

"ZagAFT's" Survey 2007



A Union of Professionals

“ZAGAFT’S” SURVEY 2007

Afghan

2700 Jefferson Davis Hwy. (Raymond Ave.), Alexandria, VA 703-548-0022

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
4	2	4	I

Truth in advertising...a huge sign states Afghan restaurant and sure enough that's what you get. Affordable, good meals, pumpkin is delicious and the bread is good. Not fancy.

-Matthew Jones, Public Affairs

Zagat's review:

“The only thing bland is the name” (and the décor) at Alexandria’s Afghani kebab kitchen, which gets “packed on the weekends” when the “expat population gathers for parties”; there’s an “authentic” menu full of “scintillating tastes” including “super” kebabs, and “attentive, kind” service that makes up for the shortcomings – namely, a “dumpy”, “crazy”, “cavernous”, “barn” of a dining room.

Al Crostino

1324 U St. NW (bet. 13th & 14th Sts.), 202-797-0523

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
4	4	4	M

Tuscan menu, very nicely prepared and presented, somewhat pricier than other U St restaurants. Appetizers \$8-\$12, pastas around \$15 (but as much as \$40 if they have the truffle sauce). Entrees in the mid-20's. Bronzini is a good pick. Cozy table-clothed atmosphere, but the flat-screened TV (always on) over the bar is a distraction, so ask to be seated upstairs in the loft. Conveniently located between Creme and the Bar Nun, which on Saturday nights doubles as a swingers (or as the bouncer calls it, a "lifestyle") joint.

-Lou Nayman, Organization and Field Services

Zagat's review:

With an “unexpectedly extensive” lineup of “truly special specials”, servers who “know their menu” and “bartenders who know their vino”, this “hip” U Street Italian bistro and wine bar (a “casual” spin-off of Dupont Circle’s Al Tiramisu) is a “welcome” spot to experience “fresh and fun flavors”; the owners, the Diotaiuti brothers, “know how to make you feel right at home” in the “intimate” (read: “crowded”) quarters.

B. Smith's

Union Station, 50 Massachusetts Ave. NE (Columbus Circle), 202-289-6188

www.bsmith.com

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
4	5	3	E

For a 'fine' dining experience, you might want to consider B. Smith's. Located in Union Station, it is the first non-NYC location opened (NOTE: the flagship NYC location is in the theatre district). Owned by former model, and now lifestyle restaurateur/TV host Barbara Smith, it features southern and low country cuisine (shrimp and grits, fried green tomatoes) in fancy surroundings. There is often live entertainment on weekend

nights. The bar area offers food at minimal prices (\$5.00 per) during happy hours. Worth a visit, although service can be spotty.

- Joyce Kilgore, *Organization & Field Services*

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
3	5	2	E

This restaurant is so overpriced. The food is ok, but for the price you pay, you'll keep looking for the rest of the food. Then again. Drink a lot and you'll never notice!!!

- Faith Proctor, *Information Technology*

Zagat's review:

Union Station's "gorgeous" "old presidential" reception room, featuring 30-ft. ceilings, white marble floors and Ionic columns, is the "lovely" setting for the Capitol Hill branch of this former model/"celebrity owner's" national chain serving "dressed-up Southern comfort fare"; while some cheer the "elevated soul food", especially at the "absolutely delicious" brunch, others are irked by "lackadaisical" service and insist the eats "should be rated on heaviness."

Ben's Chili Bowl

1213 U St. NW (bet. 12th & 13th Sts.), 202-667-0909

www.benschilibowl.com

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
5	3	3	I

Ben's Chili Bowl is a classic DC institution. Worth the cab-ride to the historic and revitalized Shaw neighborhood for chili dogs, cheese fries and milkshakes that can't be beat. As for Decor and Service, you don't go there for the Decor and Service. YOU GO FOR THE CHILI DOGS!

- Richard Ford, *Organization and Field Services*

Zagat's review:

"Line up with everybody from Dupont hipsters to cabdrivers" to "the mayor" (past and present) at this "legendary" U Street "perfect dive" for "stand-up-and-slap-your-mama" eats; the "friendly, not too chatty" help delivers "giant" half-smokers (hot dogs) and "chili-and-cheese fries that are not on the new USDA food plan" – but this is one "late-night DC" "greasefest" "worth the year of your life it might cost you"; P.S. it "caters to vegetarians" too.

Bistro du Coin

1738 Connecticut Ave. NW (Florida Ave.), 202-234-6969

www.bistroducoin.com

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
3	3	3	M

The food is decent, the service can have an attitude if you have an attitude, but it's the closest thing to a French bistro you can find in Metro Washington [Dupont Circle area]. Can be incredibly fun. Great people watching. Doesn't attract snobs of any ilk. Fun bar to hang in. Great champagne by the glass.

- Mary Traeger Pascale, *AFT Plus Member Benefits*

Zagat's review:

"The sideshow never stops" in this "bustling" and "noisy" Dupont Circle "hot spot" favored by "see-and-be-seen" "young professionals" ordering a "solid selection of

French country fare” like “magnifique” mussels and “fantastique” frites; sure, there’s “genuine, rude service to match” and it gets “excessively loud” in the “lofty” space on weekends, but most consider this “party” a “great start for a night out.”

