

FOOD

a tiny dining room with only a few tables. Great for: Carryout before a picnic in Oz Park. Entrées: \$7-\$19 Key: BYOB, D, V. 312-640-1299, amato.pizza.com, **935 W. Willow St.**

Half Shell

Half Shell has been in the same location since 1968 and still has the same menu, so it must be doing something right. As the name suggests, the menu boasts oysters, clams, and other seafood standards like fried catfish, jumbo shrimp, and the house specialty, king crab legs. More unusual selections include frog legs and deep-fried dressed smelts. Reservations are not accepted, but customers seem content to wait to snag a table. Great for: Dinner and a movie at the Century Mall around the corner. Entrées: \$7-\$25 Key: A, L, O. 773-549-1773, **676 W. Diversey Pkwy.**

DOWNTOWN NORTH

River North, Gold Coast, Streeterville, Old Town, River West, West Town

Brazazz

Brazazz is a steakhouse that offers a pricey prix-fixe with commensurately attentive customer service. Various meat dishes, such as beef ribs and bacon filet mignon are barbecued Brazilian-style (slowly roasted over coals) and then carved at the table, all you can eat. For those who prefer seafood, Brazazz offers shrimp and lobster, also prepared the Brazilian way. Great for: A big dinner before a night out in River North. Entrées: \$29 (lunch), \$48 (dinner) Key: A, O. 312-595-9000, brazzaz.com, **539 N. Dearborn St.**

Coco Pazzo

A popular spot among the high-powered business crowd, Coco Pazzo features Italian food focusing on

with friends followed by drinks at nearby bars. Entrées: \$14-\$28 Key: A. 773-604-8181, **1000 N. Dearborn Ave.**

Via Veneto

For nearly 20 years, chef/owner Tony Giamberini has served unpretentious, creative, authentic Italian food at this Far North Side staple, drawing on traditional recipes. The menu is dominated by hearty dishes and accented by fresh ingredients, all prepared using simple ingredients like risottos and favorites like filet mignon and piccata. Bonus: It's vegetarian-friendly. Great for: Dinner and putting. The Bunny Hutch, a mini-golf and game center, is just a few blocks away. Devon. Entrées: \$10-\$22 Key: A, D, O, V. viavenetochicago.com, **6340 N. Lincoln Ave.**

LOOP

Catch 35

Not a place for vegans, Catch 35 offers a menu of seafood and steaks. Sure, there are salads, but 90 percent of the menu either swam in the water or was on land. Seafood can be charcoal-grilled, oven-baked, or prepared in a wok. For those who want to try out-of-the-ordinary dishes, diners can try shrimp with eggplant or French bread with shrimp. Great for: Dinner before a show at the Grand Theatre. 10 blocks down the street. Entrées: \$18-\$25 Key: A, O. 312-346-3500, catch35.com, **35 W. Wacker Dr.**

Spa Café

The name might imply facials and massages, but Spa Café actually specializes in healthy, locally sourced food prepared in front of customers. Located in the Loop, near several banks and retailers, Spa Café offers breakfast and lunch, and boasts a quick service menu.