

# Caffeine fix frenzy

## Chicago coffee house hotspots

By Rebecca Waterloo  
A&E EDITOR

Recently Timeout Chicago magazine presented an article featuring the 15 best coffee shops around Chicago. Some of them local, and some of them even vending our dear Crop to Cup coffee, you may want to check out these java joints (new and old) for a good source of caffeine. Below are a few of the most charismatically described, the rest you'll have to scout out for yourself!

(source: <http://chicago.timeout.com/articles/restaurants-bars/91287/15-spots-to-drink-coffee-now>)

### Bridgeport Coffee House

A local coffee house to IIT, the coffee-roasting operation on the corner of Morgan and 31st Street is a point of pride for Bridgeport and a source of jealousy for almost every other neighborhood. Housed in a prototypically warm-toned, wood-heavy coffeehouse (only without the fleabag couches and drum-circle vibe), Bridgeport Coffee sets itself apart by roasting its own beans and brewing them with levels of respect usually reserved for presidents. *Bridgeport; 3101 S Morgan St (773-247-9950).*

### Asado Coffee Co.

Kevin Ashtari, whose obsession with coffee began when he visited cutting-edge coffee shops in the Pacific Northwest, roasts his beans—usually African—in a drum roaster behind the counter daily, and rigorously trains his baristas, resulting in toasty, full-bodied cups of coffee. Seating, lighting and eating are afterthoughts here, so grab a cup of coffee and a bag of beans to go. *Lakeview; 1432 W Irving Park Rd*

### Julius Meinl Coffee House

Leaky paper cups, lids with dubious sealing properties, mass-produced stale pastries—what tomfoolery the Europeans must think of American coffee culture. Showing Chicago how it's done right: Austria-based Julius Meinl. Here, as in heaven, coffee is presented on a sleek tray, accompanied by a glass of water and a biscuit cookie. *North Center; 4363 N Lincoln Ave*

### The Wormhole

The theme is time travel to the '80s, represented by a DeLorean in the window, a bizarre cast of Ronald Reagan by the register and movie posters from a cultural moment most would rather forget. This new Wicker Park coffee shop could have been awful or amazing. Fortunately, it's as passionate about coffee as about

Back to the Future, as evidenced by the always urn coffee and the clean, fragrant results of the pour-over option. Plus, how can you be skeptical of a place that serves cereal all day? *Wicker Park; 1462 N Milwaukee Ave*

### Darkcloud: Urban Coffee Lab

More like watching a science experiment than stopping into your neighborhood coffee shop, the process by which coffee is brewed at Andy Atkinson's new coffee shop is a marathon of measuring, weighing, pouring, stirring and timing. The truly bizarre space feels straight out of some sort of Dr. Evil futuristic lair: The large, two-room shop consists mostly of empty space, with a few black chairs and small yellow tables as accents. *Lincoln Park; 2122 N Halsted St*

### Coffee Studio

Miguel and Lee Corrina Cano had a major advantage when they opened this Edgewater coffeehouse: They were both trained in design, and thus could (and did) execute the kind of sunny, welcoming and yet modern space many people covet for their living rooms. With its progressive aesthetic, it's surprising the Coffee Studio hasn't gotten into the pour-over game—it brews via a drip machine, which results in a cup that is consistently aggressive. Get used to the flavor, or pour in some milk—it's a fair trade-off for the atmosphere. *Edgewater; 5628 N Clark St*