Bistro Tabaq

1336 U St. NW (bet. 13th & 14th Sts), 202-265-0965

www.tabaqdc.com

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
3	4	3	M

A little too cool for school. Self-consciously hip 3-level U St bistro featuring Mediterranean tapas, full bar, terrific views of the city from an all glass rooftop enclosed dining room and bar (you need to specify this is where you want to sit when you reserve). Rooftop tables squeezed close together, the size of TV trays, no tablecloths, noisy, and terrible service. And there's a "dress code" (always a hit with me), except when there isn't. 1 block from U St Metro. Valet Parking.

- Lou Nayman, *Organization and Field Services*

Zagat’s review:

Enjoy “incredible sunsets” and “breathtaking” “views of the city at night” atop this “trendy” “three-story town-house” on U Street that sports an “amazing” retractable glass-enclosed roof deck; the “tasty” contemporary Mediterranean tapas, brought to table by a “knowledgeable staff”, may not quite live up to the atmosphere, and the “dress code” at dinner is a “turnoff” to some, but most focus on those unobstructed sights of the Monument that make up for any failings.

Blacksalt

4883 MacArthur Blvd. NW (U St.), 202-342-9101

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
5	3	5	E

-Sandy Wiesmann, *Organization & Field Services*

Zagat’s review:

The Black restaurant family’s latest “winner”, a fin-fare-focused New American in the Palisades, earns praise for “sophisticated and assured” creations that “explode with taste”, along with a wine list of “exceptionally well-valued gems”; if you can’t snag a table in the “minimalist”, “at the great bar”, down a couple of the “freshest” oysters you’ve ever tasted and then pick up some “pristine” fish to cook at home.

Bobby Van's Grill – New York Ave.

1201 New York Ave., NW, 202-589-1504

www.bobbyvans.com

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
5	4	4	M

Varied menu - great steaks to burger. Less formal than Bobby Vans on 15th St. Great and noisy bar.

- Edward McElroy, *President's Office*

Zagat’s review:

Bobby Van’s Grill, a casual offshoot of [Bobby Van’s Steakhouse], opened near the Convention Center *post-Survey*.

Busboys & Poets

2021 14th St. (V St. NW), 202-387-7638

www.busboysandpoets.com

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
4	4	4	I

Busboys & Poets, named in honor of writer and poet Langston Hughes, combines my favorite things: Great food (cornflake crusted catfish with greens, Mediterranean pizza, chocolate cakes), inventive drinks (grey-colored "DC Tap Water"), plus poetry and social justice. Between courses, it's fun to browse through the Teaching for Change bookstore, which includes many educator-specific titles and a diverse range of children's, history, political and literary selections. You can catch a social change-oriented author or an open mic poetry event in the Langston Room. It's a great place for groups to relax after a long day, but I also love going alone to kick back on a comfy sofa with a pot of tea and a laptop hooked into the free WiFi.

- Tracy Moavero, *AFT Plus Member Benefits*

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
5	4	4	I

Very funky combination coffee shop, bar, restaurant, performance space, bookstore. Food is a good value, well-prepared, inexpensive -- burgers, pastas, funky pizzas, hummus, salads, sandwiches. Populated by an eclectic and integrated crowd of younger and older lefty political radicals, current and recent Howard, GW, UDC and Georgetown students, self-styled artistes, authors, musicians, and sometimes more poets than busboy. Obviously, I don't go for the politics, but food is a value and good for people watching. Laptops welcome (free wifi). Regular and communal tables, plus sofas and stuffed chairs. 2 blocks from U St Metro. Always crowded, so be prepared for a long wait (use the time to browse books and magazines or get a head start on drinks).

- Lou Nayman, *Organization and Field Services*

Zagat's review:

"Everyone is welcome" at this "high-energy", "socially conscious" U Street "lounge/restaurant/bookstore/community space" that serves the "right mix" of "decently priced" Eclectic/American "comfort food and trendy dishes" ranging from catfish and collard greens to peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches in a "vast", WiFi'd room that's "perfect for a latte and our laptop"; there's "always something going on" in the back performance space, so even though there are often "long waits for tables" (and for the "staff to show up"), there's "lots to look at."

Ceiba

701 14th St. NW (G St.), 202-393-3983

www.ceibarestaurant.com

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
4	4	4	E

- Alison Baylor Monthe, *Information Technology*

Zagat's review:

With "wonderful" South and Central American-inspired dishes" bursting with complex flavors" presented in "beautiful" Downtown digs, this "happening" Nuevo Latino is as "great for an anyday meal" as a "business lunch" or a "special occasion"; here's the drill: start with a "mean caipirinha", move onto the "must-have" sevice sampler, then

get an “amazing” crispy whole fish before enjoying the “best part” – complementary “caramel pop-corn brought with the bill.”

