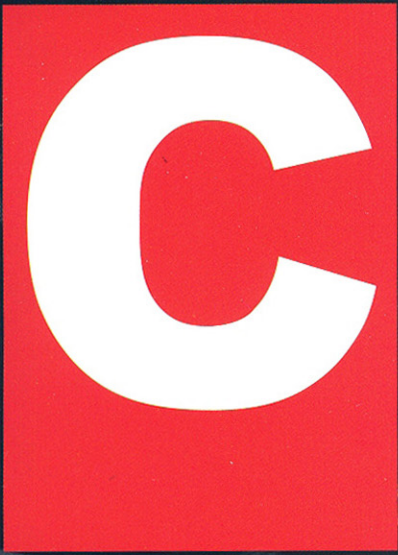


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THE COLUMBUS MAGAZINE

WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW
STEVE GERMAIN

Miss
Ohio USA
exclusive

FAMILY STANDARD
BLAINE BYERS

BoMA
THE RESTAURANT

\$9 LUNCHES
(yeah, 9 of 'em)





Enjoy a pre-dinner martini in The Great Room at BoMA

Imitating Life

BoMA 595 E. Broad St. (614) 233-3000

If the measuring stick of a city's growth lies within its cultural depth, then Columbus has just been placed on the fast track towards tackling the big boys. Just off I-71 downtown on East Broad Street rests the city's newest difference maker – a church transformed into one of the hottest multi-purpose venues with a well-deserving, holier-than-thou attitude. Allow us to introduce BoMA: the Bar of Modern Art.

As the name suggests, BoMA is certainly a bar. But it's not just any bar. It's got seven of 'em, to be exact, each with its own special ingredient to contribute to the joy of your experience. BoMA also serves as an intimate and contemporary art gallery. Intrigued yet? What if we added to their portfolio of offerings one of the most awe-inspiring dining rooms in the

country and a menu prepared by local favorite, Chef Alex Rodriguez, whose fine fare creations double as works of art themselves? We should also note that when dining is done, BoMA sea-changes into one of the hottest nightclubs in town. By now, we should be dancing on your fancy.

Yes, Columbus is ready for this degree of chic sophistication and dead sexy style. We've been screaming for it—sometimes out of both sides of our mouths. *IT* is here, and *IT* deserves some credit.

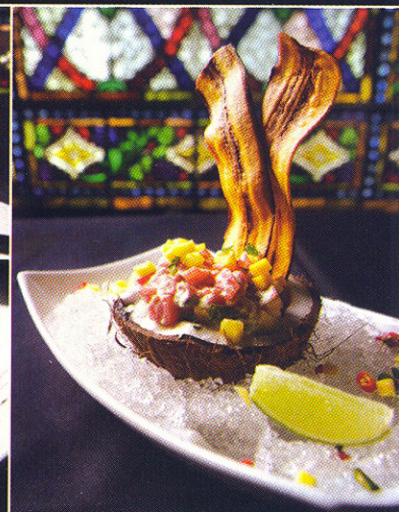
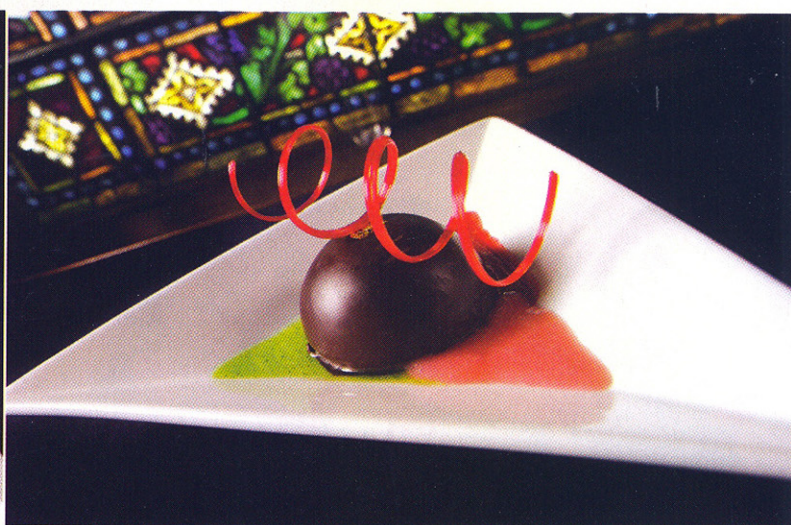
The best way to enjoy this place is to first break all your other plans and commit yourself to a real evening out. Start in The Great Room where the martini list, scotch selections and champagne cocktails are as endless as they are creative. Investigate such liquid wonders

as the Pop Rocks Martini: a fusion of watermelon and sparkling wine flavors with real pop rocks lining the rim of the glass that start crackling even before your lips touch the rim. Candy martinis not your thing? Just nestle into one of their leather couches in this two-story lounge and chew on the Dirty Mary, and when we say chew, we mean literally. The peppered vodka with a splash of Mary Mix would be great on its own, but BoMA slaps a jumbo shrimp on your rim to get your attention. The martinis are large and priced fairly, with a great Wednesday through Friday Happy Hour from 4-7 p.m.

