

# A League of Their Own

THESE UPSCALE BARS SCORE BIG WITH SOPHISTICATED SPORTS FANS.

BY AMY COSTANTINO IMERMAN PHOTOS BY SALVATORE BRANCIFORT

A PLASMA SCREEN DOES NOT A SPORTS-WATCHING DESTINATION MAKE. We want it all—a pleasant ambiance, **upscale edibles** and ESPN playing on the TV. Who says that pâté and pigskin-watching can't go hand in hand? An **expertly-mixed martini** only adds to the pleasure of a kick-off or the tragedy of a turn over. With relaxed (but refined) atmospheres and hors d'oeuvres that **venture** beyond "mild, medium or hot," these restaurants will satisfy your appetite for football and fine food.

ABOVE: The Bottleshop offers the refined Brasserie Burger for a casual Longboat key crowd. NEXT PAGE: Fried food gets a makeover with a plate of crispy-fried SweetBreads at the Cork bar, upstairs from the Bottleshop



**DESTINATION: CORK AND BOTTLESHOP**

**REFINED BAR BITES: BRASSERIE BURGER, FOIS GRAS AND CRISPY-FRIED SWEET BREADS**

If you're enjoying an afternoon on the Circle and want to take a break from the shopping to get your game on, pop the lid off of Cork and Bottleshop, a new dining venue that unexpectedly houses two refined bars for game-watching. The first is located downstairs at The Bottleshop (the more casual eatery) where you can watch the game on their new flat-screen while people watching through the large windows. The breadbasket, containing slices of crusty baguette accompanied with addictive citrus-honey butter, beats bar nuts by far, but don't fill up before you sink your mouth into a juicy Brasserie Burger topped with pickled onions and Gruyere cheese. Upstairs at the fine dining restaurant Cork, there's an even larger bar with two flat-screen TVs. Chef Mac deCarle's full menu is available while sitting at the bar, so tackle some of the gourmet options available like Fois Gras or (if your old bar food habits die hard and you're hankering for fried fare) some Crispy-fried Sweet Breads. You'll never look at fried food the same way again. 29 N. Blvd. of the Presidents, Sarasota, 941-388-CORK