Cheesecake Factory

Chevy Chase Pavilion, 5345 Wisconsin Ave. NW (Military Rd.), 202-364-0500
White Flint Mall, 11201 Rockville Pike (Nicholson Ln.), Rockville, MD, 301-770-0999
The Market Common Clarendon, 2900 N. Wilson Blvd. (Clarendon Blvd.), Arlington, VA, 703-294-9966
Tysons Galleria, 1796 International Dr. (Westpark Dr.), McLean, VA, 703-506-9311
www.thecheesecakefactory.com

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
4	3	3	M

The food is great. Depending on when you go, the wait may be a little long but the food is worth it. The cheesecake dessert is over-rated but the other desserts are great!

- *Richelle Patterson, Educational Issues*

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
4	4	5	M

The wait is ALWAYS long, but worth it. They don't take reservations, so just deal with that! Still, the food is consistently well-prepared and bountiful whether you're at the Wisconsin Avenue/Mazza Galleria location, White Flint Mall, Clarendon, or Marina Del Rey, CA! It's just a fun place to go.....and the cheesecake IS good. Too many varieties to choose from. For minimal wait, try Saturday afternoons.

- *Joyce Kilgore, Organization & Field Services*

Zagat's review:

“Go hungry” to these “touristy” yet “reliable” “Disneyland” – like Americans known for “obscene portions” and “divinely decadent cheesecake bliss” brought to table by a “well-trained staff”; “encyclopedic menus” mean there’s “something for everyone” – and everyone seems to be here, judging by the “very long wait”; if you’re in a mall setting, “put your name on the list and shop for an hour” or two.

Chef Geoff's

3201 New Mexico, Ave. NW (Nebraska, Ave.), 202-237-7800
1301 Pennsylvania Ave. NW (bet. E & F Sts.), 202-464-4461
www.chefgeoff.com

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
4	4	4	M

I have been to this restaurant several times for lunch. The food is very good and the menu is large and varied. The prices are reasonable given the quality of the food. It is convenient to Metro Center.

- *Tom Moran, PSRP*

Zagat's review:

“Chic and comforting at the same time”, this pair of New Americans puts a “thoughtful modern spin” on “standard pub fare” while “leaving some cash in your pocket” ; Glover Park provides “a perfect fall-back location” for families and collegiates, with its “kid-friendly” dining room, “charming terrace” and “bustling” bar, while Downtown delivers a “huge happy-hour scene” and a “great stop before a show” at nearby Warner Theatre; you can enjoy a “fantastic live jazz brunch on Sundays” at both.

CityZen

Mandarin Oriental, 1330 Maryland Ave. SW (bet. 12th & 14th Sts.), 202-787-6006

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
5	5	5	VE

Over the top, but in a good way. Very special, very terrific. Exciting and innovative American cuisine like you've never had. 4 and 5 course tasting menu or regular 3 course fixed price menu, \$75-\$95 per person, plus wine (nice by the glass selections if you can't agree on what to drink). You'll spend around 2 hours or more at dinner, but make sure to have a drink in the lobby where there's excellent live jazz and comfortable surroundings. Located inconveniently at the Mandarin Hotel on Maryland Ave SW, but worth the trip. Reservations probably required.

- Lou Nayman, *Organization and Field Services*

Zagat's review:

For "New York chic" in a "government town" head to this New American "extravaganza" in the "plush" Mandarin Oriental in SW; its "sleek" look, with an open kitchen, a wall of flames in the bar and lots of steel, leather and wood, suits the "fashionable" enthusiasts of its "glorious" tasting menus, "attractive wine list" and "creative" details like the "fantastic mini-Parker House rolls"; add in a "personable" staff and you might want to save this "flawless operation" "for birthdays and anniversaries" – the "sticker shock makes it surprisingly easy to get a table."

Coppi's Organic

1414 U St. NW (bet. 14th & 15th Sts.), 202-319-7773

www.coppisorganic.com

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
3	4	3	M

Don't be put off that it's an organic Italian (red sauce) restaurant. They're not pretentious about it, and you wouldn't know it from the food, which is pretty authentic. Pizza's are excellent and come out of a real brick oven. Good pastas, pleasant atmosphere for lingering, good service, full bar, inexpensive wines and drinks. Owner used to race bicycles. Comfortable side booths seat 4, 6 in a pinch. Reasonably priced. On U just off 14th.

- Lou Nayman, *Organization and Field Services*

Zagat's review:

Fans "savor every bite" of the organic "inventive" Ligurian specials and "yummy" "creative" pizzas cooked in a wood-fired oven that's the open kitchen's "centerpiece" at this "friendly" U Street eatery – a "cozy, hip" spot that pays "homage" to the home country's bicycling history with related "paraphernalia throughout"; while some question whether this admittedly "better than average Italian" is worth the "hefty price", sweet tooths keep cycling "back for the Nutella calzone."

Crème

1322 U St. NW (13th St.), 202-134-1884

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
5	4	4	M

A U St gem. Very good southern comfort food with a few surprising twists. Entrees (terrific roast chicken, shrimp and grits, meat and potatoes featuring beef spare ribs and scalloped potatoes) in the \$12-18 range, but excellent bargain dinner burgers at

\$10 and a \$9 kobe beef hot dog. Appetizer and salad for inexpensive entree alternative. Full bar. Fills up early.