On to dining... Though the instant charm and grandeur of BoMA's main dining room steals the thunder of most restaurants with its monstrous 20-foot stained glass windows and gigantic movie

screen that plays movie classics (we watched as Bogey tried to win over Hepburn in *The African Queen*), it becomes oddly approachable once you've been sat. By the time the menus hit the table, you'll likely find that you have slipped effortlessly into a comfortable spell.

Before we could even open a menu, Chef Rodriguez swung by to greet us and delivered a mouth-watering amuse: a pineapple and mango salsa wrapped in a bite-size taco chip with fresh lime. It was a cool, refreshing little package of flavor, teasing our taste buds as we dove headfirst into the menu. He also took the time to suggest the BoMA Trio: a Raw Bar combo of delectable tuna tartar, fresh salmon and the featured ceviche laid out in three individual dishes for easy sharing. Share we did. Our server,



Pictured Clockwise from left - Mahi-Mahi, Chocolate Raspberry Crème Brulee Bomb, Tuna, Short Rib and Salmon Appetizers

Nick Cicco, suggested we also try the Lobster Appetizer, which features Maine lobster raviolis lightly bathed in a gruyere-chardonnay sauce and topped with a sun-dried tomato-cucumber relish. This app proved to be incredibly tasty when paired with the bubbly apple and oak flavors of Veuve Clicquot "Yellow Label" Brut.

One thing we've learned throughout our dining adventures is to appreciate the staff's recommendations, for they are usually spot-on. When Nick suggested the BoMA Salad, it was not an arm-twisting decision to comply. Their mixed greens kept fantastic company with Granny Smith apples, dates, candied pecans and boulders of Gorgonzola; the champagne-honey vinaigrette provided a translucent blanket to keep all the love together. Another delightful item was the Trio of Soups that featured lobster bisque (finally made from scratch), a savory-sweet butternut squash and the chef's nightly creation, which, lucky for us, was the sweet potato soup. This Trio was also served in three easy-to-share compartments, and the results were miles beyond perfect.

As we perused the wine list and menu simultaneously, trying to decide what our entrées would be, we did what anyone should when dining in a place like this—we asked! Look, Nick is a professional, and his excitement towards the Lamb was almost a command—one that

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was not about to be disobeyed. Fortunately, our party agreed to disagree on our selections, and we opted for four distinct dishes. The Lamb was a perfectly seared set of loin chops encrusted in pistachios, with a roasted plum-cassis sauce gently hand-painted on top. We told you this was a gallery as well, and Chef Alex "Picasso" Rodriguez had his wares on display. All the way across the table sat the Sea Bass. The Chilean Bass was grilled on a sugarcane skewer (how cool is that!), with fluffy pillows of black bean ravioli and a smoked

tomato-corn broth as its supporting cast. Flanking the Lamb and Sea Bass were the staples of American dining—the Chicken and the Filet. Imagine an organic chicken breast grilled to perfection, with Moroccan spices, apricot-ginger chutney and a beet couscous pyramid. The tableside descriptive word was "illegal". The Filet was delicately wrapped with pancetta and served atop black trumpet mushroom risotto, with a dark rum-vanilla sauce hugging it all over.

Because of the variety of dishes on the table, we selected a bold yet smooth meritage. Once allowed to breathe for several minutes, the Chateau St. Michelle's "Artist Series" sipped exceptionally well. This is easily the finest wine Chateau St. Michelle has produced, rivaling the likes of other Washington greats like Col Solare and Northstar. Abundant notes of honey and allspice guide you towards a rush of flavors including black cherry, chocolate and blackberry. In a classic Bordeaux-style blend, you might not find a better wine in its class for the money. BoMA's wine list is full of similar, well-priced hits.

You simply must save room for dessert, whether you drink it or eat it. We first "punished" ourselves with Fire & Ice: a pyramid of spicy chocolate ganache (yeah, that's the fire), smoothed out by a passion fruit sorbet. Not to be outdone was the Chocolate Raspberry Crème Brulee Bomb that allowed a fresh blood peach coulis to co-star. May we challenge any restaurant in Columbus to match this? The last thing that touched our lips was a kiss from a 100-year anniversary Grand Marnier Cuvee du Centenaire. Better served warm, Nick had our resting in another cognac glass of steaming hot water—quite the touch, but that's to expected here at BoMA.

With San Francisco-like dining and a club fit for Manhattan, BoMA's sophistication brings to Columbus a kind blend of class and style. Yes, you can get in, just as long as you dress like you care. So retire your predictable, bland plans and step into something altogether new and exciting. Step into BoMA and enter a world where beauty rules. From the bar to the table to the dance floor, your smile will glow.