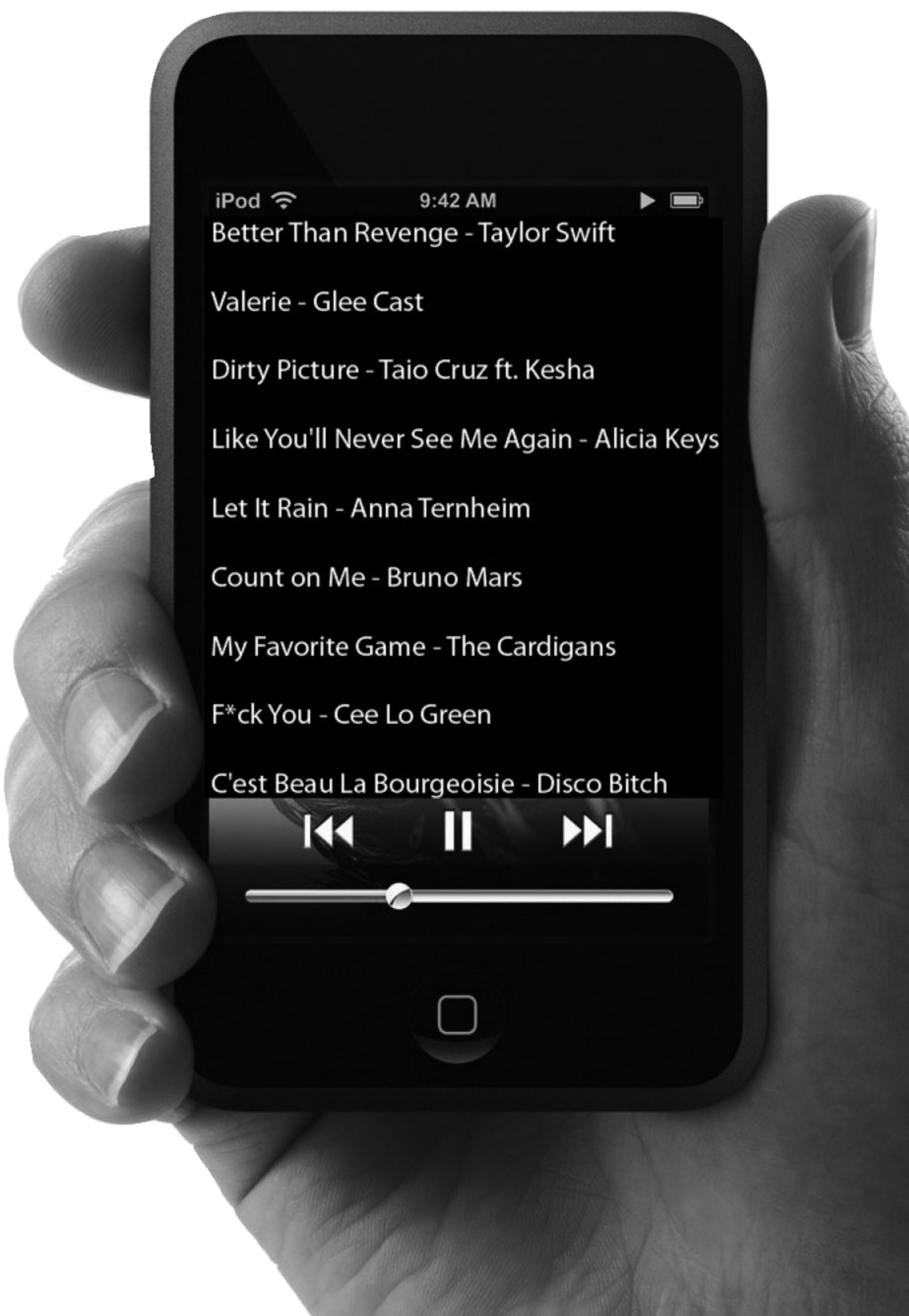
### A De-li-cious Cafe

Is good pour-over made any worse if prepared by an unfriendly vegan? You'd think it would be, but this 21-month-old shop proves otherwise. No matter how surly the service, no matter how loud the Ani DiFranco is blasted, the pour-over coffee here remains robust yet smooth, complex but still drinkable. Vegans have the added benefit of pairing some eggless, milkless pastries to their order. *North Center; 3827 N Lincoln Ave*

### @Spot Cafe

If this were 1992, and you were 16, this spot's "urban" unplugged vibe would leave you orgasmic. There are two things here, however, that will help purge that decade from your head: One, the fact that this shop uses coffee from Crop to Cup, a Chicago- and New York-based company that establishes strong relationships with its growers in Uganda; and two, the care with which that coffee is made. Just your everyday drip machines are used here, but the coffee (available in both medium and dark roasts) exhibits the clean, nuanced flavors of cups made using Clovers, Chemex and Clevers. *River North; 901 N Larrabee St*

what's playing on Ashleyann Sanabria's playlist?



What's playing on *your* playlist?  
Email [ae@technewsiit.com](mailto:ae@technewsiit.com)!

## Third Friday Zhou B Art Center opening

By Young Sand Ip  
STAFF WRITER

The Zhou B. Art Center openings that happen every third Friday on the month features international art galleries and art studios of local Chicago artists. From 7 to 10 p.m., the center is packed with people wandering the art rooms of all four floors, conversing with artists, enjoying some wine. This past Friday, the center featured the National Wet Paint Exhibition 2011 on the first floor curated by Sergio Gomez. The focus is on paintings by Masters of Fine Arts candidates and graduates from all over the country. The premise was how this new, technology oriented generation of artists redefine and use the medium of paint. One artist explained that painting allowed her to "get back to the basics of being", while another used painting to explore his dual cultural identity. Other artists

use painting as a way to regain intimacy with one's surroundings as the technological age has eradicated much of the personal emotion that comes from human interactions.

Up the narrow staircase are several studios

and hallways filled with photography, paintings, sculptures, jewelry, and digital artwork separate from the exhibition. The experience is enhanced by the various music playing from the artists' laptops and ipods, the bright and colorful lighting, and not to mention, the smells of acrylic paint, mahogany wood, and even beeswax. The artists, usually inside their studios, answered questions and explained the inspirations behind their work making conversations truly enlightening.

Many chose to wind down the evening at the Zhou B. Cafe, a cozy niche in the corner of the art center. Despite the bitter cold weather, the Zhou B Art Center opening was well worth

the visit. The center is on 35th Street between Morgan and Aberdeen, a fifteen minute walk from IIT.

The National Wet Paint Exhibition 2011 will be at the Zhou B Art Center till Febru-

ary 28. For more information visit <http://www.visualarttoday.com/Exhibitions/WetPaint/index.htm>. For more information about the Zhou B Art Center in general visit <http://www.zbcenter.org/>.



A quality cup of Joe (Image courtesy [www.re-nest.com](http://www.re-nest.com))