

## UPTOWN SUSHI

1131 Uptown Park Boulevard, Houston Texas 77056

To step into Uptown Sushi is to step into a chic and zoomy décor, a décor which one might expect to find on the Sunset Strip or in South Beach, a la Philippe Starck. This curvilinear space with its sensual lighting and flowing white linen drapes creates a pleasing backdrop for some of Houston's sleekest young forms, AND for some extraordinarily fine Asian cuisine. In addition to a very long list of sushi and highly creative specialty rolls, Uptown Sushi offers the equivalent of Asian tapas, small mouth-watering plates such as Eggroll Prawns (battered in flaky eggroll cookies with apricot salsa) or Baked Pink Scallops (petite pink scallops baked with Japanese mayo and masago caviar). "New Vogue Entrees" include Katsu Chicken Piccata, Blackened Lobster and Shrimp Fettucine, and Spicy Pork with Mama's spicy pepper paste. Much of the seating is in comfortable booths, and if you are lucky enough to get one with a view of the happening bar area, you will be doubly rewarded.

## LA VISTA

1936 Fountainview, Houston Texas 77057

This innovative sidewalk café – where you can bring your own wine – has for some time now been not only a place to get an excellent meal, but a place to see and be seen as well. Whether your neighbors at the next table are Governor Mark and Linda Gayle White, or real estate brokers celebrating the closing of a big deal, or a couple enjoying a nice little meal away from the kids, 'everyone knows everyone' at La Vista, and everyone is 'a regular.' Chef and owner Greg Gordon has a special way with food (he teaches cooking classes from time to time at Rice Epicurean Market just next door to the restaurant), and the constantly evolving menu features prudently priced little masterpieces of gastronomy. Moules Mariniere (mussels in white wine sauce) is an excellent starter, as are bruschetta or a variety of exciting salads. Dinner entrees range from lightly spicy seafood with angel hair pasta to more hearty grilled veal or pork chops served with Provencal vegetables, lightly sauteed in olive oil. For the lighter appetite, an excellent selection of personalized pizzas is available. No reservations are accepted at La Vista, but sitting in the little circle of folding chairs, sipping wine, and chatting with other waiting customers is a perfectly acceptable way to build an appetite, and to pass a summer's eve.

**WINE COMMENTS:** It is legal in Texas to cork an unfinished bottle in a restaurant and to take it home with you...a waiter should never fully upend a Bordeaux bottle to get the last drop into the glass, since the shoulders of the Bordeaux bottle are there to trap any remaining sediment and keep it in the bottle...some experienced diners tip the same for the service of a more expensive bottle as for the service of a less expensive bottle, reasoning that the same amount of service is involved, no matter the price of the contents of the bottle.

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*Note: By way of qualifications for reviewing restaurants, Hankamer has owned and operated numerous restaurants, coffee shops, hotels, discotheques and banquet halls over the last forty years; he has travelled to over 70 countries and has studied and lived in Europe for over three years; he was co-owner of a home delivery wine of the month club and imported his own wine labels for years.*

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