

pan-broiled squid with noodle as an "appetizer." I'd call it a meal. The massive bowl featured four piles of springy vermicelli over a chile-soaked stir-fry of tender tentacles and abdomen, sheets of tail meat, sweet onions, mushrooms, zucchini and red pepper strips.

A sizzling stone bowl was deceptively simple to the naked eye: a heap of steamed white rice tossed with black sesame seeds, diced scallions and a single raw egg. I used a large spoon to excavate a base of pungent kimchi, then stirred, spreading red spice. The rice formed a nice crust on the hot stone pot.

For beverages, every table receives a tall pitcher of iced barley tea, the perfect tonic for spicy food. Plenty of diners were downing oversized bottles of OB and Hite beer, both popular in South Korea. We opted for plum wine. The sweet amber was another nice balm for the food's chile heat. Black raspberry and pomegranate wine were also available.

Hamjipark doesn't offer dessert, but Ice Kiss is next door, serving fully loaded shaved ice and frozen yogurt. Still, Hamjipark was sensational, serving beyond-generous portions of flavorful food in a lively setting.

Pork spare ribs \$16.99; Kimchi rice in sizzling stone bowl \$9.99. NA

THE HOT CORNER

2nd Street and Main Street

A lot of Angelenos mistook Downtown Los Angeles as a lost cause, but the cranes have camped, luxury lofts are rising, and the city's historic core is speeding toward revitalization. A steady stream of businesspeople, *Times* reporters, gentrifiers and government workers have made 2nd & Main one of the area's most fully realized corners to date.

The 1910 Beaux-Arts Higgins Building currently contains all of the corner's action, both above and below ground. Lili and Cecil Kim's stylish Liliya China Bistro partners Chinese and Korean food with a red, orange and gold color scheme. Expect dishes like black bean noodles with pork and squash, sizzling short ribs, and flounder with soy ginger sauce.

Paul Hibler and David Sanfield imported Pitfire Pizza Company from North Hollywood in August 2005. The contemporary offshoot offers thin-crust pizzas topped with market-fresh ingredients, hearty pasta dishes and seasonal panini.

No stranger to Downtown, third-generation Angeleno Richard Karno succeeded with Groundwork Coffee in the Arts District before opening a branch at 2nd & Main in January 2007. Karno said, "I was always embarrassed about our Downtown, but I've been very excited about this revitalization." His two-story coffee-house introduced

Los Angeles to the deluxe Clover coffee-making machine, and offers up to 30 varieties of organic beans and blends per day. In the basement, Andrew Meieran and partner Marc Smith have transformed the Higgins Building's original power plant into a truly distinctive bar and lounge. Their signature cocktail features lavender-honey-infused liquor, pear liqueur and fresh pear nectar. A bar menu is available Wednesday to Saturday, and includes a lobster corn dog and both deviled and angel eggs (with Osetra caviar).

—Joshua Lurie

The Edison 108, W. 2nd St. #101, Los Angeles, (213) 613-0000.

Groundwork Coffee, 108 W. 2nd St. #107, Los Angeles, (213) 620-9668.

Liliya China Bistro, 108 W. 2nd St. #102-103, Los Angeles, (213) 620-1717.

Pitfire Pizza Company, 108 W. 2nd St. #105, Los Angeles, (213) 808-1200.



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