

■ SIDE DISH ■

Franklin Fountain

116 Market St. 215.627.1899.
www.franklinfountain.com

Why was I in Old City on a Saturday night? I'm not 21 anymore. I don't have fake boobs (nor do I one day hope to acquire them). And being shouted at by men who've taken the time to have their eyebrows waxed isn't really my idea of a good time. Yet somehow I ended up in the throbbing communal dry-hump that is a weekend night on Market Street, dodging barfing bachelorettes and leering packs of metrosexuals. And then, shining brightly amid the sea of hormones, there was the Franklin Fountain, an oasis of wholesome goodness wedged between lounges Suede and One14. The owners, brothers Ryan and Eric Berley, refer to their storefront as an "ice cream saloon," but it's really a meticulously assembled homage to the soda fountains of old. The Fountain's menu features egg creams, ice cream sodas, milkshakes, phosphates (with intriguing names like Japanese Thirst Killer) and 25 flavors of old-fashioned soda by the glass. Philadelphia-style ice cream is offered by the scoop or as part of carefully crafted sundaes like the Stock Market Crunch (Rocky Road ice cream, peanut butter sauce and crushed pretzels) or the You May Fire When You Are Ready, Gridley, a banana split that's a literal mouthful. The space, which used to house X-rated bakery Eroticakes, has undergone a thorough physical (and undoubtedly psychological) renovation. The lovely inlaid mosaic floors have been repaired, the pressed tin ceilings and walls repainted a fresh-scrubbed white. The store is furnished with elegant period antiques, including a Mexican onyx seltzer-dispensing "draft lamp"—a 100-year-old version of today's soda gun—topped with a Tiffany-style lamp. The Berleys themselves (and occasionally Mom and Dad) man the counter. Sporting pristine white lab coats and snappy paper hats while assembling the sodas and sundaes with pharmaceutical precision, they seem to be plucked straight from Central Casting. Their attention to detail helped me forget, at least for a little while, that the 21st century, with its midriff exposed and its bass-heavy soundtrack, lay thumping just a few feet away. *(Kirsten Henri)*