- Lou Nayman, *Organization and Field Services*

Zagat's review:

Dishing up "down-home dishes with a new flair" in the "trendy U Street corridor", this "stylish" New American "neighborhood joint" with "eager service" makes pork and beans "chic", and draws raves for its "most inspired" mushrooms; the "diverse crowd" at its "long" "black bar" or in the dining room can "pair chicken soup with a martini" or test-drive the "infamous \$9 Kobe hot dog" – but they'd better "go early", since it doesn't take reservations.

Equinox

818 Connecticut Ave. NW (bet H & I Sts.), 202-331-8118

www.equinoxrestaurant.com

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
5	5	5	E

This is my personal favorite. My husband and I save it for special occasions. The chef's tasting menu - where they pair the drink with each course is just the best.

- Cheryl Teare, *Union Leadership Institute*

Zagat's review:

Todd and Ellen Gray's "wonderful" Golden Triangle New American near the Oval Office rings "superb" to its many fans who fawn over the "highly innovative" tasting menus full of "exquisite delights" and "local flavors" paired with "tastefully chosen" wines (there are a la carte selections as well); the service is "attentive without being intrusive", and even if a few faultfinders want an "update" of the "ho-hum" decor, others find it amenable for "quiet" conversation; P.S. for a less-expensive option, try a "power lunch" instead.

FireFlies

1501 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria VA, 703-548-7200

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
5	3	3	N/A

I love it as a neighborhood hangout in the Del Ray section of Alexandria, but what draws other folks are the meals made from scratch on the premises, many in the big pizza oven. The 20-something owners both went to the Culinary Institute of America and are dedicated to great food at reasonable prices. They also have a good wine selection at only a \$5 surcharge per bottle. Take the Yellow Line to Braddock Road, turn right out of the station, right on Braddock, right on Mount Vernon and walk about eight blocks.

- Annette Licitra, *Editorial*

Zagat's review: Not included in the *Survey*.

WINNING ENTRY**

Fogo De Chao

1101 Pennsylvania Ave. NW (11th St.), 202-347-4668

www.fogodechao.com

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
3	4	5	E

I was in line for the bathroom (unisex) when a drunk lady broke the toilet seat and pulled the TP off the wall, pretty much trashing what was available to be trashed in the restroom in an effort to stay on her feet (I think she was hanging on to the TP to stabilize herself, then pulled it off the wall, lost her balance and ended up coming down with a crash on the toilet seat which dislodged it and sent her careening onto the floor where she knocked over a potted plant and displaced a trash can.) Entertaining!

- *Luke Peterson, Organization and Field Services*

Zagat's review:

Head to this "gluttonously wonderful" Downtown Brazilian steakhouse for an "endless procession" of gauchos slicing "mouthwatering" meats tableside ("all you can eat and then some") plus an "extensive" antipasto and salad bar and "constantly replenished" sides, all for a fixed price; "your stomach may be fuller than your wallet", but carnivores judge it "worth the splurge" and the pounds; P.S. it's good for groups as "there's no question how to divide the bill."

**Unscientific, purely subjective judging was conducted by the 2006 National Staff Meeting Committee Welcome Reception subcommittee.

Georgia Brown's

950 15th St. NW (bet. I & K Sts.), 202-393-4499

www.gbrowns.com

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
2	3	4	E

The Brunch is overrated! Don't waste your time!

- *Richelle Patterson, Educational Issues*

Zagat's review:

"Stick-to-your-ribs" "Southern comfort food" goes "up-scale" at this "classy" (if "noisy") Downtown "dining institution" near the White House where the service is "excellent" and the "satisfying" fare includes "divine" shrimp and grits, "addictive" fried green tomatoes and "delicious" fried chicken livers; just "expect to put on five pounds", especially at the "decadent Sunday jazz brunch" where you can "fill up" on the "limitless buffet" and then "box up" the entrée "to take home for dinner."

Good Hope Road Carry-out

1350 Good Hope Rd. SE, 202-678-7383

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
5	1	2	N/A

It's pay-n-go, but the food is ummm...ummm good!!! American and Chinese. I recommend the turkey burger with fried rice-extra onion and extra gravy.

- Allison Crawford, Organization and Field Services

Zagat's review: Not included in the Survey.

Hanks Oyster Bar

1624 Q Street, NW (betw. 16th and 17th Sts.), 202-462-4265

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
5	4	4	N/A

It is great for people watching but pretty dismal for food. Hanks -- on Q just next to JR's -- is a pretty spectacular exception. Delicious always fresh seafood expertly prepared. The \$19 lobster roll (fresh lobster meat, mayonnaise, served in an over-sized tasty hot dog bun and super fries) is not to be missed. Expect to pay in the twenties for entrees. Fresh oysters and fried clams for appetizers. Full bar, the kitchen space is too small for the preparation of desserts, so they serve complementary pieces of dark chocolate to end the meal. Unless you get there between 5:30 - 6:30, expect to wait. About 4 blocks from Dupont metro on the red line.

