

# CHICAGO'S

R E S T A U R A N T  
ART SHOW HISTORY

PRESS RELEASE

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## About Chicago's

Located in mid-city Baton Rouge, Chicago's is a restaurant that is known not only for its fine food but also its distinct atmosphere. A renovated house with twenty-foot ceilings, sweeping arches, and rooms divided by windows, it is exactly the non-corporate ideal of the chef owner.

Patrick Mahon attended the Culinary Arts Institute of Louisiana and discovered a passion for food that went beyond the aesthetic. Not only did Patrick set out with the goal of producing quality food in a quality atmosphere but he also sought out to revitalize the mid-city and downtown area. Upon graduation two years ago, he purchased Chicago's from the previous owner and has been working to improve the high quality Chicago's was already well known for.

Patrick is committed to providing a fresh creative environment for the business. His interest also extends into making Chicago's a place for local artists to show their work helping to make mid-city an exciting art district where people will come for great food and great art.

## How the Art Shows Began

When Patrick first took over the restaurant, a young man named Daniel Beach walked into the restaurant with a painting he had done of the restaurant. He expressed his desire to show more of his work in the restaurant. Impressed by Daniel's work, Patrick allowed the young man to hang a total of 10 paintings as well as hold a small opening reception.



A year later (summer 2002), Patrick decided to take the experiment a little further. He brought in a full time Art Coordinator, Samantha Morgan, to set up regular art shows and openings.

The first show at Chicago's was a group show titled *The Taste of Color* featuring the works of 10 artists over a 10-week period of time. Beginning September 5, 2002 through November 15, 2002 a new opening was displayed every Thursday night. The featured artist for the week was available at the show to answer questions about their artwork. In addition, a printed biography was available including an artist statement, meaning of style, and career history. These biographies remained visible through the duration of the collective display, and are now standard for each show.

The primary room designated to the opening was and is the downstairs bar area. After opening night, the artist's work was moved to another section of the restaurant. After the final opening, the full display consisting of ten artists remained up through January 10, 2003.

The purpose of the weekly openings was to initiate interest in the community. Knowing that Chicago's was a restaurant and not a gallery, Mahon and Morgan knew it would be a battle for attention from the art community.

After the "big" show, a more typical format was established. Rather than the weekly format, the restaurant now features monthly group shows featuring the work of four local professional, student, and amateur artists.

Most recently, Chicago's sponsored its First Annual Juried Art Competition and Exhibition. The Competition and Exhibition were a success greater than ever imagined. Not only was the show full of talent and beauty, but also the support from the community was overwhelming. The opening reception was held Sunday, August 25<sup>th</sup>, to a full house of patrons. The restaurant was filled with wonderful art, and those that maintain the work through support.

### **Format of Opening Receptions**

The primary goal of the opening receptions is for the viewers to meet the artist and ask questions about their work. It is an opportunity for the artist to make their selves known. Each artist generally provides an artistic statement along with other printed information.

The opening receptions are held every third Thursday of each month with the rare deviation (such as the reception for the competition exhibition and the October exhibition which we decided to hold on Halloween night). By keeping a standard opening night, we hope that patrons will regularly attend.

Live music of various genres is also featured at the opening night. In the future, we hope to add more performing art events, such as poetry readings and possibly improvisation comedy. This is still tentative, but is a goal.

To enhance the openings, there is a wine tasting. A patron can choose five samples from the selections of white or red wine. Each wine will be accompanied with a description of the wine's body and taste. Along with expanding your knowledge of visual art, you will discover the refreshing art of wine.

### **Statement from Samantha Morgan: Purpose of Shows**

When most people think of modern art, they envision the big city setting with people wearing all black standing stagnate in a white walled room full of finger painting style abstract art. It's time to put an end to this stereotypical view by putting a modern view on modern art. Art is everywhere; all you have to do is look.

When Pat Mahon first approached me about setting up regular art openings for the restaurant, I was perplexed about how I would do such a thing. But after talking with him, and realizing his desire to do something new and interesting, the creativity bug infected my every thought.

Because the art would not be their primary source of income, Pat was willing to try a different approach along with different styles of art. My goal with the shows are to feature every different style of art. I find that too often gallery's stick to either extreme realistic artwork or extremely abstract art. All the different styles in between seem to get lost in the shuffle.

Being an artist myself, I know how frustrating it can be to be told no because my style does not "fit in". In my opinion, the traditional gallery is limited to showing work that they think will sell. Although they should not be blamed for this, I feel that there should be venues that are unrestricted.

When I proposed the idea to artists, the majority of them are thrilled at the thought of being able to display work that they would not ordinarily try to show in town. From the time the shows began to build itself. Now, more artists call me than I call.

More so than for amusement the openings are an opportunity to learn about various artistic styles. I have tried to show the complete artistic spectrum to show the community all there is to offer. The key to appreciating anything in life is to understand it. I believe that Chicago's is that opportunity.

