

Restaurants

barbecued ribs. *Lunch and early dinner Fri., Sat., Sun. 2310 Lafayette Rd., 687-0631. R, W \$ \$*

OAKLEYS BISTRO

American innovative - Chef Steven Oakley prepares European-inspired dishes for his seasonal menus. The mac-and-goat-cheese side dish is not to be missed. *Lunch and dinner Tues.-Sat. 1464 W. 86th St., 824-1231. R, W \$ \$ \$*

OCEAN WORLD

Japanese - Japanese classics in a cheery, colorful dining room. *Lunch Mon.-Sat.; dinner daily. 1206 W. 86th St., 848-8901. R, W \$ \$ \$*

PASSAGE TO INDIA

Southern Indian - The city's only South Indian eatery is also a great, inexpensive vegetarian restaurant. *Lunch and dinner Tues.-Sun. 4225 Lafayette Rd., 299-2127. R, W \$ \$*

PUCCHINI'S SMILING TEETH

Pizza - See Northeast listing. *Lunch and dinner daily. 1508 W. 86th St., 875-9223. W \$ \$*

RICK'S CAFE BOATYARD

American - The menu covers all of the casual-dining bases, with a spacious deck with a view of Eagle Creek Reservoir. *Lunch and dinner daily. 4050 Dandy Trail, 290-9300. R, W \$ \$ \$*

RUBEN'S QUE

Soul food - Southern-style ribs, catfish, wings, and fried veggies. *Lunch and dinner Tues.-Sun. 2440 Lafayette Rd., 423-7001. W \$ \$*

SAWASDEE

Thai - Tiny Sawasdee serves our favorite pad thai, drunken noodles, and chicken satay with a helping of good cheer. *Lunch Mon.-Sat.; dinner daily. 1222 W. 86th St., 844-9451. R, W \$ \$*

SQUEALERS AWARD-WINNING BBQ

BBQ - Specialties here are Southern-style smoked meats, ribs, chicken, pulled pork, and beef brisket. *Lunch and dinner Mon.-Sat. 5515 W. 86th St., 871-7427. W \$ \$*

NEW TULIP NOIR

American - Chef and owner Dina Romay-Sipe takes great pains to ensure that the lunch and brunch dishes at her serene cafe are both irresistible and nutritionally sound. Whole-wheat pancakes with homemade berry syrups make a delightful start to the day. *Brunch and lunch Tues.-Sat. 1224 W. 86th St., 848-5252. W \$ \$*

VILLAGE GRILL

American - This all-day breakfast cafe serves fluffy pancakes, scrambled eggs, and crisped Belgian waffles. *Breakfast, lunch, and dinner daily. 4335 W. 106th St., 824-0400. W \$ \$*

North Suburbs

INCLUDES CARMEL, FISHERS, GEIST, NOBLESVILLE, AND ZIONSVILLE

96TH STREET STEAKBURGERS

American - A gleaming, locally owned burger joint serving only the basics—burgers, fries, and shakes. Eat in or drive through. *Lunch and dinner daily. 4715 E. 96th St., 844-6351. W \$ \$*

A2Z CAFE

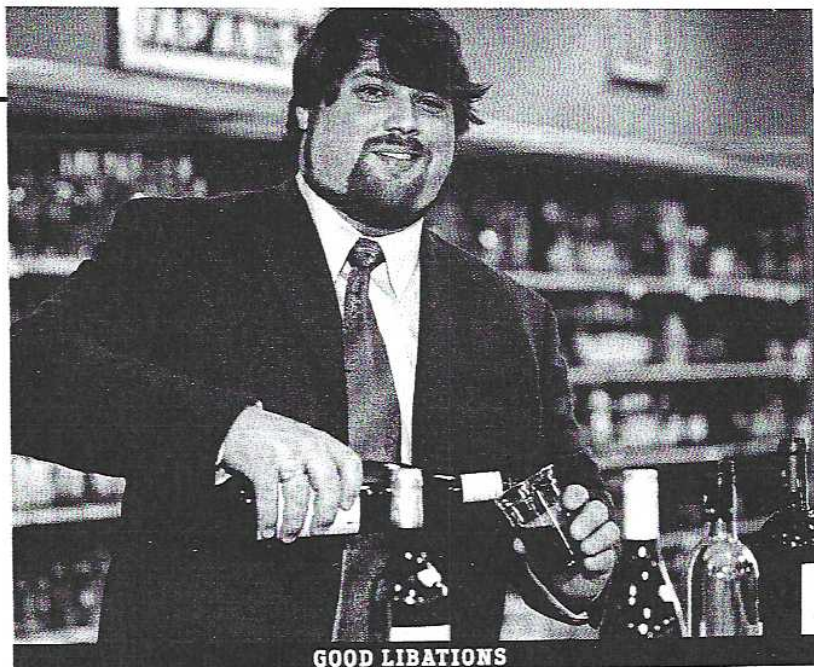
American - Fluffy omelets, apple-stuffed crepes, and fresh sandwiches encourage lingering at this neighborhood cafe. *Breakfast, lunch, and dinner daily. 4705 E. 96th St., 569-9349. W \$ \$*

ABUELO'S MEXICAN FOOD EMBASSY

Mexican - See Northwest listing. *Lunch and dinner. 14480 Lowes Way, 815-8175. R, W \$ \$ \$*

ASIAN GRILL

Asian - Though small, Asian Grill offers big choices. Will it be Thai, Vietnamese, Indian, or



GOOD LIBATIONS

WORLDLY TASTES

A British wine guru plays favorites with wines from France this month

"Part of the joy of this business is there's no right or wrong, but an infinite range of choices," says Chris Freeze, his voice deep and melodic, his accent semi-posh British. Nonetheless, he acknowledges, "some choices are more right than others."

This is the refreshing attitude Freeze brings to his work as wine director for **Wine Gallery by 21st Amendment**, where he has worked since 2006. Freeze earned his undergraduate and master's degrees at Cambridge, escaping the grind with membership in its prestigious Wine and Food Society, whose fortnightly tastings were accompanied by black-tie dinners. He also attended IU, where he studied vocal performance, and is proficient in singing in many languages. While he confesses to some Francophilia, his tastes are nevertheless global.

"I've recently been discovering more Italian wines, some of which are hard to come by," he notes. "We just picked up a Nebbiolo d'Alba (\$13.98), which is made from the same grape as the famous wines of Barolo and Barbaresco. The wine looks and smells like a Barolo. I can't claim it really tastes like one, but given they usually cost five to 10 times as much; I'm not complaining."

Nearly every Saturday, Freeze can be found in the 21st Amendment at 56th and Illinois streets, offering a small tasting, plus pairing advice for any price point. This month marks the first in what he hopes will be a series of larger wine events: a seven-course Bastille Bash dinner in partnership with Oh Yumm! Bistro, with wines from seven French regions. As fancy as the menu sounds, Freeze's wide-ranging tastes will be in evidence. In place of Champagne to start, he has selected a non-vintage Crement de Bourgogne Rose from Cave de Lugny, a light and elegant wine that retails for \$16.99, and for the finish, he says he'll pour "an incredible wine called Chateau des Graves du Tich, Ste-Croix-du-Mont, 2005. It's across the river from Sauternes. And I love Sauternes, but they can cost from \$50 to \$1,000. This one is only \$17.98." *Bastille Bash dinner July 14. Reservations required. 21st Amendment, 5561 N. Illinois St., 255-3070; Oh Yumm! Bistro, 5615 N Illinois St., 251-5656.*

—Hank Nuwer