- Lou Nayman, Organization and Field Services

Zagat's review:

"Neighborhood charm" oozes from Jamie Leeds' tiny "pearl" of a seafood eatery in the Dupont Circle area, where an "upbeat" crew "knowledgeably guides diners through the daily offerings" of "delectable" oysters, "amazing lobster rolls", "fried clams how they're supposed to be" and other "wonderful" fresh fish; the "party atmosphere" in the "narrow" "retro" room and the sidewalk café "makes for a fun evening, but not a quiet dinner", so "arrive early" since they don't take reservations, and expect some local "flavor."

Hollywood East Cafe

2312 Price Ave. (Elkin St.), Wheaton, MD, 301-942-8282

www.hollywoodeastcafe.com

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
5	2	4	I

Interesting, different dishes in addition to the usual Cantonese favorites. Go for the food, not the ambiance.

- Rita Freedman, President's Office

2621 University Blvd. W. (Veirs Mill Rd.), Wheaton, MD, 240-290-9988

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
5	4	4	I

Newer than its sister restaurant Hollywood East Cafe (same owner), so decor is better, food just as good. Both moderately priced

- Rita Freedman, President's Office

Zagat's review:

The "homey" if "dingy" Price Avenue "original" in this pair of Wheaton Hong Kong-style Chinese "always" provides a satisfying adventure" with "authentic", "inventive" fare and a staff you can turn to "for help to avoid dishes skewed for Western palates"; the "new, spiffier" University Boulevard location is a "dressed-up version" of the "old" "favorite" with the added appeal of "outstanding" weekend dim sum – there are 60-plus selections and "the carts are plentiful."

Indique

3512-14 Connecticut Ave. NW (bet. Ordway & Porter Sts.), 202-244-6600

2 Wisconsin Circle (Western Ave.), Chevy Chase, MD, 301-656-4822

www.indique.com

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
5	5	5	M

Great Indian food with cool atmosphere. They serve very interesting cocktails too. Try the tamarind margarita if you are daring.

- Marci Young, *Educational Issues*

Zagat's review:

"Check your expectations at the door" of this "exotic Cleveland Park Indian where a "contemporary spin" on traditional dishes makes "believers" of the curry-cautious, while impressing "in-laws from India", an "intimate" (some say "crowded"), "romantic, but still happening" room and "reasonable prices" make it a "great spot"; N.B. its Chevy Chase sib opened post-*Survey* in a second-story loungey location where the focus is on tapas and innovative elixirs.

Island Jim's Crab Shack and Tiki Bar

901 Monroe St. NE, 202-635-8454

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
4	5	3	N/A

What a cute idea, I thought. An outdoor cafe with a tropical beach theme. There's even a 'sand pit' with lawn chairs. Woo hoo. It was a warm early September night. We sat at a table next to the tall exterior walls/fence with tropical foliage everywhere. Great! Let's order. While we waited for the food, I heard a 'rustling' sound coming from somewhere in the foliage next to the table. Patrons at the table next to us were wondering and asking if we'd hear it, too. After about the 3rd time, we asked to be moved to another table near the center of the restaurant - away from whatever was moving through the plants near the fences. While we sipped our tropical drinks and marveled in the surrounding environment (Calgon! Take me away!) my eyes centered on movement near the rear gate of the perimeter. There it was - the BIGGEST RAT I'd ever seen! And, then there was another one.

Oh, no. Not here. Not me. We asked and were immediately moved to an indoors table. Of course, I had to say something to the waiter.

"Did you know that there are rats out there?"

"Yes. Traps have been placed" he responded. I thought to myself "not enough of them and not big enough!" We finished our meal, paid the bill, and headed to the car. And as we approached the adjacent parking lot, what did we see? More RATS scurrying near

the garbage bins. Notes to self: 1) This is NOT a place I want to ever come again; 2) Call the Health Department and file a complaint!

- Joyce Kilgore, *Organization & Field Services*

Zagat's review: Not included in the *Survey*.

Jackie's

8081 Georgia Ave. (entrance on Sligo St.), Silver Spring, MD, 301-565-9700

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
5	5	5	M

Eclectic American food in a converted warehouse. The elvis burgers are incredible! This is a relatively new spot in the newly revitalized downtown Silver Spring area.

- Marci Young, *Educational Issues*

Zagat's review:

"Hands down the hippest spot in Silver Spring", this "garage converted into a bustling bistro" "surprises" first-timers with its "cool vibe" and "funky" "factory-chic" looks; though the frugal find fault with "small overpriced portions", a "lively crowd" appreciates American "comfort food with a zing" like "mini-Elvis burgers" and daily specials (fried chicken, meatloaf) that round out the "interesting menu."

Kam Fong Seafood Restaurant

807 7th St. NW, 202-898-1168

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
5	1	3	N/A

Authentic Cantonese (Southern Chinese/Hong Kong) food, and "dim sum". Make sure to try their seafood with pan fried egg noodles - this is a typical Cantonese noodle dish. Don't confuse it with "chow mein". This is far superior in taste and appearance. How to get there: Less than half a block from the exit at Chinatown/Gallery Place Metro Delivery takes about 45 minutes. Order early way before you're hungry.

