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nightlife



Scout out the South Loop

The Scout Waterhouse & Kitchen 1301 S. Wabash Ave. 312-705-1595



Off to a good star

'Hood's latest upscale sports bar already has its game face on

By Emily Van Zandt

The concept of an upscale sports bar is nothing new—add some fancy cheese on your burgers, keep the beer list long and full of craft, and throw some flat-screens on the wall. So what makes The Scout Waterhouse & Kitchen stand out? Location, location, location. It's a formula that hasn't made big strides in the South Loop (Jimmy Green's comes close), so when we heard that The Scout would be taking over the former Opera space, we stopped by on a game day to check it out.





» Lincoln Park whiskey oasis **Delilah's** (2771 N. Lincoln Ave.) celebrates their 18th anniversary from 4 p.m.-2 a.m. » **Derby** (1224 W. Webster Ave.), Big Onion Tavern Group's new Lincoln Park project, looks like it will be open and serving mint juleps by October.

» Ethyl's Beer & Wine Dive

(324 S. Racine Ave.) is set to celebrate the unofficial end of summer with a pig roast Sunday at noon for \$12 per person.



Get there early ...

if you're planning on posting up at the bar up front. The night we stopped in, I pegged the crowd to the Bears game that was in progress, but from what I heard from staff and a friend who had dropped by before, the bar is almost always packed. Not bad for being open only a few weeks. The crowd seemed young but not sloppy with a mix of guys meeting up for beers and the game, girls in heels and short skirts, and couples grabbing a quick bite.

The menu...

has anything you'd crave on game day, plus a few extras. Dive into flatbread pizzas (\$6-\$7) or a huge burger and fries (\$8-\$11) or opt for a shared meal with small plates like pulled-pork sliders (\$8), chicken nachos (\$7) and beer mussels (\$8).



Group can't agree on one game? ...

This is your spot. TVs line the walls every few inches, which can be a bit dizzying when they're all tuned to the same channel. But on a Saturday or Sunday this fall, you'd better believe patrons aren't going to miss a minute of their favorite team. Try to score one of the oversized leather booths toward the back of the main room for optimal fantasy-team bonding. But the cocktail list ... leaves something to be desired. The solo gin fizz (\$11) is an overly sweet mix of gin, blood orange nectar, soda and a heavy pour of maraschino liqueur. The Tortuga (\$12) is a rather confusing mix of tequila, St. Germain, lime and grapefruit juices with a chili pepper garnish. Our table couldn't quite figure out why a drink named Tortuga wasn't rum-based and the cocktail would have benefited from a much stronger taste from the peppers. With a dozen cocktails at \$10-\$12, it's an impressive list for a sports bar, but the mixes are hit and miss.

Just wait until ...

football season gets into full swing. This place is going to be a hub for sports watchers in the neighborhood. With ridiculously easy access to the Roosevelt stop and the benefit of being one of the few upscale sports options in the neighborhood, The Scout should have no trouble pulling in a steady group of weekend regulars.

And if that grilled cheese looks familiar ...

you're right. Scout co-owner Chris Bravos was formerly involved with The Pony and created its signature 14-inch grilled-cheese sandwich, which now appears on The Scout menu in a slightly different form: Try the sharable sandwiches (\$9) in a triple cheese or "CheeseBrook" version (which incorporates Canadian bacon) with a tomato basil sauce for dipping.

Bottom line

The Scout Waterhouse & Kitchen has its formula down: sleek and comfortable decor, plenty of seating, hearty (and generally affordable) eats, and a drink menu that has something for everyone in your group. Add to that a fast-moving and personable staff and five TVs within your view at all times, and you've got one sports-watching spot that will stay hot this fall.

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