### **Listing of Shows and Artists that Participated**

#### **Show 1: The Taste of Color**

**1) September 5<sup>th</sup>**

- β Demond – Local Professional Artist – mixed media
- 2) September 12<sup>th</sup>**
  - β Steve Schmidt – BRCC Professor of Art – acrylic
- 3) September 19<sup>th</sup>**
  - β Josh Robinson – Recent LSU Fine Art Graduate – charcoal
- 4) September 26<sup>th</sup>**
  - β Jean Sommer – Local Professional artist – watercolor
- 5) October 3<sup>rd</sup>**
  - β Geeta Dave – Local Professional artist and teacher – mixed media
- 6) October 10<sup>th</sup>**
  - β Robert Hausey – LSU Professor of Fine Art – oil paintings
- 7) October 17<sup>th</sup>**
  - β Samantha Morgan – Art Coordinator – acrylic and mixed media
- 8) October 24<sup>th</sup>**
  - β Keith Parent – Recent LSU Graduate and Professional Graphic designer – oil paintings
- 9) November 7<sup>th</sup>**
  - β Linda Jeffers – BRCC Professor of Fine Art – mixed media
- 10) November 14<sup>th</sup>**
  - β David Wandell – LSU Fine Art Student – Printmaking

### **Show 2: January Exhibit**

**January 16<sup>th</sup>**

- 1) Jeremy Broussard – Recent LSU graduate – Oil Paintings, Graphic Design.
- 2) Amy Anderson – Professional artist – Stained Glass and Mosaics
- 3) Mary Hunt – Professional artist – Primitive Art (African American folk art)
- 4) Sara Hopp – LSU graduate student – Monoprints

### **Show 3: February Exhibit**

**February 20<sup>th</sup>**

- 1) Jeana Esser – Professional artist – Oil Paintings
- 2) Abby Salazar – Professional artist – Oil painting (Abstract – focuses on light)
- 3) Randell Henry – Southern Profession of Fine Art – Acrylic & oil paintings.
- 4) Demond & Robin Durand – Professional Artists (collaborative work) –

### **Show 4: March Exhibit**

**March 20<sup>th</sup>**

- 1) Mat Bowers – LSU fine art student – Oil Paintings
- 2) Robin Durand – LSU Professor of Fine Art – Abstract and Photo expressionism
- 3) Lisa Unterbrink – LSU and BRCC Professor – Printmaking
- 4) Marcia Eisworth – Teacher in Gifted and Talented program at Baton Rouge High School – Encaustic Paintings

### **Show 5: April Exhibit**

**April 17<sup>th</sup>**

- 1) Sara David – Graduated in Painting and Drawing – Surrealism Oil Paintings

- 2) Todd Bienveau – LSU Fine Art student – Oil Paintings
- 3) Aimee St. Amant – LSU Fine Art student – Oil Paintings
- 4) Tammy Frazier Johnston – Professional Art teacher – Painting and Mixed Media

**Show 6: May Exhibit –Professional Photography Exhibit**

**May 15<sup>th</sup>**

- 1) Beverly Coates
- 2) Toni Goss
- 3) Reggie Kieo
- 4) Dede Lusk

**Show 7: June Exhibit**

**June 19<sup>th</sup>**

- 1) Holly Stone Barker – Professional Artist – Paper Collage and Mixed Media
- 2) Anne Bigger – Art Therapist/Teacher – Painting and drawing
- 3) SandraWilliams–Diggs – Professional Art Teacher – Acrylic Painting
- 4) Matt Wallace – Professional Graphic Designer – Abstract oil paintings

**Show 8: July Exhibit**

**July 17<sup>th</sup>**

- 1) Willie Fontenot – Blind Artist – Watercolor and Photography
- 2) Melody Guichet – LSU Professor – Oil Paintings
- 3) Josh Robinson – Recent LSU graduate in Fine Art – Oil Paintings
- 4) Angela Nichols – Professional Art Teacher – Printmaking

**Show 9: First Annual Juried Art Competition and Exhibition**

**August 24<sup>th</sup>**

AyeAton, Holly Stone–Barker, Daniel Beach, Rob Carpenter, Mark Carroll, Mary Jane Cox, Sandra Williams Diggs, Virginia Donner, Jessica Dwyer, Jeana Esser, Megan Freeman, Fay Coward Gordon, David Horton, Michel Hudelot, Tammy Frazier Johnston, Tammy Keene, Don Kilbourne, Allison McAshan, Kenny McAshan, Keith Parent, Megan Pearson, Nancy Priy, Dann Shobe, Jean Sommer, and David Mandell.

**Show 10: Winners Exhibit – featuring collections from the winners of competition**

**September 18<sup>th</sup>**

- 1) David Horton – 1<sup>st</sup> place winner – Magic realism – oil paintings
- 2) Megan Freeman – 2<sup>nd</sup> place winner – black and white photography
- 3) Kenny McAshan – 3<sup>rd</sup> place winner – figurative oil paintings
- 4) Daniel Beach – 4<sup>th</sup> place winner –
- 5) Megan Pearson – Popular Choice –
- 6) Jean Sommers – Restaurant Pick –

**Show 11: Professional Watercolor Exhibit**

**October 31<sup>st</sup>**

- 1) Kathy Miller Stone
- 2) Virginia Donner
- 3) Fay Coward Gordon
- 4) Mary Jane Cox

**Show 12: White Light Night Exhibit  
November 20th**

- 1) Nyiece Owens - Professional Artist - Oil Paintings
- 2) Marcia Eisworth - Encaustic Paintings - Teacher in Gifted and Talented program at Baton Rouge High School
- 3) Greg Kiger - Professional Artist - Paintings
- 4) Jeremy Broussard - Professional Graphic Designer - Oil Paintings