

## San Jose After Dark: Cool Dining and Hip Nightlife

**SAN JOSE, CA** (August 30, 2007) — San Jose is growing up. Its more complex, multifaceted persona now supports a fine dining scene with everything from the taquerias of its youth to restaurants sporting Wine Spectator magazine Awards of Excellence. And the variety of its evening entertainment ranges from hip ultra-lounges to outdoor movies. With so much at their fingertips, visitors find plenty of fun to suit their tastes and rhythms.

### From Diners and Delis to Steak and Seafood Houses

Although you'll find great places to eat throughout the city, two major areas—Downtown and Santana Row—make great neighborhoods for strolling, and finding exactly what you're in the mood for: cheap eats in a funky setting, casually sleek venues, or fine dining to wow a date or an investor.

#### Downtown

A San Jose institution since 1958, **Paolo's** has award-winning Italian cuisine in an intimate atmosphere. The recently remodeled **Original Joe's Italian** restaurant, bar, and lunch counter is two years older, and beloved especially for steaks and veal. You can find terrific seafood at the upscale **McCormick & Schmick's**, or the bright and airy **Scott's Seafood Grill & Bar**. Tiny **Good Karma Vegan Deli** offers a fresh change of pace, but for that sports bar fix, it's **San Jose Bar & Grill**—all only a few minutes walking distance from downtown hotels and the convention center.

In north downtown is San Pedro's Square, where business and upscale diners head to **71 St. Peter Mediterranean Grill**, bistro, and wine bar, or the new **San Pedro Square Bistro & Wine Bar**. The beautiful **A.P. Stump's** old-style chophouse is sure to impress, in the historic Masson-Lefranc Building. The Square also has roomy restaurants with uncomplicated, crowd-pleasing menus, for big groups or families with children: The **Sonoma Chicken Coup**—with its spacious patio—and **Peggy Sue's** 50's-style diner offer budget-friendly options. **Picasso's Grill** is especially attractive to large business groups.

#### Santana Row

The upscale retail, dining, and residential development Santana Row sports more than 30 places to eat, drink, or have coffee. Jewel-toned Amber India's lounge ambience and terrific food make reservations a must, while **The Left Bank** percolates with a lively French bistro flavor. Slip onto a leather banquette at **Maggiano's Little Italy** for family-style classics atop red-checked tablecloths. Twenty-somethings love the hip and upbeat **Sino's** modern Chinese cuisine, by Chris Yeo, chef and owner of **Straits Café**, which fuses Singaporean and Southeast Asian cuisines. Need more fish in your diet? Try no-frills **Yankee Pier** seafood house, or elegantly modern **Citrus'** seafood at the chic Hotel Valencia.

In addition to Indian, American, and continental favorites, San Jose dining is flush with Latin, Spanish, and Asian flavors.

#### Spanish and Mexican Flair

San Jose attracts innovative and talented chefs from Latin and Spanish kitchens worldwide. Downtown, there's authentic Spanish **Picasso's Tapas** on West Santa Clara, and the fusion of Caribbean and South and Central American cuisines at fancy new **Azucar Latin Bistro and Mojito Bar**. **La Victoria Taqueria** near San Jose State is informal and welcoming with Mexican comfort food, topped off with their famous orange sauce. **Tres Gringos Baja Cantina** boasts off-the-clock, beach-themed fun, with Santana Row's answer to the cantina being the 1900's-style **Consuelo Mexican Bistro**.

#### Asian Influence

San Jose's large Vietnamese population, the largest outside Vietnam, translates into many authentic Vietnamese restaurants, such as friendly **Khanh's** near Santana Row, and those along Tully and Story Roads. One of America's few Japantowns runs along East Jackson Street, where **Gombe** dishes out noodles and home cooking, and little **Kaita** expertly cooks cutlets and slices sushi. Fly your taste buds further east for Asian-influenced Hawaiian food and cocktails at Jackson Street's **Hukilau Aloha Spirit**. **Blowfish Sushi** at Santana Row displays beautiful people eating beautiful fish, and further south sits **Krungthai**, venerated for two-decades, now at two locations on Winchester Boulevard. Downtown, diners love decorative, low-key **House of Siam**, and the upbeat, suave **E&O Trading Company** Southeast Asian grill.

