



community (405)  
 automotive (1,185)  
 buy, sell, trade (2,969)  
 musician (477)  
 rentals (1,675)  
 real estate for sale (1,502)  
 jobs (2,166)  
 personals (1,229)  
 adult entertainment (317)  
 services (1,298)



## Restaurants

Thursday, March 15, 2007

NEWS	BLOGS	RESTAURANTS	ENTERTAINMENT	MUSIC	MOVIES	BEST OF	CLASSIFIED	PROMOTIONS	SEARCH	AD INDEX
------	-------	-------------	---------------	-------	--------	---------	------------	------------	--------	----------

[write to the editor](#) | [email a friend](#) | [print article](#)

### Roll On, Columbia

Columbia's a college town. It's also an eatin' town. Big-time.

By [Ian Froeb](#)

Published: March 14, 2007

An ATM that dispenses five-dollar bills: I must be in a college town.



Tyson Anderson

Whatever you choose at Columbia's Wine Cellar and Bistro, you'll likely be impressed.

#### Where:

Columbia, Missouri

**Subject(s):** [Wine Cellar and Bistro](#), [Cucina Sorella](#), [Flat Branch Pub & Brewing](#), [Shakespeare's Pizza](#), [Sycamore](#), [Booches Billiards Hall](#)

Specifically, I'm standing in the vestibule of a bank in Columbia, Missouri, the home of Columbia College, Stephens College and the University of Missouri's flagship campus. At last count, I have (barely) enough in my account that withdrawing it in five-dollar increments isn't essential — but since I don't need much more than five bucks for lunch at **Booches Billiards Hall** (110 South Ninth Street, Columbia; 573-874-9519), it's convenient.

Booches opened in 1884 — Chester A. Arthur was president, kids — so I'm probably the last person in the world to learn that Booches a) doesn't take credit or debit cards and b) serves only burgers.

"And cheeseburgers," our waiter says. "They're small, so most people usually order two. We don't have fries. We do have chips. In bags."

My fiancée and I each order two cheeseburgers, a bag of barbecue chips and a soft drink. While we wait, we admire the sheer scale of Booches, a long, high-ceilinged space, dark wood and dim lighting, dominated by pool and snooker tables. Regulars' cues are stored along the walls, protected by tiny padlocks. It should reek of a century's cigarette smoke, but thanks to Columbia's ban on smoking in bars and restaurants, it smells like ground beef frying.

Our cheeseburgers arrive wrapped in wax paper. No plates. They're small compared to a burger from, say, O'Connell's, but not slider small. Two make a filling lunch. The flavor is straightforward: beefy, salty, cheesy. I take mine plain (your

### Most Popular

[Most Viewed](#)   [Most Emailed](#)   [Restaurants](#)

- ❖ [Crack Up](#)  
How to gain success and notoriety in the crack trade
- ❖ [Basketball by the Book: A Riverfront Times Investigation](#)  
The Vashon High School Wolverines have won five state titles in the past eight years. But did they play by the rules?
- ❖ [The Strange, Strange Tale of the U.S.S. Inaugural](#)  
An old warship meets its most formidable enemy — the Mississippi River.
- ❖ [Wii Love It](#)  
Nintendo finally gets 1-Up on the competition.
- ❖ [As the World Turns...to Branson.](#)  
Plus: Spicy sex games for the Christian couple.

click here to learn more

#### Blogs

- ❖ [Review Preview: Columbia, Missouri Food, Restaurants](#) 12:41PM 03/14/07
- ❖ [Stipe Hunting News, Media, Music](#) 09:30AM 03/12/07
- ❖ [Leaving on a Jetplane Music, Local Music](#) 05:30PM 03/11/07
- ❖ [Lean and 'Zine Music, Local Music, Technology](#) 05:43PM 03/09/07
- ❖ [Small Plates: Friday, 3/9 Food, Restaurants](#) 02:50PM 03/09/07

#### Be Social

Ain't Misbehavin' A Number  
 Children of Men Creflo Dollar  
**DVD** Film listings  
 Global Foods Market Hana's Suitcase Heartbreak House  
**Letters** Letters from Two Jima  
 Menopause The Musical Mississippi Nights  
 Of Spirit and Form: The... Second class citizen Stagger Lee  
 Straub's Sundance 2007 The Dubliner Via Dolorosa



click here to learn more

-----Stunning  
 lighted address signs-----  
 Etched in stunning  
 crystal-----  
[Gold Coins List](#)

topping choices are onion, pickle, ketchup and mustard) and briefly wonder why we bother putting anything at all on our burgers. Those at Booches are — simply — outstanding.

We've come to Columbia for the True/False Film Festival, a celebration of documentary filmmaking. Our schedule is tight, but I'm determined to sample — sample being the key word here — as many of Columbia's restaurants as I can in 48 hours.

We don't have time for a proper dinner this evening, but we stop in **Sycamore** (800 East Broadway, Columbia; 573-874-8090) for drinks and appetizers. Sycamore is as big as Booches — at least three times as long as it is wide; maybe two stories tall — but that's the extent of the similarities. Sycamore is a modern, sophisticated space, all earth tones and burnished wood.

