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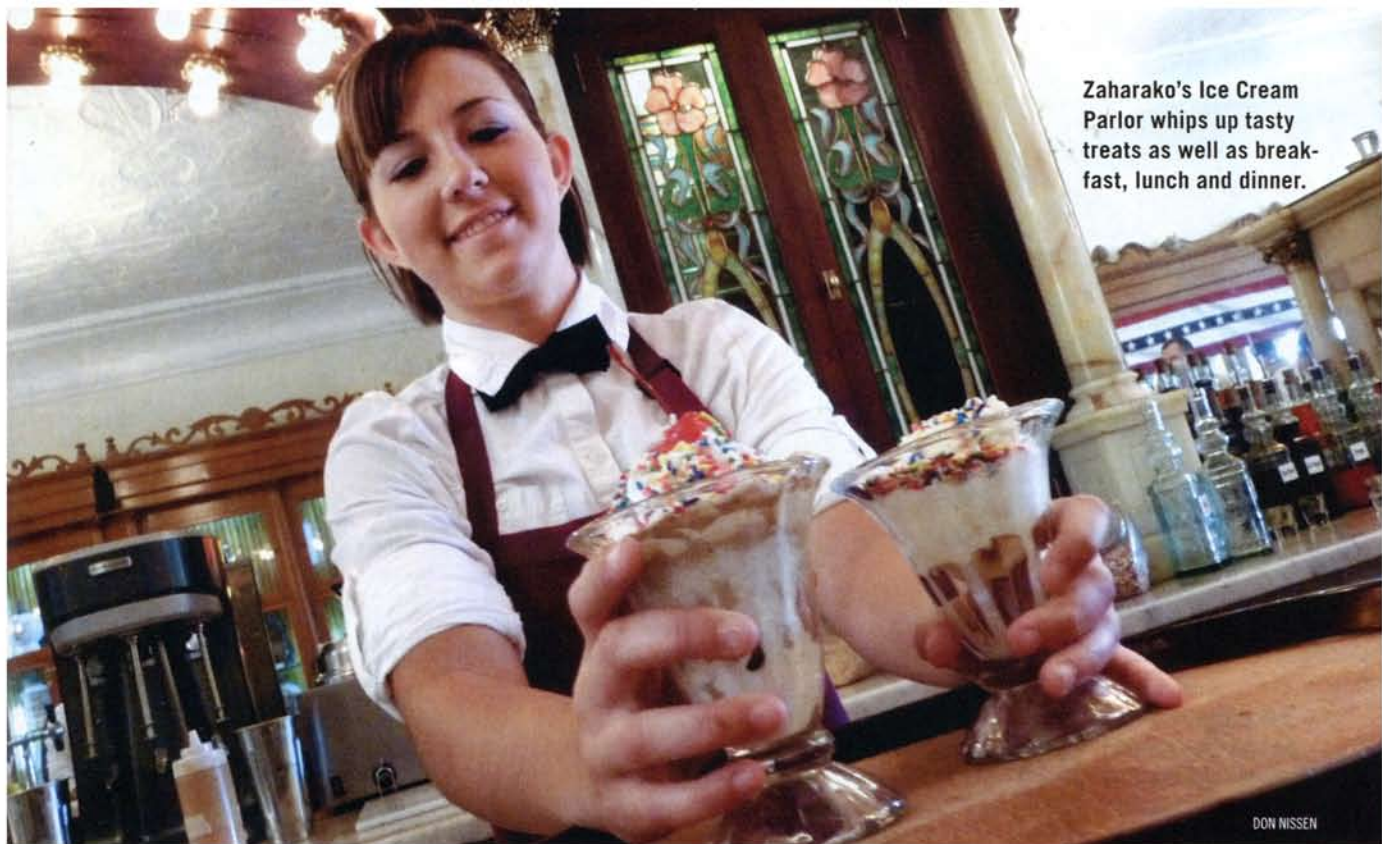
HAIL TO WHALES

**COLUMBUS'
SMALL-TOWN
WONDER**

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Zaharako's Ice Cream Parlor whips up tasty treats as well as breakfast, lunch and dinner.

DON NISSEN

Discover Columbus

This Indiana town's striking architecture, fine food and family-friendly fun cater to modern travelers.

BY AMY LYNCH

The sundaes arrive at our table looking like something straight out of another era, in tall curvy glass dishes with long spoons, whipped cream and cherries on top. There's even a small boat of extra hot fudge on the side. The root beer float is similarly old-fashioned, right down to the house-made syrup and paper straw. Everything tastes as it looks: delicious.

