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## A Taste of Spain in the South Loop

Suburban Spanish dining empire puts down roots on State Street

By [WENDY WOLLENBERG](#)

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Courtesy of Tapas Valencia

Tapas Valencia's tapas are top-notch.

Formerly the hottest thing going in west suburban [Bloomingtondale](#), [Tapas Valencia](#) has finally moved to the big city -- the so-hip-it-hurts South Loop, to be exact. The restaurant, which was voted the area's top Spanish restaurant in the 2008-2009 Zagat guide back in its old digs, is the sister location of another suburban hot spot -- [Naperville](#)'s much-loved [Meson Sabika](#).

Owner Hossein Jamali has created an urbane counterpart in [Tapas Valencia](#) to Meson Sabika's stately grandeur (the Naperville restaurant is housed in a 19th century mansion). The new restaurant boasts an airy, loft-like feel, with a spacious bar area featuring plentiful plasma TVs, sleek brown leather booths and solid blonde wood tables in the dining room and colorful mosaic tile murals and [Joan Miro](#) paintings enlivening the space throughout. A striking vantage point of the Sears Tower from floor-to-ceiling windows is the icing on the cake.

The menu, created by executive chef [Filemon Ochoa](#), is a snapshot of Spain, offering an array of hot and cold tapas, plus paellas, soups, salads and desserts. An enticing cocktail list offers the restaurant's famed housemade sangria and specialty martinis, plus more than 50 wine choices by the glass or the bottle with an emphasis on fine Spanish vintages.

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