- *Membership Division*

Zagat's review: Not included in the *Survey*.

Kolumbia, Restaurant

1801 K St. NW (18th St.), 202-331-5551

www.restaurantkolumbia.com

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
4	4	4	E

Different. Polish owners and chef. Great appetizers. Nice bar.

- Edward McElroy, *President's Office*

Zagat's review:

Chef Jamie Stachowski and his sommelier wife, Carolyn, are the "dynamic duo" powering this "eclectic" K Street New American where there's "always a surprise on the menu" to complement a "solid" wine list; the "long narrow bar" hosts an "upscale happy hour", and there are "ultra-discreet booths" in which to "meet a hip business associate for lunch" or for an "intimate" dinner, even though sticklers say the staff is "unpolished" and the décor needs a "spruce up."

La Loma

316 Massachusetts Ave. NE, 202- 548-2550

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
4	3	3	N/A

Service has always been crisp, but mostly because they'd rather see your table turn over than let you stick around for drinks!

- Jesse B Rauch, Public Employees

Zagat's review: Not included in the *Survey*.

Logan Tavern

1423 P St. NW (bet. 14th & 15th St.), 202-332-3710

www.logantavern.com

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
4	4	4	M

On P St. across from Whole Foods and on the same block as Merkado and Halo, Logan serves very satisfying comfort food, including excellent fried chicken, meat loaf, and burgers. Expect to pay in the high teens for entrees. Full bar serving their specialty, Stoli-Doli (vodka steeped in a vat of cut pineapples). No reservations, but there is a large candle-lit community table where singles or small groups can share seating with strangers. Bar is pretty active and a scene in and of itself. Good food, good value, good surroundings.

- Lou Nayman, Organization and Field Services

Zagat's review:

The old joke, "nobody goes there anymore – it's too crowded" aptly applies to this "laid-back" P Street hangout known for its "bustling, lively" brunch and "humongous portions" of "basic" American "comfort cooking" like "meatloaf that warms the heart and is easy on the wallet", "great burgers", the "best French toast ever" and "to-die-for" Bloody Marys during weekend brunch; but naysayers knock this "diner with pretensions" as simply "not worth the long wait" for "hit-or-miss" food and "snotty" service.

Luigino

1100 New York Ave. NW (bet. 11th & 12th Sts.), 202-371-0595

www.luigino.com

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
5	3	4	M

Excellent Italian with a northern tilt. Great young chef.

- Edward McElroy, President's Office

Zagat's review:

Downtown devotees of this "very reliable" Italian are drawn in by "delicioso pastas" like the "fabulously addictive" house-smoked salmon in pink vodka sauce served in "bright", "business-lunch appropriate" surroundings; even if the location is a bit "out-of-the-way" now that the Convention Center has moved to Mt. Vernon Square, it's still "convenient for theatergoers" who give it "a solid B"; dour diners are distracted by "slow service" and "tired" décor "in need of updating."

Malaysia Kopitiam

1827 M St. NW (bet. 18th & 19th Sts.), 202-833-6232

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
5	3	5	I

Authentic Malaysian food which is a combination of Malay, Chinese, and Indian influences. Very reasonable prices. Friendly service in a simple decor. Ask the waitress for what's popular and you won't be disappointed.

- *Accounting*

Zagat's review:

If "you like Chinese and Indian (and Thai), then Malaysian will rock your world" and this "dark" "subterranean find" in the Golden Triangle provides a "shockingly affordable", "most authentic" opportunity to try the "fascinating" cuisine; chef-owner Penny Phoon and her "friendly" staff are happy to "suggest or explain" her native dishes, and the "full-color pictures" in her "phonebook"-size menu save the "uninitiated" from "ordering disaster"; just ignore the "dumpy basement" digs to have a better time.

Merkado Kitchen

1443 P St. NW (bet. 14th & 15th St.), 202-299-0018

www.merkadodc.com

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
4	4	4	M

Pan-Asian/Latin fusion menu, very well prepared, many surprises, nicely presented. Run by the same people who own Logan Tavern, but somewhat pricier. Interesting pleasant surroundings, very good service. Full bar -- don't miss the ginger martinis.

- *Lou Nayman, Organizing*

Zagat's review:

East meets South at this "stylish", "roomy" Asian-Latin with "great cocktails" in the "now trendy neighborhood" of Logan Circle; after-theater diners and gentrifiers "bored of eating out" ignore the "slow" service and focus on "inventive" dishes that "make the odd enjoyable" yet are "friendly enough for Yankee stomachs"; but critics cringe over this "weird mix" of "fusion gone bad."

Mi Rancho

8701 Ramsey Ave. (Cameron St.), Silver Spring, MD 301-588-4872

19725A Germantown Rd. (Middlebrook Rd.), Germantown, MD 301-515-7480

www.miranchorestaurant.com

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
5	3	4	I

Tex-Mex fare with a flair. The fajitas are fabulous. A terrific place (Silver Spring location) to go in the summer for margaritas in the outside dining area. Also very family friendly.