Chef Mike Odette's menu highlights local, seasonal ingredients. We order lobster pot pie (lobster isn't, strictly speaking, an ingredient native to Missouri, but it's chilly, and pot pie sounds just right), gnocchi with butternut squash and fried sage leaves, and an excellent shiraz from the thoughtful, affordable by-the-glass list. The pot pie's crust is soft and flaky, its top puffed out to an impressive size. The pie has more potato than lobster, but the lobster is perfectly cooked, each piece a burst of buttery sweetness. The gnocchi are excellent, not too heavy, not too light, and the squash is tender and sweet, but the fried sage leaves — only three of them, sadly — steal this dish. The frying gives the strong flavor of sage a mellow, slightly nutty undertone. If James Beard were God, this would be the bar snack in Heaven.

We're still hungry, but we need to head to the theater. We're starving by the time the film is over, so we make the pilgrimage to **Shakespeare's Pizza** (225 South Ninth Street, Columbia; 573-449-2454). There's not much left to say about this institution, the Platonic ideal of a pizza joint in a college town — of a pizza joint anywhere, really. We're served a delicious pizza with pepperoni and mushrooms; the pepperoni are sliced thick, a very nice touch that gives the whole pizza a boost of flavor. Shakespeare's claims to stay open "past your bedtime." We prove it. We're so tired we nearly leave without our souvenir plastic Shakespeare's cups.

We enjoyed our stop at Sycamore last night so much that we've returned today for lunch. I have a weakness for dishes that combine pork and pork, so I order the sandwich with pork loin and bacon (and fontina cheese, grilled onions, sun-dried tomato mayonnaise and barbecue sauce) on focaccia. This is good, especially the pork loin, from nearby Patchwork Family Farms, and I also like the "Hummus Wrap": cum-in-spiked hummus, roasted red peppers and cucumbers in a whole-wheat pita made in-house.

My fiancée goes to a film. I wander around downtown, drinking too much coffee. When we meet up again, I need to settle my caffeinated nerves, so we head to **Flat Branch Pub & Brewing** (115 South Fifth Street, Columbia; 573-499-0400) for a beer and — since I can resist pretzels and cheese dip no more than I can unholy combinations of pork — a snack.

Flat Branch, which opened in 1994, offers beer in a wide range of styles, from traditional ales to brews spiked with green chiles. With its hoppy body and hint of coriander, Katy Trail Pale Ale reminds me of Sierra Nevada Pale Ale, while Oil Change Oatmeal Stout (so named because Flat Branch used to be an auto dealership) is rich, creamy and filling — perfect for a late-winter afternoon.

For dinner we visit the **Wine Cellar and Bistro** (505 Cherry Street, Columbia; 573-442-7281). You enter at street level, then descend a ramp into the cozy dining room where tables are nestled among the wine racks. It's a

## Recent Articles

## Related Articles

## Recent Articles By Ian Froeb

- ❖ [Dolce' aims high -- but does it hit Ian's sweet spot?](#)  
Appearance ain't everything at this downtown restaurant/club.
- ❖ [KoKo's pan-Latin menu is at its best when it's all over the map.](#)  
This south-city spot tackles big flavors head-on.
- ❖ [Ba Le and Cheeburger Cheeburger break the chain mentality.](#)  
Fast food ain't necessarily bad food.
- ❖ [The Quintessential Crêpe](#)  
Pancakes rule — but the crêpe is king.
- ❖ [French Kissed](#)  
Ian makes out (like a bandit) at Franco.

## National Features

## East Bay Express

[Diagnosis: Murder](#)

Thanks to a harrowing ritual called "The Match," being a medical student has never been more frightening.

By **Monya De**

## Cleveland Scene

[Amish Girls Gone Wild](#)

They're not so "plain" after you get a few beers into 'em.

By **Denise Grollmus**

## SF Weekly

[Don Nelson Just Said the](#)["F" Word](#)

Can the NBA's most outspoken coach fix the Golden State Warriors?

By **Martin Kuz**

## City Pages

[Officer Grumpke](#)

Meet the cop who called America's only Muslim congressman a terrorist.

By **G.R. Anderson Jr.**

[Cute Yorkies for Rehoming](#)

[Smith & Wesson 38 Cal. Airweight Revolver](#)

[More buy, sell, trade ads](#)

lovely, even romantic, space, and executive chef Craig Cyr's menu reveals a man passionate about food.

Consider the description of the duck confit appetizer: "Mexican vanilla, juniper and garlic marinated Muscovy duck with watercress salad, candied yuzu, Goatsbeard cheese and Vietnamese-cinnamon-roasted, shag-bark hickory nuts."

My first reaction: "Wow."

My second reaction: "What's yuzu?" (It's a citrus fruit common to China, Korea and Japan.)

[Show All](#)

[1](#) [2](#) [Next Page »](#)

---

[Write Your Comment](#)

[About Us](#) | [Work for Riverfront Times](#) | [Esubscribe](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Problem With the Site?](#) | [RSS](#) | [Site Map](#)  
©2007 Village Voice Media All rights reserved.