

# TOUR

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STAY

## ACE ASCENDING

The West Loop just got even cooler.

BY AMBER GIBSON

If you're familiar with Ace hotels, you might be surprised by the ample natural light and subdued style of the brand's newest outpost in the West Loop. Formica, plywood and the like reflect the overall Bauhaus-inspired aesthetic (think modern Mies van der Rohe). Local and emerging artists created much of the commissioned artwork on display.

Free Wi-Fi and comfortable co-working space in the lobby are some of Ace's many appealing amenities. The rooftop bar has DJs spinning every night, and events like art shows, poetry slams and rooftop yoga build community among locals and visitors alike. In-house eatery City Mouse serves brunch and dinner daily, offering dishes like cornbread with Parmesan butter and smoky chicken with cashew rice and aioli.

There's plenty to enjoy here without even checking in, but you really should get a room. Most come with either an acoustic Martin guitar or a turntable with locally sourced, vintage records. Every room has a Bluetooth Tivoli radio and a minibar overflowing with treats, including local favorites like Koval gin and Veruca Chocolates. For a late-night indulgence, order the milk and cookies — a room-service exclusive that's worth every calorie. *Ace Hotel Chicago, 311 N. Morgan St., Chicago, 312-764-1919, acehotel.com/chicago*

SHOP

## SECOND NATURE

Chicago gets its first green beauty boutique.

BY AMBER GIBSON

After developing painful rashes while working as a nail technician, Jenny Duranski began researching the harmful chemicals used in nail polish. "When everything started making sense, it made me really angry," she explains. "Nail technicians deserve a healthy work environment, and the industry takes advantage of these women — many of whom are immigrants."

Now, Duranski is doing her part to bring clean, natural care products to the masses. She opened Lena Rose in 2016, naming the green beauty emporium and non-toxic nail salon and spa after her daughter. She carries lines from small, American producers, like Au Naturelle and Bonnie. And a fun lineup of monthly events lets customers blend their own scrubs, learn about beauty nutrition and meet the makers behind their favorite brands.

Duranski's admirable activist spirit even led her to Washington D.C. with the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics to lobby for the Personal Care Products Safety Act. Next up? She just debuted her Noktivo nail-care line, and she's planning a rooftop garden at Lena Rose to harvest herbs and botanicals for use in spa treatments. *Lena Rose, 4668 N. Manor Ave., Chicago, 872-806-2552, shopenlarose.com*



DINE

## STAR POWER

BLVD harkens back to old Hollywood.

BY AMBER GIBSON

BLVD feels like a swanky Las Vegas club, complete with caviar, bottle service and an upstairs Champagne room. It's a far cry from the cold, industrial-chic interiors you'll find in most West Loop restaurants. Everything here feels a little extra glamorous, even the baby greens salad, flaunting itself on a large white platter with an audacious swipe of whipped feta sprinkled with sunflower seeds.

This ambitious venture is the first eatery for the young restaurateurs behind Sancerre Hospitality. Executive Chef Johnny Besch has a knack for crafting intricately layered dishes and a talent with sauces.

Begin with the extravagant seafood tower or better yet, some osetra caviar. When the tower arrives, your waiter will invite you to spin the base platform, and the lucky person who has the word "BLVD" pointing toward her gets a complimentary glass of Champagne. The playful yet precise service continues throughout the meal. Come for the opulent atmosphere, but return for the irresistible food. *BLVD, 817 W. Lake St., 312-526-3116, Chicago, blvdchicago.com*

