

Trader Vic's

5330 E. Mockingbird Lane (adjacent to Hotel Palomar)
214.823.0600; tradervicsdallas.com

Keys to the Door: Owners Kip Sowden, Jeff Berry and Rusty Fenton; executive chef Mickie Crockett.

Mai Tai Madness: We can't put our finger on exactly why we're so excited for Trader Vic's to reopen. Perhaps it has something to do with the good-natured, Polynesian vibe of the place — a landmark that originally opened in Dallas during the 1960s, when big names such as Bob Hope dropped in for cocktails. Perhaps it's the totally transporting atmosphere, 75 percent of which remains intact from the original Vic's: think bamboo beams, intricately hand-carved tiki statues, dangling Japanese fishing balls and an outrigger canoe hanging from the ceiling. Maybe it's the sweet overindulgence of drinks such as the Rum Keg, Tiki Puka Puka and the world-famous Mai Tai, created by Trader Vic's founder Victor Jules Bergeron Jr. in San Francisco in 1944. (The name comes from "Mai tai roa ae!" which means "Out of this world!" in Tahitian — the exclamation from the first person to sip one.) With all this festive drinking and straw-sharing, you might be tempted to skip dinner, but big, big mistake. Chef Crockett's delicious food — she's the first female chef in the 74-year history of Trader Vic's, by the way — such as BBQ pork spareribs, fried crab Rangoon, sizzling beef cho-cho and The Trader's Crispy Duck, with mu shu pancakes, are dizzyingly decadent. Best of all? We just love a good comeback story. When Trader Vic's closed in 1987, Dallas wasn't sure if it would ever again get the chance to slip into the dimly lit room, wrap its hands around an earthen bowl brimming with rum punch and forget about the outside world for a moment. We got lucky. Aloha again, Trader Vic's.



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