

CRAIN'S CHICAGO BUSINESS

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These are the best new restaurants

Chicago felt rich with restaurant openings over the last year. We're focusing on downtown options for the business diner, sampling four dinner spots and three lunch locales. For those getting creative with their entertainment budgets as restaurant prices continue to rise, we also scope out a cocktail bar and wine tasting counter. | **By Ally Marotti**



Clockwise from top left: Seville's seabass, paella-style risotto and tuna carpaccio | SEVILLE CHICAGO

BEST NEW SPOTS FOR LUNCH

Seville Chicago

243 S. Franklin St.

Dining at Seville is a colorful experience. The chairs are orange, the wall is turquoise, plants hang from the ceiling. Tiles on the wall depict birds and tropical foliage. It's a nice departure from Chicago's many earth-toned restaurants and provided just the energy my dining partner and I needed on a gray, snowy March day.

Among the Loop's newest lunch spots, the Mediterranean restaurant from celebrity chef Fabio Viviani sits on the 16th floor of The Canopy by Hilton, just across the street from Willis Tower. The 5,900-square-foot dining room is airy, with windows offering Loop views and an atrium-style skylight overhead. The restaurant opened in January and started serving lunch in early March.

But lunch in the Loop, it seems, is still a gamble for restaurant operators. We went on a Monday

at 1 p.m. and, save for two women sitting at the bar, were the only patrons in the joint. Downtown restaurant operators have said that business has been slow on Mondays and Fridays since the pandemic, as many Loop office employees work hybrid schedules.

No matter. As a diner, it felt special to have the place to ourselves, and we did not have to talk over the din of a crowded room. Service was also prompt. We were in and out in just under an hour.

There's a shared plates section on the menu that tempted me to throw the rest of the day's productivity to the wind and turn the lunch into a grand tapas-style experience, but my curiosity about the other parts of the menu kept me in check. We stuck with one dish from that section: the Iberico and saffron crispy rice (\$18). It

was a taste sensation. The rice was crispy and the saffron was not overwhelming. A dollop of unctuous Manchego cream was hidden beneath the melt-in-your-mouth Spanish ham. A delightful gluten-free option.

Next up was an apple and Manchego salad (\$15) with sliced apples, chunks of cheese and sherry vinaigrette. We added chicken for an extra \$7. The server told us this was one of several salads added to the menu for lunch. Indeed, the lunch offerings were expansive.

We also split a prosciutto pinsa (\$26), a kind of pillowy flatbread with arugula, stracciatella, Parmesan cream and truffle honey. Delicious, but messy.

Before we got in the elevator to leave, we stopped to look at the vast outdoor area. When the flakes aren't flying, I imagine it will be a great draw.