

Dining Around Town

The latest dish on hot new eateries, plus seasonal delights and fun food events

By Jody Robbins

HOT TIPS

Engage the senses with tasting plates (below) at **Vosges Haut-Chocolat**. Or just go whole hog when it comes to sweets at **Nine** (right).

SWEET SOMETHINGS

DECONSTRUCT THE SENSES WITH THE sensory tasting plates now being offered at **Vosges Haut-Chocolat** (520 N. Michigan Ave., 312/222-1414). Choose one, then smell and taste the bee pollen, bite into the komquat, sip the honeyed espresso and eat the Naga truffle (coconut Indian curry and milk chocolate). Then add texture with the corn nuts and your experience is complete.

Hot doughnuts take on their own mystique at **Krispy Kreme** (175 W. Jackson Blvd., 312/922-4700), which has finally

opened its first downtown location.

DO WHAT?

WHAT DO YOU GET WHEN YOU MIX MORE than 30 different varieties of oyster with nightly jazz and blues events? Must be the 14th-annual *Royster with the Oyster* festival (Oct. 21-25) at **Shaw's Crab House** (Page 84). Put your oyster eating prowess on the line nightly en route to participating in the final "slurp-o-rama."

Get a musical slant on lunch or dinner at **Rhapsody** (Page 74), where executive



chef Romuald Jung supplies the prix fixe menu, which comes with a free CD featuring the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Halloween is on the way, but you don't have to trick to get a treat at **Nine** (Page 86). Pastry chef Robert Ash has developed a unique line of sugar goodies, like candied lady apples and chocolate cherry clusters, just to name a couple.

INTRODUCING...

AWARD-WINNING CHEF ROBERT SULATUCKY is now piloting the much-vaunted **Seasons Restaurant** (Page 72) at the Four Seasons Hotel Chicago. He most recently worked at the Four Seasons Toronto and has worked with premier chefs like Marco Pierre White of London's The Oak Room and Michel Roux of Le Gavroche, also in London.

Savor (Page 72) is a new American bistro spiced with Cajun and Creole influences. Chef Kevin Karales keeps the menu fresh by offering favorites with a twist, like the BLT: a soup of roasted tomato, smoked bacon, chiffonade of romaine, and garlic-tobasco croutons.

For a quick lunch, it doesn't get any more Italiano than **Tutto Pronto** (Page 79), a family-owned Italian deli which offers more than 100 original, family-of-the-proprietor recipes. The pasta is fresh and the sauces taste like homemade. ☑

COOKIE IN A BOWL

IT'S NOT a pizza or a hot dog, but it is pure Chicago. "It" is **Carol's Cookies** (847/831-4500 or www.carolcookies.com), a Chicago area-based cookie company that dishes out nine flavors of handmade, garbanzo cookies sans preservatives across the nation. Locally, they can be had at **Neiman Marcus** or **Whole Foods** (call ahead for availability if the cookie is the only point of your visit), and at a couple of local

restaurants. Both the **Blue Cactus Fajita Bar** (Page 81) and **P.J. Clarke's** (Page 70) are offering the half-pound cookies on their dessert menu. The cookie comes with all the trappings at the Blue Cactus, where "Cookie in a Bowl" means either the traditional chocolate chip cookie, heated and served with ice cream plus chocolate sauce, or the cinnamon swirl, topped with caramel sauce instead—not your typical cookie.