GIBSONS ITALIA (GRG/Steve Lombardo & Hugo Ralli)

Destination Fine Dining & Socializing In A Top Grossing, Fashion Forward, Multi-Award Winning, Milan-Inspired, Modern Steakhouse On The River's West Bank

-Modern American Italian Riverfront Steakhouse Fine Dining
-233 N. Canal (Lake & Canal).
-West Bank Where River Splits Into North & South Branches.
-Entrance Via Shared River Point Building Lobby.
-Fulton River District/West Loop/Near West Side
-Riverfront
Year Opened: 2017
Size: 15,700 sq ft
Annual Revenue: $30+ million
Dining Cost $$$/Surcharge: No
Frequent Diner Rewards Program: No.
Neighborhood Crime Profile: Fulton River District, West Loop

Located on the edge of downtown and northwest of the Loop, the affluent Fulton Market and Fulton River District are sub-neighborhoods of the West Loop and part of the Near West Side Community Area. The adjacent Fulton River District is just East of Fulton Market and on the river, a short distance from the Chicago Riverwalk, Kinzie street and the East Bank Club. As a transitional border neighborhood, it is quieter, less crowded and less dense than Fulton Market. Being more residential, it lacks the commercial activity and foot traffic of Fulton Market. While Fulton Market is slightly bigger, more congested and more populated than the Fulton River District, their median income and age seem comparable. **Fulton Market and Fulton River District have similar crime profiles and share most of the same general urban safety dynamics.** While both have relatively low nonviolent crime, **the Fulton River District may have a bit less crime** due to the lack of nightlife density, commercial activity and foot traffic patterns. Fulton Market has more private security and camera initiatives while Fulton River District relies primarily on standard multi-tenant security features. While safe overall, **Fulton River District is still subject to property crimes like package thefts, vehicle break-ins, bicycle thefts and the occasional opportunistic crimes**. Working actively with the CPD & local leadership about security and the lack of robust night life congestion, the residential heavy Fulton River District is considered **one of the safer areas in the West Loop** and broader Near West Side Community. While walkable, standard big city awareness is advised, particularly at night and near transit stops. See Bar Tutto for more on the West Loop and Fulton Market.

Click HERE for more on neighborhood crime by zip code, block & address.

Opening in **2017,** Gibson's Italia was one of the first Chicago restaurants embracing a destination type experience. The Mark Knauer designed Gibson's Italia is a unique, lively, large (**15,700 sq ft**), multi-level, top grossing, award winning, Modern American Italian Steakhouse with legendary standards .

While not on the main downtown branch of the river or the riverwalk, it can be accessed by foot or a short drive. The entrance is through the River Point Building's shared lobby and acts as a non-dedicated vestibule for herding guests into the elevator. While the restaurant sits in its own distinct muti-level glass structure on the north side of the River Point Building, it is structurally integrated as part of the development.

Located above the shared lobby level, the three-level vertical buildout includes sleek modern architecture, multi-level outdoor dining, panoramic views, floor-to-ceiling windows, a prominent art lined staircase and a retractable roof. With nearly every seat benefiting, the layout maximizes the views.

Looking eastward down the river and across the downtown skyline, the epic views are some of the least obstructed in Chicago. The decorative elements include fireplaces, distinctive marble bars, ornate ceilings, high-end finishes and materials.

Adored by the corporate crowd, GRG's flagship is a popular, energetic, refined, contemporarily elegant, but comfortable, Milan-inspired modern Italian American Steakhouse offering waterfront views, upscale destination dining and a vibrant social atmosphere. With Milan the fashion capital of Italy, Gibson's Italia is anything but an old school Italian Restaurant.

Bathed in natural sunlight from large river facing windows, the vibrant, stylish, welcoming **bar and lounge** is on the first floor above the lobby. Offering smaller portions of the main dining room menu, the atmosphere is more casual, but still elegant. The aesthetics include a wood-beamed ceiling, warm colors, a large & sleek black marble counter with a deep bottle wall behind the bartenders, tan leather bar stools, white marble high-top tables with tan leather chairs and dining tables that wrap around the side of the bar.