## “Wow” Food

With San Jose grown so epicurean, why drive elsewhere for a four-star dinner or to celebrate special occasions? San Jose’s downtown hotels feature fine foods in gorgeous surroundings. The stately Italian **Il Fornaio**, in the historical Sainte Claire Hotel, or the Fairmont’s old-New-York-style bar and restaurant Grill on the Alley offer classic hotel dining—as does elegant, high-ceilinged **La Pastaia** in the Hotel De Anza. Modern twists on the classics are on the menu at chef Michael Mina’s **Arcadia Modern American Steakhouse**, in the Marriott, and Santana Row’s Hotel Valencia features fine food in modern rooms at **Citrus**.

Plenty of standalone restaurants downtown have fine reputations, such as **Morton’s The Steakhouse** upscale steak and seafood restaurant; award-winning **Emile’s**, dishing out European-influenced California cuisine atop white linen since 1973; and the less formal, though still top-of-the-line, **Hawg’s Seafood**.

## Wine Tasting

Of course, wine tasting is one of California’s favorite recreations, and wine bars serving flights of wines for tasting and food pairings with wine have sprung up all over: Santana Row’s **Vintage Wine Bar** pours over 25 wines by the glass, and the nearby **Vintage Wine Merchants** offers tastings, premium bottles, and accessories for sale. **Cielo** rooftop wine bar highlights tastings with lovely Santa Cruz mountain views from the Hotel Valencia; **Village California Bistro and Wine Bar** serves flights, half-bottles, and bottles. Downtown, **J. Lohr** winery opened its own tasting room, and **A Perfect Finish** dessert and wine bar has special Thursdays tastings. In the neighboring town of Campbell is **Pinder Winery’s** tasting room. Over in Los Gatos, you’ll find **Testarossa Vineyards Tasting & Gift Shop**, and **Backyard Wineries**—a tasting and retail shop for the vineyards **Clos La Chance**, as well as Fleming Jenkins, co-owned by world-famous figure skating champion, Peggy Fleming.

Or, go to the source: many wineries themselves are within a forty-minute drive of downtown San Jose. Sit atop a mountain, sipping wine as coastal breezes ruffle your hair at **Ridge Vineyards** in Cupertino. Literally just down the road, taste fine wine in the 1896-vintage red brick building of **Picchetti**. Picnic at internationally acclaimed **David Bruce** in the hills of Los Gatos. You could just putter around Saratoga, and visit mountainside **Savannah-Chanelle**, the new tasting room for **Cinnabar** (named for the local mercury ore), and **Cooper-Garrod**. Further up the Santa Cruz range sits **Thomas Fogarty** of Woodside.

## Nightlife

When the sun drops below the mountains and fresh, cool breezes stir, San Jose doesn’t retire for the night. Summer was made for free outdoor movies, and **Cinema St. James** rolls the reels Fridays at dusk in **St. James Park**; **Cinema San Pedro** lights up Wednesday nights in San Pedro Square. Visual arts take center stage in up-and-coming SoFA, the South of First Area, which hosts South First Friday each month except July, from “8 ‘til late.” Galleries, shops, and the **San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles** is open for shoppers and browsers, as does **KALEID**, an artists coop in temporary quarters at the Fourth Street Garage. The showcase for Latin art is **MACLA (Movimiento de Arte y Cultura Latina Americana)** contemporary arts space on South First.

