

Chicago Tribune

chicagotribune.com >> [Entertainment](#)

ONE FINE DAY

ONE FINE DAY

Kevin Williams

Published April 1, 2006

They say you can't go home again, and they're right. But in the case of Evanston, it's because they've built a soaring multiunit condo tower where home used to be. Chrissie Hynde, of "My City Was Gone" fame, can forget about Ohio. A big chunk of this university town that the family -- me, wife, hyper-intelligent cur -- moved to 10 years ago, where you could drive downtown, park and run errands, is gone. Long gone. It's been replaced by something vaguely resembling Schaumburg, overnight it seems. American Apparel, Urban Outfitters, Wolfgang Puck's -- it's all there.

We fled to Highland Park four years ago, after driving around Evanston's downtown for the 314th time, trying to find parking. But recently, I had to spend a week in Evanston and ... well ... read on.

MORNING

You're going to think that I'm kidding when I say this, but the Hilton Garden Inn (1818 Maple Ave., 847-475-6400) has a killer breakfast that's also a bargain. A piddlin' \$10.82 (after taxes and all) buys a limitless supply of gustatory excess. Fruit, omelets, pancakes, waffles, all made to order and piping hot. I particularly liked the omelets, which didn't have that greasy, "we made everything in the world on this griddle" taste. Am I saying go to a hotel for breakfast? You betcha.

AFTERNOON

I know that everyone has been to Urban Outfitters except me, so off I went. Surely, there would be something there for a 44-year-old suburban man, since the store's devotees say that there's something for everyone. The Arctic Monkeys CD? Nope. Cheesy winter gloves? Heck no. Just as I was about to dismiss this place as a hellhole of kitsch, there it was: a France national soccer team tote bag. Now, this bit of flimsiness was \$48, so my AMEX card stayed put. But there was indeed something for everyone, even me, a raving lunatic soccer fan.

EVENING

Nighttime is no time to fool around, so, it was off to Campagnola (815 Chicago Ave., 847-475-6100). It is with some reluctance that this neighborhood stalwart finds its way into this piece, but because it's in south Evanston, the downtown mall crowd won't jam it up. We were able to call at about 5 p.m. Friday for an 8:30 dinner reservation, and what a dinner it was. Homemade tagliatelle in a mushroom sauce, salad with aged balsamic vinaigrette, and my friend had an immense, Fred Flintstonesque rib-eye. Two of us dined for about \$105, including dessert (but no wine).

kmwilliams@tribune.com