- *Marci Young, Educational Issues Department*

Zagat's review:

These "lively", "crowded" "no-frills" Tex-Mex "stalwarts" in Germantown and Silver Spring, Maryland, may look "like someone's basement", but they always "feel like there's a party going on" with "*muy fantástico*" margaritas and "huge portions" of "hot and sizzling" fare; maybe they "aren't adventurous", but with such "fast service" and "decent prices", they're even "good for families" if you go early.

Momoyama Japanese Restaurant

231 2nd St. NW, 202-737-0397

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
5	3	4	N/A

If you're in the mood for good, but reasonably priced sushi while in DC, Momoyama is a nifty little spot (VERY little - only about 15 seats plus a tiny sushi bar) within easy walking distance of AFT at 231 2nd Street, NW (tucked away behind the Carpenters' and Letter Carriers' buildings). My experience with the raw sushi menu is limited, but others have told me it is delicious. If you're pregnant like me or just don't do the raw fish thing, don't let that stop you from trying out the teriyaki, tempura or noodle soups on the menu. I'd try them myself, but the need to satisfy my food cravings always compels me to order the yummy vegetarian sushi instead. Open weekdays from 11am until 10:30pm for lunch and dinner. Enjoy!

- *JennyEvans-Muir, Meetings and Travel*

Zagat's review: Not included in the *Survey*.

Nora

2132 Florida Ave. NW (R St.), 202-462-5143

www.noras.com

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
5	4	5	E

Organic -- but wait! The food is terrific, and they don't make a big deal about it. This is a special occasion place, pricey (expect to pay \$75 to \$100 per person, depending on drink selections). Steaks, poultry, rockfish have all been super. Artisanal cheeses. Hudson Valley foie gras, a vegetarian prix fixe dinner, a wonderful selection of US wines (Oregon, California) and a surprising selection of spirits (some good and hard to find rye whiskeys). The atmosphere is comfortable with tables decently spaced, but there's a nice more intimate room walled in on one side by the glassed-in wine cellar for privacy, if that's what you're looking for. You'll probably need reservations. Valet parking (at additional charge), if you don't live in walking distance. Ha Ha Ha.

- *Lou Nayman, Organizing*

Zagat's review:

Head here to "celebrate anniversaries and birthdays or just to enjoy wonderful" New American cuisine courtesy of Nora Pouillon, who uses "fresh organic ingredients" in her "inspired" dishes; the "outstanding" "spot-on" servers move smoothly around the "enchanted" space – an old carriage house "near DuPont Circle galleries" – that "attracts movers, shakers" and legions of loyalists, but a few nitpickers point to a certain luster that's "faded."

Nova Europa

1311 Lanberton Drive, Silver Spring, MD, 601-649-6690

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
5	4	5	N/A

great seafood

- *Rita Freedman, President's office*

Zagat's review: Not included in the *Survey*.

Pacific Café

1129 Pennsylvania Ave. SE, 202-543-1600

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
5	3	5	N/A

It's in SE DC on Pennsylvania Avenue, a cab ride from the office but really delicious Thai Food. Tim Shea will kick me for recommending it as it's a Capitol Hill best kept secret.

- Tish Olshefski, PSRP

Zagat's review: Not included in the *Survey*.

Panache

1725 DeSales St. NW, 202-293-7760

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
4	3	3	N/A

While some places have tapas - Panache has mini entrees they call appetizers. I had a filet and portobella mushrooms with goat cheese, delicious and I was full. Very tasty and reasonable. Next to the ABC office across the street from the Mayflower.

- Deb Corbin, AFT Plus Member Benefits

Zagat's review: Not included in the *Survey*.

Penang

1837 M St. NW (19th St.), 202-822-8773

www.penangusa.com

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
5	5	4	M

Malaysian food that is tasty. The bar and dining areas are both pretty lively. It's downtown on M and 18th Streets.

- Marci Young, Ed Issues

Zagat's review:

"Mango chicken, snazzy drinks and a great-looking crowd" make this "fun" "south Dupont hot spot" – a cross "between a classy restaurant and a lounge" – "perfect for a Friday nights", even if it may be "difficult to get the staff's attention"; add in "fabulous three- course lunch special" and "\$5 happy-hour martinis" and "what more could you want?"; but rivals retort it's only "trendy, fusion seekers" who fall for this "dumbed down" Malaysian.

PS7

777 I St. NW, 202-742-8550

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
5	4	5	N/A

My stepson, Rethe, is a chef at this new restaurant - and so is his best friend, Kylan. It doesn't get any better than that. Nouveau cuisine/ultra modern decor. Fabulous rest rooms with goldfish and mysterious faucets.

- Karen Schiffhauer, Public Employees

Zagat's review: Not included in the *Survey*.

Raku

1900 Q St. NW (19th St.), 202-265-7258

7240 Woodmont Ave. (bet Bethesda Ave. & Elm St.), Bethesda, MD, 301-718-8681

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
5	4	4	M

Great pan-asian cuisine. I love to get sushi but the soups are also really good. It's in Dupont Circle very close to the Metro (red line).

