

# A Milwaukee Lunch Spot for Jason

## Bourne and Friends

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A GPS is not going to help you find one of the best restaurants in Milwaukee. Neither will a street map or a good sense of direction.

What you need is a sense of intrigue, a flair for the dangerous, and a license to kill. Maybe not so much a real license to kill, but it helps if your name is Bond. James Bond.

It's a place where Austin Powers, Maxwell Smart and the team from Mission Impossible would feel at ease and Jason Bourne could blow in and out of without being detected.

This is The Safe House, perhaps the country's first concept-themed restaurant that has been giving refuge to spies and their counter intelligence groups since 1966. In the world of international espionage, a safe house is an unassuming house or business that serves as a

secret refuge for spies engaging in covert operations. In the recently released Bourne Ultimatum, the place where Matt Damon hooked up with Julia Stiles in Tangier was a safe house.

Weaving through three windowless buildings, The Safe House is like Disneyland at Checkpoint Charlie. Energetic music, fun exhibits, colorful imagery celebrates the elements we love in characters like James Bond, Emma Peale, Jim Phelps and Agent 99. Spy glasses, two-way mirrors, fast moving cars and kitchy language. A couple of booths spin around and magically disappear in the wall.

Dave Baldwin, the mastermind of The Safe House plot, is a graduate of Marquette law school who found the profession too boring to stay with very long. Admitting that he is "older than Pierce Brosnan and younger than Sean Connery," Baldwin and a friend made a trip to Berlin in 1965 that shaped the course of his life.

"We ate in this place called Eden's Saloon, this dark, secluded place with lots of little rooms and passage ways, and you just knew there were real spies and espionage taking place," Baldwin said.

At the Milwaukee Safe House, Baldwin's favorite experience is called "Hail to the Chief."



It's a 28-ounce special occasion drink for which reservations are necessary. Basically, a party comes to the restaurant and the unknowing drink recipient is identified to the wait staff. A femme fatale agent/waitress approaches the recipient and offers to take him on a tour of The Safe House. Leading him down a spiral staircase, he is eventually maneuvered into the seat of an F-8 jet fighter, which is then ejected into the upper level where the recipient's friends have gathered at the bar.

A band strikes up "Hail to the Chief," flags drop from the ceiling, and the whole bar stands to salute as the bartender hands over the drink. If the drink recipient is a female, the experience is called "Her Majesty's Secret Service" with gender-appropriate changes. The whole process lasts about 20 minutes and costs \$24.50.

Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is at [www.safe-house.com](http://www.safe-house.com).

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– Diana Lambdin Meyer, RED Travel Writer