖ [Shapiro's Delicatessen](#) – a lot of people who know Jewish delis say this beats the best of NYC's delis. Easy walk. \$\$
- ❖ [Iozzo's Gardens of Italy](#) – Iozzo's is a third generation Italian family restaurant about a 1/2 block south of Shapiro's. Not a bad walk. If it's a nice night ask for a table in the back garden. Purely authentic. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

- ❖ [Bourbon Street Distillery](#) – Indianapolis isn't known for Cajun...but you'll find it here. If the weather's nice head for the upper deck. Don't let the lower bar scare you. Healthy walk. \$\$
- ❖ [The Red Key](#) – A great little dive that is the place to find beloved local author Dan Wakefield. Wakefield wrote, at the time scandalous, "[Going All Way](#)" which was later a popular movie starring Ben Affleck. Dan was also a close friend of Kurt Vonnegut. Cheeseburgers and O'rings are classic. Not far from Broad Ripple on College. Need Uber or Lyft. Cash only. \$\$
- ❖ [The ChatterBox](#) – a cozy legacy jazz bar on Massachusetts Ave. –we call it simply Mass Ave! The Chatter Box has wonderful local players and it's the place traveling top acts go after their big shows and they need to keep playing to unwind. Good music and good drinks but eat someplace else on Mass Ave. \$\$
- ❖ [Rick's Boat Yard on Eagle Creek](#) – if you get to dine on the deck you'll feel like you're at a beach front resort. Rick's is about 30 minutes west from the hotel. They usually have a small jazz group. It's large and friendly and the servers are fun and funky. It would be one of my favorites even it weren't five minutes from my house. \$\$\$
- ❖ [Union 50](#) – this is a wonderful large space tucked into a side street off Mass Ave. It combines table dining but if you want to get

social it has group seating if you want to make new friends. Really good food and check the web site for live entertainment. Uber / Lyft. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Foodie 'Hoods: these are blanket recommendations for areas that have bunches of great and unusual restaurants and/or bars. Indianapolis was an early adopter of artisanal beers and there are small microbreweries all over. And, the next phase is artisanal distilleries. Here are the fun areas:

- ❖ [Speedway](#) – OK...you've travelled thousands of miles to come to ICON which has a racing theme because —You're in the Motor Capital of the World—of the Universe and beyond!!! The Town of Speedway has several great restaurants including one attached to the [Sarah Fisher indoor karting track](#). For a breakfast choice head for Charley Brown's where the waitresses (not servers) will call you "hon" and "sweetie" and you'll love it. I was at Charley Brown's one morning and racing legend AJ Foyt lumbered in. Remember: the rule of the house is you treat the legends just like any other customer – no autographs. Down the street is [Barbecue and Bourbon on Main](#) – wonderful BBQ and artisanal bourbon and beers. Can't go wrong with it. \$-\$\$\$

- ❖ [Mass Ave.](#) Massachusetts Ave. is a stretch of about eight loooonnnnggg blocks with a great restaurant nearly on each block. It's a 10 minute Uber / Lyft ride and worth it. It's walkable on a nice night. It has some of the best and most fascinating outdoor sculpture of any area you'll find. \$\$-\$\$\$\$.
- ❖ [Virginia Ave.](#) – a newly redeveloped *hipster* area southwest of downtown. An easy 10 minute Uber / Lyft ride. It's hard to describe the variety of menus but they run from a really good coffee shop to cutting edge and farm-to-table. \$-\$\$\$\$.
- ❖ [Fountain Square area](#) – just a few blocks on down the street from Virginia Ave is Fountain Square. You'll find Mexican, Peruvian, Chinese and really good BBQ. If you get tired of break outs and networking go Duck Pin bowling at the Fountain Square Theater building. About 15 minutes from the hotel. \$-\$\$\$
- ❖ [The International Market Place](#) – The International Market Place is on the west side of Indianapolis and is the home to dozens of restaurants representing ten countries. Many of the Mexican restaurants are truly authentic Mexican food, not a combination of Tex/Hoosier/Mex. \$-\$\$

- ❖ [Broad Ripple Village](#) – about 30 minutes from downtown it used to be the college drinking spot – and sometimes still is – but it is making the transition to Millenials with families and the restaurant mix is upscaling. Good selection and eclectic. Interesting mix of retail especially north of the village center. \$\$-\$\$\$.

More details and links. Rather than give you a huge list of most restaurants, here's a list o'links from a variety of sources that will help guide you to the finest restaurants in our community. Just as many other metro areas you can find a great well-known restaurant and around the corner is probably an even better small restaurant with better, caring service and smaller ticket.

Other than my previous recommendations above for places I've been and enjoyed, I can't vouch for the authenticity of the comments and reviews on these links.

Links:

[25 Best Restaurants - Indianapolis Monthly](#)

www.indianapolismonthly.com/best-restaurants/

Indianapolis Monthly

Read it and eat: There are the *25 best restaurants Indianapolis* has on the table.

[Indianapolis' Top 25 Local Restaurants - An Insider's Guide | Visit Indy](#)

www.visitindy.com/indianapolis-indys...

Indianapolis Convention & Visitors Association

But we want you to try the *best* of the *best*, so we asked locals to pick 25 locally-owned *restaurants* that *best* represent *Indianapolis*. We then asked food writer...

[Most Booked Restaurants Indianapolis | OpenTable](#)

www.opentable.com › [Home](#) › [United States](#) › [Indiana](#) › [Indianapolis](#)

OpenTable

Top 10 Diners' Choice Winners. #1. St. Elmo *Steak House*. #2. Harry & Izzy's - Downtown. \$ \$ \$ \$ #3. *Fogo de Chao Brazilian Steakhouse* - Indianapolis. #4. Cooper's Hawk Winery & Restaurant - Indianapolis. #5. Seasons 52 - Indianapolis. #6. Nada - Indianapolis. #7. Harry & Izzy's - Northside. #8. Maggiano's - ...

[Best restaurants downtown Indianapolis, IN - Yelp](#)

https://www.yelp.com/search?find_desc=best+restaurants...Indianapolis%2C...

Yelp Reviews on *Best restaurants* downtown in *Indianapolis, IN* - Bluebeard, Union 50, Mesh, Three Carrots, Harry & Izzy's, Black Market, The Capital Grille, Saffron...

Who the heck is David L. Shank, APR, Fellow PRSA?

Hey, thanks for asking! I've been an Indianapolis resident since 1976 when we returned to Indiana from Colorado. My wife and business partner Marilyn



Shank, APR, grew up in Indianapolis and went to the same high school as Kurt Vonnegut and Dan Wakefield, but not at the same time.

I've been a PRSA member since the late 1970's and in fact I took my APR on a Selectric electric

typewriter. I've served as President of the Hoosier Chapter, Chair of the East Central District and served on its Board twice.

Besides continuing our public relations firm, Shank Public Relations Counselors, Inc., I am a PRSA staff member serving as the Midwest Regional Representative based in Indianapolis.

If you need more information about Indianapolis restaurants, arts venues or just about anything except bail bonds, you will find me during ICON at the Member Services booth. You can also reach me at [david.shank@prsa.org](mailto: david.shank@prsa.org).

Have a great time and enjoy our city!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.