

2 Ladies Who Lunch

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Bringing Back the Art of Lunching

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[CANDIDATE FOR INDY'S BEST POWER LUNCH
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January 19, 2012 by admin



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Photo: Chef Joseph's

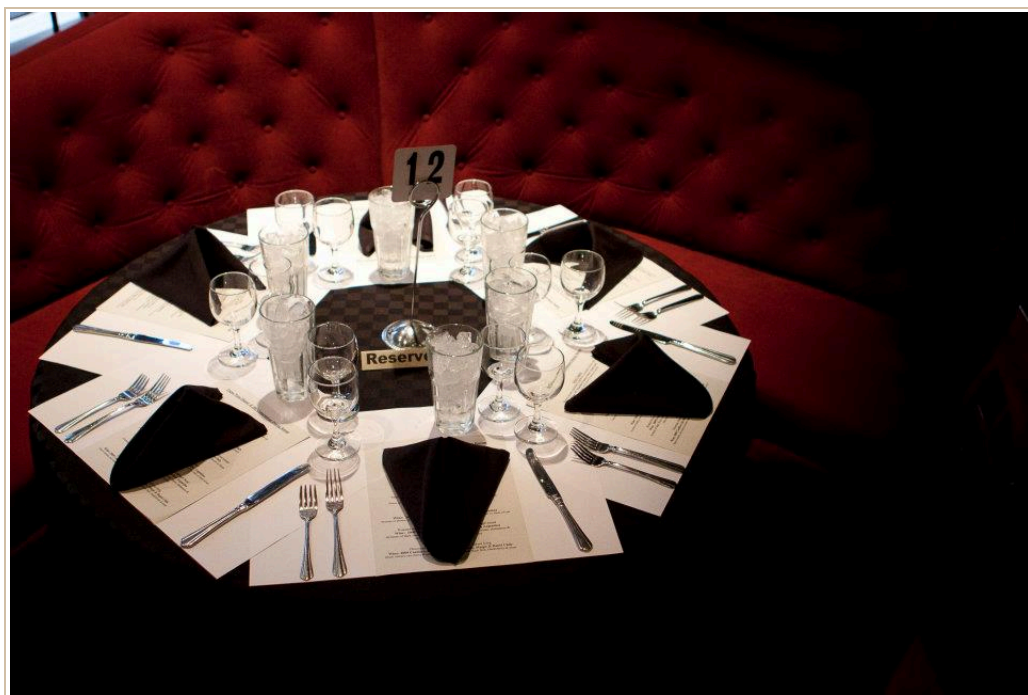
In 2004, Fast Company magazine declared the power lunch dead. High achievers preferred the idea of a “business lunch with impact.” Now, the term – coined by an Esquire magazine restaurant critic in 1979 – is back on the tip of enterprising tongues.

In January, Forbes magazine released its **Top 10 Restaurants Across the Country for a Power Lunch** (<http://www.forbes.com/sites/forbestravelguide/2012/01/09/top-10-restaurants-across-the-country-for-a-power-lunch/>).

“Where you decide to eat can be just as vital as what you talk about between bites,” the article read. For Houston’s “kings of crude,” that place is a boisterous Italian joint. In Beverly Hills, Hollywood’s elite meet at the Polo Club.

Not surprisingly, no Downtown Indianapolis restaurant made the list. (Or **Zagat’s list of 19** (http://travel.usatoday.com/news/2011-05-10-zagats-power-lunch-spots_n.htm) in 2011.) Therefore, 2LadiesWhoLunch will presume to offer an 11th: **Chef Joseph’s at the Connoisseur Room** (<http://www.chefjosephs.com/>), which opened in November 2011 at 115 E. Ohio St.

LadyBlonde can only sigh tolerantly when, at local dining establishments, she is greeted by an affectedly aloof, 22-year-old menu jockey in a tight, economical black dress. So she was delighted when she and her lunch companion were led to their table by an easy-mannered gentleman in a dark suit.



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Photo: Chef Joseph's

The clubby, masculine dining room, with its walnut paneling and tufted red velvet seating, had the ambience of a private venue, minus the pretense of a membership fee. (Likewise, entrees are an affordable \$11 to \$19.) The tables are placed just far enough apart that one needn't perform the “Indianapolis swivel” – that discreet, side-to-side room scan required in our small city before one can hunker down to gossip, or discuss sensitive business, across the table.

Service was seamless and unobtrusive. And the menu unpredictable. The Fried Alligator with Chipotle Tartar Sauce small plate (\$9.95) is more than a starter; it's an ice-breaker. As any

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practiced power-luncher knows, these initial meetings are first and foremost about making a human connection. You might, or might not, talk business. But you should make a first-rate impression.

Our advice: Get on good terms with Chef Joseph's, or another impressive restaurant, so you can always get a table, a warm welcome and perhaps other privileges.

The best part: The grilled scallops with basil lemon thyme glaze didn't put LadyBlonde in the meat coma she's experienced at other carnivorous temples about town. She left her meeting feeling light, energetic. Try to accomplish that with a pork tenderloin and a plate of fries.

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