Lacking a bar, the **main dining room**, including semi-private dining & outdoor seating, is on the second floor above the lobby. It is more formal, classic, elegant and detailed than the bar and lounge, but it still has an urban edge. The gray leather booths, chairs and white marble tables flow in a serpentine manner. Aesthetics include an ornate ceiling, classic millwork, backlit onyx walls, high end finishes, neutral colors, minimalist shelving and abstract wall paintings.

Seamlessly integrated, the third floor is home to a glass enclosed **private event space** with a retractable roof and glass doors that open. The large white marble bar and tan leather stools are complemented with leather sofa seating and a fireplace. With limited wall décor, the east facing panorama is the décor.

Featuring chef-driven tastes of Italy, the menu is led by a dedicated culinary team currently headed by ***Executive Chef Drew Keane****. Serving affordable upscale food and wine,* ***the menu balances traditional Italian favorites with classic steakhouse staples.*** *(Former Chef Jose Sosa departed for Ummo in 2023).*

The rich food is well presented, including gold-extruded pastas, world class steaks, other noteworthy meats & seafood, antipasti, ***signature risotto,*** *decadent sides and celebrated desserts. Some of the most popular dishes include arancini, crab & avocado parfait, spicy rigatoni, signature risotto, steaks, branzino and spumoni baked Alaska.*

We dined in the bar area on our most recent visit. Bypassing the 650 selections and the excessive 10,000-bottle inventory, we relaxed with an outstanding choice of low-cost wines by the glass. While they certainly offer more expensive wines by the glass, we opted for the $13 Mohua Sauvignon Blanc and the $15 Baileyana Pinot Noir, both acclaimed, delicious and high value wines.

The less than edible chopped salad was the low point of the evening. The rich crab bisque was delightful, but in need of tumbler of dry sherry to top it off. The meatballs and crispy artichokes were perfect. The ravioli carbonara was good, but too rich for us. If you are a meat lover, the fusilli was satisfying. After bringing freshly shaved cheese and a peppermill to top off the Cacio e Pepe, it was the best pasta on the table. The spicy rigatoni was another delight. The soup was late, so our server brought a medley of delicious complimentary desserts. Click HERE for menus.

Our American born Mexican server, Tenoch, must have gone to Gibson's boot camp for service staff. His pleasant and meticulous attention to detail made us feel like royalty. When the check arrived, we were surprised by the affordability. All in all, a delightful experience.

Given their success, Gibsons doesn't have to do anything different. However, the current Italian dishes don't provide a big incentive to dine there. The signature Risotto is certainly fine, but we would revise the Italian dishes and consider those below. Some could no doubt become signature dishes.

- **Paglia e Fieno**
  Cream sauce, ribbon pasta, peas, mushrooms & pancetta. No bizarre shaped pasta.
- **Osso Buco & Saffron Risotto**
- **Manicotti & Cannelloni**
  Combination with bechamel or marinara
- **Baked Clams Casino**
  Large Fioretta type clams. No dime sized clams
- **Polpo Alla Griglia**
  Cut & served tableside over radicchio with fresh lemon juice & a shot of balsamic

The incentive is important because while Italians in the DCFG love Gibsons Italia, they don't dine there for the Italian food. They may not ever get pasta like the legendary Doro's on Rush served in the 80s, but they still crave pasta like Tre Dita's Linguine Al Limone, La Serre's Caviar Nest Pasta, Piccolo Sogno's Paglia e Fieno (made upon request) and il Porcellino's Pappardelle Alla Porcellino.

While the competition is heating up, Gibson's Italia has always been one of Chicago's top destination type experiences for upscale dining and socializing. The food quality, consistency and service are key components of why Gibson's Italia is the top grossing independent restaurant in Chicago.

Gibson's service model - across all their restaurants - is among the best in the industry. As a destination dining pioneer **grossing more than $30 million annually,** Gibson's Italia has probably earned more awards than any other Chicagoland restaurant.

NO happy hour. Closes at 11:00 pm on weekends. Click HERE for Yelp (4.3) images of the highly successful modern Italian American Steakhouse.