With gleaming woodwork and stained glass, turn-of-the-century

soda fountains and a working 1908 Welte orchestration pipe organ in mint condition, the 100-year-old Zaharako's Ice Cream Parlor and Museum is a Columbus, Ind., landmark, and something of an old-school oddity in a town famous for its modern architecture—and full of modern enjoyments for the whole family.

From the Ground Up

Cummins Engine magnate and philanthropist J. Irwin Miller sat



AMY LYNCH

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INDIANAPOLIS MUSEUM OF ART

Hotel Indigo's bold furnishings and colorful decor (above) create one-of-a-kind accommodations. The innovative-for-its-time conversation pit within the Miller House (right) set a new standard for modern home design. "Exploded Engine" by Rudolph de Harak (middle) anchors the lobby of the Cummins corporate headquarters and is open to curious visitors at no charge.



with famed architect Eero Saarinen and designer Charles Eames at Zaharako's marble counters decades ago hatching plans to turn Columbus into a showplace of inventive structural design. Dozens of distinctive buildings have since taken shape, including the modernist Cummins headquarters; the Bartholomew County Public Library, designed by I.M. Pei; and the captivating North Christian Church, with its otherworldly soaring spire.

Nowadays, visitors can feast their eyes on Columbus architecture during tours by bus, on foot or via recorded messages accessible by cell phone. A just-announced guided walking option offers an exclusive

peek into Miller's previously off-limits private office, and his personal residence joined the ranks of Columbus attractions in May 2011 when the Miller House and Garden opened its doors to public tours for the first time.

The ultramodern Mid-Century home—a team effort by Saarinen, designer Alexander Girard and landscape architect Dan Kiley—offers much to marvel at with its futuristic design details. Visitors hop on a bus at the Columbus Visitors Center for a 90-minute excursion that illustrates notable aspects of the home, such as the open floor plan, living room conversation pit and built-in illuminated marble dining table. Photos of the

home and grounds have been forbidden up to now, but a photography tour and a new extended curator tour are currently in the works.

Varied Tastes

The city's vibrant restaurant scene continues to evolve, with cuisine ranging from comfort food classics to spicy ethnic eats. A stroll along downtown's quaint Washington Street reveals a collection of eateries to please all palates. A recent addition as of last year, Scotty's Burger Joint is the newest member of the state-wide Scotty's Brewhouse franchise, serving up mouthwatering sandwiches with an emphasis on fresh, locally sourced ingredients.



SUSAN FLECK



DON NISSEN

The 35-foot Luckey Climber (above) in the Commons keeps kids entertained, while the 20-mile People Trail (left) gives the whole family a chance to bike or hike.

Fine-dining establishments include the continental Bistro 310, Smith's Row Food and Spirits, and elegant Italian eatery Tre Bicchieri. Gramz Bakery, Papa's Deli, and the Garage Pub and Grill are ideal destinations for a more casual lunch or dinner. Thirsty travelers can sip a little red and white at a Simmons Winery tasting or quaff a pint of local craft beer from the new microbrewing operation at Zwanzigz Pizza.

Those craving a sweet treat should seek out all-natural, locally produced 240 Sweet Artisan Marshmallows in sinfully good flavors such as salty caramel swirl, cherry chocolate chip and honey lavender. And the company offers marshmallow-making

classes, especially fun to do with kids in tow.

Play and Stay

Columbus further caters to younger visitors with kid-friendly attractions such as the interactive Kidcommons children's museum (the giant toilet is a must-see). Across the street, the Commons public space gives little ones lots of opportunity to burn off excess energy on the two-story Luckey Climber structure and in age-designated play areas. A browse through the books and toys at Imagination Station wraps up any trip on an educational note.

For downtown accommodations, Hotel Indigo delivers visually stimu-

lating lodging in keeping with Columbus' forward-thinking vibe. Located along the recently expanded 20-mile People Trail path, rooms and common areas pop with bright colors and funky furnishings. Guests can say hi to Miles, the hotel's friendly resident pooch; he lives in the lobby. For character-rich digs in a historical setting, the Inn at Irwin Gardens is the perfect backdrop for a luxurious bed-and-breakfast experience. The inn's gorgeous sunken gardens, modeled after Pompeii, are reason enough to merit a visit.

Planning Your Trip

For more information about Columbus, call (800) 468-6564 or visit www.columbus.in.us.

H&A

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