## Microbrews, Pubs, and Laughs

Sometimes you just want to kick back with a beer, and that’s when you head to San Pedro’s Square for **O’Flaherty’s Irish Pub** with live Irish music; or the **Tied House** brewpub for its own beers and food. Downtown, **Gordon Biersch** pulls its own brews to the sounds of swing and other live music in the Courtyard. The **Britannia Arms Pub** is a cozy British pub inside and a bier garden outside, but the rowdier crowds and bar-top dancers favor **Mission Ale House**. Over in Santana Row, **Rosie McCann’s Irish Pub** offers a friendly, uptown Ireland vibe. And if it’s German beer you’re after, **Harry’s Hofbrau** in west San Jose serves it up with cafeteria-style food.

Need a laugh at the end of the day? Try a conventional comedy club like the **Improv** downtown or nearby **Comedy Sportz**, which just celebrated its 20th anniversary of performing in the style of “Whose Line is it Anyway?,” a famous television improvisational show featuring audience participation. Or, depending on your sense of humor and mood, there’s laughs to be found at Japantown’s **7 Bamboo**, voted San Jose’s best karaoke.

## The Night Comes Alive with Music

Stylin’ evenings were made for the Montgomery Hotels’ **Paragon Restaurant and Bar**, for upscale casual dining, live jazz, and even bocce ball. But perhaps the best known live jazz venue in San Jose is the sophisticated **Hedley Club** at Hotel De Anza.

Every September, San Jose celebrates its Mexican heritage during the **San José International Mariachi Festival**, through music, dance, food, and shopping. For an even smaller entrance fee—nada—the **Music in the Park** concert series plays great R&B, alternative, reggae, rock, and jazz on Thursday evenings from July to September at the Plaza de Cesar Chavez. In June, visit **Music in the Other Park** (in St. James Park, on Thursdays).

## Even Later Nights

If you head out when others are heading home, or just aren't ready to call it a night, San Jose still hops after 10 pm. The slick black and red **Vbar** in Santana Row's Hotel Valencia is comparable to downtown's ironically named **Dive Bar**, and **Paragon** lounge, with DJ-spun music. **Loft Bar and Bistro** offers dancing, rooftop dining, and ultra-lounging. The new **Blank Club** showcases local punk and national performers, or even you—if you drop in for Monday's Union Jack Off Brit pop Karaoke. Non-dancers and non-singers sink, Zen-like, into the plush suede booths of new **Koji Sake Lounge** or are drawn to the lava lamps of nearby **Voodoo Lounge** to sip themed cocktails and martinis. Drawn by the pulsing music on the dance floor, Voodoo loungers can also dance the night away.

Those born to dance can easily find their groove—from downtown's cosmo **Fahrenheit Ultra Lounge** and the tony **Vault** (an old savings and loan with dark wood, and grand staircase), to the live music and DJs of **Johnny V's** and the raucous **Smoke Tiki Lounge** near San Pedro Square, advertising live bands, DJs, and cleavage. Latin and salsa dancers love **Miami Beach Club**, but for sheer size you can't beat **ViVid** South Beach-style night club.

Further south, in SoFA, Hunters extends its franchise as the latest gay dance club, and the swanky and popular **Agenda Lounge** on South First Street has DJs and live jazz, and its new neighbor **Motif Restaurant & Nightclub** features Asian fusion fare and everything from electronica to hip hop; but this is only a fraction of the fun San Jose offers to the adventurous visitor. Join the pool sharks circling at casual **South First Billiards** and **Elixir Ultra Lounge**, or even just take in a movie in one of the city's deluxe theaters. When other towns are rolling up their sidewalks at 5 o'clock, San Jose is just rolling up its sleeves. Come rediscover the night in San Jose.

## About The San Jose Convention & Visitors Bureau (SJCVB)

The San Jose Convention & Visitors Bureau (SJCVB) mission is to enhance the image and economic well being of San Jose by marketing San Jose as a globally recognized destination. The SJCVB offers visitors, meeting planners, and tour operators, a range of services to ensure a successful event and fun visit to San Jose. For a copy of the Official Visitors Guide, please contact the SJCVB at 1.800.SAN.JOSE (1.800.726.5673) or visit <http://www.sanjose.org>.

