

Cook creates artistic cuisine

Rachel McMath

For the Oregon Daily Emerald

Can you imagine a new place to eat in Eugene? Somewhere that serves organic vegetarian food with flavor? I found it on the corner of West 13th Avenue and Lawrence Street — the Van Gogh Cafe.

This place was sassy in a subtle way with yellow walls, orange marigolds and blue trim around the windows. I felt as if I had just walked into one of Van Gogh's paintings, except the oil paints smelled like fresh herbs and the artist was owner and food preparer, Julie Stander.

It was an evening of lighted candles on every table as Stander sat down with me while I ate potato-lentil soup and my favorite selection, Van Gogh's Ear, a fat roll with melted brie, pesto and a tomato on top.

Stander was as colorful as her green salad made of everything found in a garden as well as raw cashews, raisins and Parmesan cheese. A 1993 University graduate with a bachelor's degree in fine arts, Stander wanted to extend her talents to the mouth's palate.

"I've always loved food, and I can be creative with it," Stander said.

Creating carrot-ginger soup, pizza bread, stuffed

peppers, quiches, raspberry custard and marinated tempeh, Stander experiments in flavor with an artist's intuition.

Stander, who runs the cafe mostly by herself, begins making bread at 7:30 each morning. She keeps the cafe open from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., Monday through Friday. She prepares all of her food from scratch and grows oregano, thyme and dill in her outside planter.

"I cook as if I'm at home and I never will be able to cut corners when preparing food," Stander said. "It takes time to create something quality, and eating healthy food makes people feel good."

Stander buys only local organic food, but you wouldn't be able to tell by her cheap prices.

Why the Van Gogh Cafe? "I knew that I didn't want to enter a crazy work force, and this way I can create food in the manner I would create a painting," Stander said, adding the name comes from the colors of the cafe.

Stander, 49, who remembers painting her tricycle a different color every two weeks as a child, works with other media besides food. Some of her paintings are displayed on the walls of the cafe.

"I would like to see art become more natural in our everyday lives, not something that is difficult to find," said Stander, who values community more after opening the cafe last January.

The place was cozy. I could imagine putting on something different from my usual Eugene garb and pretending I was in a big city.

POLICE BEAT

The following incidents were reported to the University Office of Public Safety and the Eugene police department Oct. 5 through Oct. 10.

- A 21-year-old male student was cited for shoplifting at the University Bookstore on Oct. 5. The student attempted to steal a University coffee mug.

- Two men were observed pouring a liquid substance into a vending machine Oct. 6 on the 1400 block of Kincaid Street. According to police, the liquid substance causes a vending machine to release its coins. The suspects fled before police responded.

- Two 20-year-old men were cited Oct. 6 on the 1000 block of High Street for minor in possession of alcohol.

- A 23-year-old woman was cited Oct. 7 for having an open container of alcohol in public.

- A 20-year-old man was cited for minor in possession of alcohol Oct. 8 on the 1700 block of Hilyard Street.

- A 20-year-old man was cited for possession of less than one ounce of marijuana and for presenting fake identification to police Oct. 8 on the 1300 block of Alder Street.

- A 36-year-old man was arrested for driving under the influence of intoxicants Oct. 9 on the 1300 block of Ferry Street.

- A male student reported his \$400 bicycle stolen Oct. 10 from the Westmoreland Housing complex.

- A 40-year-old man was arrested for disorderly conduct and harassment Oct. 10 at the EMU. According to police reports, the subject was roaming through the Fishbowl eating food he had no money to pay for. A student recognized the subject as a person who had previously followed her around Skinner's Butte Park asking her to go to dinner and then marry him.

— Compiled by Joe Harwood

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