

## Smith Commons Opens and Argonaut Returns

BY ELISE BERNARD

It's February again, and the temperatures may be cold, but H Street is so hot right now that I could barely fit all the news in this month's column. This month will see multiple new businesses open, and a major arts festival that stretches into March when we'll celebrate Mardi Gras.

### Fine Dining at Smith Commons

Smith Commons (1245 H Street NE, <http://www.smithcommonsdc.com>) officially opened its doors on the H Street Corridor last month, bringing another excellent option for patrons interested in an upscale dining experience. The menu offers a little something for all tastes, without feeling scattered. The beef carpaccio offers an excellent start, and my confit of duck leg worked perfectly with the port wine sauce. The first floor dining room buzzes with a frenetic energy reminding one what city living is all about. The average dinner check is priced at \$30-40 per person before tip. The top two floors offer a more lounge like feel, with couches that invites visitors to relax while enjoying a cocktail.

I've spoken with many neighbors who have been greatly impressed with the new establishment, and the owners and staff appear just as excited to be here. Chef Fredrik De Pue described his experience thus: "So far, the response from the H Street community and Washington, DC diners has been tremendous. The restaurant is busy every night, and I've had the pleasure of speaking with many of our neighbors. I think Smith Commons is going to make a nice addition to



Smith Commons offers upscale dining in an elegant, yet comfortable atmosphere.  
Photo: Greg Powers



Paige Hernandez of the autobiographical Paige in Full performs as part of the Intersections Festival. Photo courtesy of Intersections

the booming H Street dining scene." What's become abundantly clear since opening day is that there is nothing at all common about Smith Commons.

### Intersections Arts Festival Returns to the Atlas

Intersections (<http://intersectionsdc.org>) returns for a triumphant second year at the Atlas Performing Arts Center (1333 H Street NE, <http://www.atlasarts.org>). The interactive arts festival offers everything from music, to dance, to visual arts, to spoken word, to film. Events are geared towards different age groups, and interests, and many events are offered free of charge.

### Argonaut Dining Sails Back Onto the Scene

Following a devastating fire in June the kitchen at the Argonaut (1433 H Street NE, <http://argonaut.typepad.com>) closed

for several months, and just reopened in January. With the reopening comes a new menu, and a new look for this classic H Street eating establishment. The old favorites like the Argo burger, fish tacos, and the sweet potato fries still find a place on the menu. Only now they nestle amongst newer offerings like steamed snow crab legs and gulf shrimp. Vegans and vegetarians will also find expanded options like a new mushroom burger, tempeh tacos, and the option of vegetarian bacon.

The drink menu also sports a complete overhaul. Though the Argonaut's Booty Beer sticks around, it has many new friends. The Argonaut now offers 12 beers on tap at any given time, and all but four of those will rotate. The new beer menu focuses heavily on American craft brews, and the time and attention paid to selecting them shows in the quality of the offerings. A personal favorite, the Edmund Fitzgerald Porter from Great Lakes Brewery, will keep me coming back. Indecisive, or curious, beer drinkers can enjoy the beer flights. For those wanting the experience, but not the buzz, Erdinger Alkoholfrei Weißbier offers a refreshing alternative to the previous non-alcoholic offering of O'Doul's. The wine list gets the same treatment, and features 12 wines by the glass. The cocktail menu remains largely unchanged.

The first floor interior takes on a totally new look with a relocated bar carved to look like a ship. One notable change is that the relocation of the bar to the left side of the dining



The Argonaut returns with a new look and new flavors. Photo: Shaaren Pine

room allows for outdoor bar seating when the weather cooperates. Newly laid floors render the Argonaut's days of wobbly tables merely a memory (no doubt a relief to patrons and staff alike). Mondays remain family night, and Booze Clues (pub quiz) maintains its hold on the upstairs bar on Wednesdays. Once the weather warms dog owners can bring their well-behaved (and leashed) pooch on the patio from 12-5pm Saturdays for the Metro Mutts (508 H Street NE, <http://www.metromuttsdc.com>) Doggie Happy Hour.

### The Establishment of Church and State

Erik Holzherr, of Wisdom and Fruit Bat (1236 H Street NE, <http://www.dcfruitbat.com>), recently opened the slightly more mature brother of Latin inspired fresh squeezed cocktail bar Fruit Bar. Church and State (2nd floor of 1236 H Street NE) focuses on classic cocktails, and is Holzherr's "baby." Though I hadn't visited as of press time, initial reports from soft openings are positive, and Holzherr certainly knows his cocktails.

### Khan's Mongolian Bar-B-Q Moves Forward

I recently got a sneak peak inside Khan's and I'm happy to report that construction is nearly

complete. This Mongolian bar-b-q restaurant (with full bar, of course) boasts an attractive interior, and at around \$9 a bowl, an equally attractive price point. Visitors will have their choice of tables, booths, or a seat at the bar. Preparations are in the works for patio seating, but a planned power substation for the H Street Streetcar (<http://www.dcstreetcar.com>) might throw a kink into things on that end.

### XII Launches Brunch

XII (1123 H Street NE, <http://www.twelvedc.com>) recently launched a new Sunday brunch running from 12-5pm. Offerings includes all the classics, plus the popular chicken and waffles. Entrée prices for brunch range from \$8-14.

### Doctor Granville Moore's Adds Sunday Brunch

Starting sometime in February everyone's favorite H Street Belgian restaurant will offer its Saturday brunch on Sundays as well (11am-3pm). Dr. Granville Moore's (1238 H Street NE, <http://www.granvillemoores.com>) has also extended its mussels happy hour to Monday through Thursday from 5-8pm.

*For more on what's abuzz on and around the H Street Corridor you can visit my blog <http://frozentropics.blogspot.com>. You can send me tips or questions at [inked78@hotmail.com](mailto:inked78@hotmail.com). ★*



**Your Home.**



**Your Family.**



**Your Choice.**

**Thank you for choosing natural gas.** Washington Gas has proudly served the Washington D.C. community for 160 years, providing safe and reliable natural gas service to its homes and businesses at a reasonable cost.

We recognize that today people are looking for ways to maintain their quality of life while spending less. Washington Gas can help. As a District of Columbia resident, you are eligible to participate in Customer Choice, a voluntary program that could potentially save you money\*.

Customer Choice gives you the option to continue buying natural gas from Washington Gas or to choose an alternate licensed energy supply company. Since energy supply companies compete in the retail market for your business, these companies may have greater flexibility in how and what they charge. Washington Gas, as a regulated utility, must charge you what it pays for the natural gas supply you use and prices can fluctuate monthly.

Shop around, compare prices and decide what's best for you. If you choose to use another energy provider to supply your natural gas, know that Washington Gas will continue to deliver your gas safely and reliably and respond to natural gas emergencies around the clock.

For more information on the Customer Choice program, including the most current list of energy suppliers as well as helpful tools for assessing your choices, visit [washingtongas.com](http://washingtongas.com) or call us at 703-750-1000.

[washingtongas.com](http://washingtongas.com)



**Washington Gas**

\*Potential for savings may vary based on market conditions, energy use and other factors.