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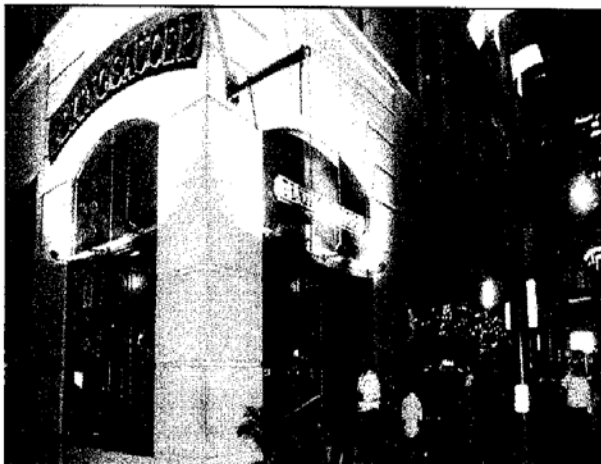
INSIDE

■ Calcium is a safe and essential supplement, say the You Docs. **PAGE D6**

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What to eat before heading to the ballpark



BILL OLIVE

PRE-GAME WARM UP: Beer geeks grab a cold one at the Flying Saucer.

■ These dining hot spots boast outta here fare

By **SYD KEARNEY**
 STAFF WRITER

Hey, Astros fans. Looking for someplace to eat downtown before heading to Minute Maid Park? Here are some suggestions within walking distance of the ballpark.

Irma's Southwest Grill normally serves only breakfast and lunch, but the owners have a soft spot

for the Astros and their fans. The Tex-Mex restaurant famous for its super-fresh fare and no-menu policy opens three hours before first pitch on game days. (Closed on Sundays.) Very popular, so reservations are advised. 1314 Texas, 713-247-9651.

Home Plate Bar & Grill is directly across the street from Minute Maid Park. It can get crazy crowded on game days, but you're with fellow fans and the kitchen moves orders out at fastball speed. The fare is what you'd expect: burg-

ers, wings and other fried things. 1800 Texas, 713-222-1993.

For a something more relaxing and cozy, consider the **Sam Bar** at the Alden. Check out the pre-game happy specials or enjoy a post-game burger and house-cut fries. 1117 Prairie, 832-200-8800.

You can get in the spirit of the game at **Lucky's Pub**, a sprawling sports bar just on the other side of U.S. 59 but still an easy walk. The pub features more than 200 beers in

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