- *Marci Young, Ed Issues*

Zagat's review:

This "high-energy" pair of "funky" "Asian diners" with "consistently good" fare "draws a hip, young crowd" to Dupont and Bethesda for a "nice mix" of multicultural fusion (plus sushi in DC), much of it served "tapas-style"; they're "frenetic on weekends" due to "totally reasonable" prices, but some say "waiting forever" to have "club music pounding" in their ears isn't their idea of fun; others opt to "sit outdoors on a sunny day and people-watch."

Ristorante Piccolo

1068 31st St. NW, 202-342-7414

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
5	5	5	N/A

A beautiful, romantic restaurant with excellent food and wait staff.

Located in Georgetown.

- *Employee Benefits*

Zagat's review: Not included in the *Survey*.

Royal Mile Pub

2407 Price Avenue, Wheaton, MD, 301-946-4511

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
4	5	5	N/A

Scottish pub, with Irish music. My best experience was walking in and seeing Catherine Chapman performing with fellow musicians.

- *Rita Freedman, President's office*

Zagat's review: Not included in the *Survey*.

Sabang Indonesian Restaurant

2504 Ennalls Ave., Wheaton, MD, 301-942-7859

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
4	3	2	N/A

Indonesian food.

- *Rita Freedman, President's Office*

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
5	3	4	N/A

This restaurant has been around for more than 10 years with a faithful clientele. It continues to offer some of the best Indonesian food on the East Coast. During the weekdays, they have a \$6.95 buffet, and jazz performances in the evenings (there will be a cover charge). They are located at 2504 Ennalls Avenue, Wheaton MD 20902, Ph: (301) 942-7859. Within easy walking distances (about 3 blocks) from the Wheaton metro station on the Red line to Glenmont.

- *Membership*

Zagat's review: Not included in the *Survey*.

Tesoros

4400 Connecticut Ave. NW, 202-363-6766

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
5	4	4	N/A

My favorite neighborhood Italian place!

- Joan Devlin, *Ed Issues*

Zagat's review: Not included in the *Survey*.

Thaiphoon

2011 S St. NW (20th St.), 202-667-3505

www.thaiphoon.com

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
4	4	5	I

Best cashew chicken in DC.

- Sam Lieberman, *Legal*

Zagat's review:

"Brushed steel, swank lighting" and huge "froufrou" "bargain" cocktails set the mood for the "lively young crowd" that "squeezes into the sardine can of a dining room" at this "trendy" Dupont Thai where the "waits on weekends can be a drag"; here, and at a "chic" Pentagon city counterpart, the "consistently good" fare is "easy on the wallet", but a few who find it "so Americanized that it tastes like Chinese takeout" suggest "asking them to up the heat if you like spicy."

Tuscana West

1350 I St. NW, 202-289-7300

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
4	4	3	N/A

I took a large group to the restaurant for a business dinner and it was no problem. The food was very good and the prices very reasonable. The decor of the restaurant is very nice. A very good experience.

- Tom Moran, *PSRP*

Zagat's review: Not included in the *Survey*.

Wasabi

908 17th St. NW, 202-822-2005

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
5	5	4	N/A

If you love Japanese sushi bars and are looking for a quick bite to eat, Wasabi is the place for you! It's located on 17th and I, NW, right in between the Farragut West and Farragut North metro stops. If you don't like raw fish, don't fret; Wasabi offers rolls made with grilled fish as well. The grilled yellow fin tuna and herb salad is my personal favorite!

- Gillian Moise, *Educational Issues*

Zagat's review: Not included in the *Survey*.

Zaytina

Pepco Bldg., 701 Night St. NW (G St.), 202-638-0800

www.zaytinya.com

Food	Décor	Service	*Cost
5	4	4	M

Delicious variety of small dish tapas - Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, Spanish. Scrumptious warm bread with olive oil. Cool atmosphere. Make reservations. It's at the Gallery Place Metro.

- Janet Bass, Public Affairs

Zagat's review:

"Stunning, sleek white walls provide a dramatic back-ground for a buzzing crowd" at this "fabulous" "fast-paced" Penn Quarter "meze heaven" where an "epic menu" of Middle-Eastern/Mediterranean (Turkish, Greek and Lebanese) "unique" small plates encourages "sharing", and a "knowledgeable staff keeps it from being overwhelming"; its "divine" "big city atmosphere" (one of the "best-looking restaurants in town"), "excellent" prices and "great service" make "tables hard to come by."

*Based on the results of Zagat's *2007 Washington, DC/Baltimore Restaurant Survey*, covering 1,051 establishments as tested, and tasted, by 6,714 local restaurant-goers. Cost is based on Zagat's ratings estimating the price of dinner with one drink and tip and is a benchmark only. Lunch is usually 25% less.

I - \$25 and below

M - \$26 to \$40

E - \$41 to \$65

VE - \$66 or more

Learn more about Zagat's Survey at www.zagat.com