

Revisiting the Top Ten Restaurants in the Eastern District of Texas

By: John M. Jackson

Jackson Walker Partner

901 Main Street, Suite 6000

Dallas, Texas 75202

214.953.6109

jjackson@jw.com

Judging from both the quantity and enthusiasm of the feedback to my Top Ten Restaurants article (<http://images.jw.com/com/publications/1105.pdf>), my decision to take a hiatus from writing about substantive patent litigation issues was well received. In fact, after going back through the dozens of e-mails I received commenting on the list, it soon became apparent that I had enough material to prepare a follow-up piece and could further postpone any articles dealing with substantive patent law.

The vast majority of the comments were favorable (or at least ostensibly so). Some of my (beer-drinking) friends from law school were astonished that my taste in adult beverages had evolved to the point that I called myself an oenophile. My brethren from the Commanderie de Bordeaux were equally stunned when they discovered that I was a competitive eater. Others were just grateful that my article did not mention *Bilski*, *Quanta* or *TS Tech*. And of course, many readers thought that the list would come in useful the next time they visited the Eastern District of Texas.

While the feedback to the article was largely positive, there was a vocal minority who was not at all amused by my list. This group had one thing in common – Beaumont. The harshest attack came from one of my Jackson Walker colleagues who grew up in Beaumont. That attorney sent me a scathing e-mail blasting Beaumont's omission and snidely wondering "if any Beaumont restaurants would even make my top 100 list." This person was so agitated by my list that he failed to respond to my reply asking him which Beaumont restaurant he believed should make the cut. Fortunately, however, the others from Beaumont were more constructive and unanimously recommended that I include Suga's Deep South Cuisine on my list.

In addition to the suggestions for Suga's, there were a number of other restaurants that were recommended multiple times. Since I have not yet personally experienced these restaurants, I cannot add them to the top ten list at this point. Instead, I prepared a supplemental list showing the top five restaurants not included in the initial article. To avoid further controversy, please note that the rankings for these restaurants are based on the number of votes each restaurant received.

15. **Big Pines Lodge** - 747 Pine Island Rd, Karnack, TX 75661 - (903) 679-3466
An East Texas institution for more than 60 years. The Big Pines Lodge was known for all-you-can eat catfish and ice-cold beer served in mason jars. Until the late 1990s, this was reportedly the only place in the country where you could get alcohol, guns, ammunition and fishing bait all within ten feet of each other. Sadly, a fire destroyed the restaurant in June. At this time it is not clear whether Big Pines Lodge will reopen.
14. **Fuad's Lake Country** - 3920 N. Stateline Ave., Texarkana, AR 71854 - (870) 773-1550
Don't be fooled by the exterior. Fuad's offers fine dining in Texarkana. Fuad's food, service and atmosphere are all first rate.
13. **Hopkins Icehouse** - 301 E. 3rd St., Texarkana, AR 71854 - (870) 774-8432
<http://hopkinsicehouse.com/home>
Like Zapata's (number 8), Hopkins is conveniently located next to the federal courthouse, which makes it ideal for a post-hearing visit. Hopkins is well known for its cold beer and pizza. Also, the manager at Hopkins Icehouse used to be the head bartender at Timothy's (which remains firmly entrenched at number two on my list following a recent visit).
12. **Suga's Deep South Cuisine** - 461 Bowie St., Beaumont, TX 77701 - (409) 813-1808
<http://www.sugasdeepsouth.com/Home.aspx>
Universally regarded as the best restaurant in Beaumont. Suga's is an "up-scale, casual" restaurant/jazz bar in downtown Beaumont that features "southern cuisine with a twist." Having reviewed the dinner menu, I already have my order planned – the Grilled Comanche Buffalo Tenderloin with a Lobster Tail (and a Lipitor).
11. **Country Tavern** - State Highway 31 & FM 2767, Kilgore, TX 75662 - (903) 984-9954
<http://www.countrytavern.com/menu.php>
Many readers decried Country Tavern's omission from my list. Unbeknownst to me, Country Tavern has been serving some of the best barbeque in Texas since the 1930s. Country Tavern's barbequed pork ribs induced actor Larry Hagman to give up his vegetarian diet and were delivered to George H. Bush's hotel room in Tyler during the 1988 Presidential campaign.