

CHANGE OF SCENE: Exploring Northwest Portland

By Katlin Smith

Northwest Portland is an ideal antidote for weekend wanderlust. Innovative specialty stores, first-rate restaurants and Victorian architecture can provide a Saturday full of shopping, noshing and sightseeing. Situated between downtown Portland and the northwest hills, Northwest Portland is also a good base for excursions ranging from Old Town to the Washington Park Zoo to the quiet trails of Forest Park.

Northwest is a neighborhood in transition. New shops and restaurants are opening almost weekly so expect to find more businesses than this selected list of stores and eateries. Also expect to find a parking crunch. Beginning this tour at the north edge of the shopping area, however, should allow relatively easy parking.

The best way to start a Saturday tour of Northwest Portland is with a hearty breakfast at **Ezekiel's Wheel** (1201 NW 21st, formerly called Wheel of Fortune) which is run by the Holy Order of MANS and helps fund Raphael House, an emergency shelter for women and children. This popular restaurant fills by 9:30 am or so on Saturdays so aim for an early start. Parents note: This is a good restaurant for children.

Either leave the car at this point or move it to NW 23rd, north of NW Overton. At this point, a block of shops can be found in recently renovated houses. **Laughing Horse Books** (1322 NW 23rd) offers new and used political books and periodicals plus crafts from Latin America and political buttons. Espresso and other drinks and bake goods are also available in their small coffeehouse.

Next door the **Carter Arcand Gallery** (1318 NW 23rd) features contemporary Japanese art. And one more door to the south, **Nutcracker Sweet** (1310 NW 23rd) is a fine diversion for doll and chocolate lovers.

Walk off any truffles eaten at Nutcracker Sweet by heading south past Good Samaritan Hospital to the main shopping area. Fiction aficionados, and other bibliophiles, should stop by **Twenty-Third Avenue Books** (1015 NW 23rd). Take a rest in their overstuffed chair if need be or continue south for more shops.

Elizabeth Street (908 NW 23rd) is an excellent stop for women's clothing and jewelry. This shop's interesting selection is especially inspirational for seamstresses looking for new sewing ideas. Next door **Dimples** (904 NW 23rd) offers children's clothing and gifts.

On the west side of NW 23rd, a mini-mall houses **Beyond Reason** (2305 NW Kearney), an inventive shop filled with imaginative, locally-designed clothing and jewelry, hand-painted and hand-dyed scarves and avant-garde art. Two doors and about a century away is **Grandmother's Cedar Chest** (2327 NW Kearney) in which every available square foot is jammed with an unbelievable selection of lace plus vintage linens and fabrics.



Photograph by Katlin Smith

The true flavor of Northwest Portland is found in its older homes. Kearney Street provides a good diversion for house-watching. Stroll toward the hills for one block to view some fine examples of turn-of-the-century architecture including two Victorians at the end of the block at NW 24th and Kearney.

Back on NW 23rd, the **Downstairs Attic** (825 NW 23rd) offers fine china and glassware. Next door **The Selection** (823 NW 23rd) has a small but quality assortment of cotton pants, colorful sweatshirts, and unusual jewelry.

The most densely populated block of shops, and shoppers, in Northwest is found between NW Johnson and Irving. Sweater collectors should stop at **23rd Avenue Sweaters** (738 NW 23rd). Upstairs, **What's Upstairs** (736 NW 23rd) sells quality used women's clothing and is connected to **Country Flaire** (734 NW 23rd) which sells baskets and other country decor. Also on the second floor, but next door, is **Ethnic Arts** (728 NW 23rd), a shop filled with imports from around the globe.

The basement-level shops offer some of the best shopping on this block. **D.L. Barnes** (740 NW 23rd) markets women's accessories and creative, handmade jewelry like Seiko's resin-

Turn-of-the-century houses on 23rd Street in Northwest Portland are being converted into shops and restaurants.

coated, origami earrings. Next door is **Mako** (732 NW 23rd), a required stop for parents. This wonderful children's store features cotton togs and other outfits designed by Portlander Mako. Also available are sweaters hand-knit by Mako and her sister, Yoko. Parents will also appreciate **Early Childhood Bookhouse** (724 NW 23rd) with its excellent selection of children's books including songbooks, tapes and literature on multi-cultural education. Ask for their catalog.

Weary shoppers will appreciate the espresso cart conveniently parked in front of **Coffee People** (722 NW 23rd). Take a break with a cappuccino and one of "Wanda's Famed Cookies" on the nearby bench or peruse the fine selection of coffee, teapots, mugs and other caffeine-oriented accessories inside the shop. This is only a partial listing of shops on this side of the block. Allow plenty of time to explore all of them.

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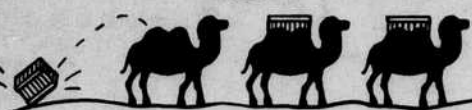
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