

## LATE NIGHT BITES

## Mai Hero!

After a fire ravaged **Mai's** (3403 Milam St., 713.520.5300) 14 months ago—a blessing, it turns out—the Midtown Vietnamese restaurant is finally back in business. “We would’ve never had the chance to modernize—because we never close!” laughs manager Anna Pham.

The updated space is awash in reclaimed wood and calming neutrals, its neon lights replaced by mod fixtures. Instead of just beer and wine, the front-facing bar now serves Asian-inspired cocktails—“Maijito,” anyone?—and for the first time there’s happy hour. Not that Mai’s needs gimmicks to get guests; Pham says the place is packed from 11AM till 3AM close on weekdays (4AM on weekends). During the first few weeks the minimum wait time was two hours.

The menu’s been edited, with new dishes like Vietnamese crepes joining classics like *pho*, which is still popular with sobering-up tipplers. Perhaps the boisterous after-hours crowd calmed down given the swish new digs? “Still wild,” assures Pham, “no matter what night it is.”

Other new post-midnight gastropots have hit the scene, too. Celeb chef Bryan Caswell’s old-school **El Real** Tex-Mexer housed in the old Tower Theater (1201 Westheimer Rd., 713.524.1201) dishes out rich enchiladas, and **BB’s Cajun Café**—of shoestring-fries-with-queso-and-beefy-gravy fame—will open a third location near live-music venue Fitzgerald’s in the Heights. **Max’s Wine Dive** (4720 Washington Ave., 713.880.8737), beloved for its fried egg sandwich, remains hip.



Mai's

## PET PROJECT

## Going to the Dogs?

A dog park... and a bar? Yup, just off the club-heavy Washington Corridor, **Boneyard Drinkery** (8150 Washington Ave., 832.494.1600) is open for humans *and* canines. The bar’s inside in a small hunting-lodge-feeling space, where paintings of dogs live next to taxidermy. But the action is in the 7,000-square-foot backyard, where dogs roam and enjoy the water station, tennis balls and chew toys, and their owners plop on picnic tables with a cold microbrew.

## Booze News

Local investor Bill Kallop and Johnny Schuler, an expert on grape-based liquor pisco, introduced their **Pisco Porton** to Houston. It’s made in a Peruvian distillery that dates to 1684. Besides the classic Pisco Sour, the spirit can replace vodka or gin in cocktails—or be sipped neat. “It’s hot but not raspy,” says Schuler. Porton is available at Spec’s, and in restos like Smith & Wollensky, where Kallop and Schuler first sketched the bottle design on a napkin.

