

# V-Day dining spots can accommodate nearly any budget

Although finer restaurants can be quite expensive, a picnic or outdoor trek are options for frugal couples

By Moriah Balingit  
Freelance Reporter

Whoever said "Diamonds are a girl's best friend" probably hadn't tried Maurizio's Cake. The dessert, an angel cake soaked in cognac and orange juice and topped with chocolate curls, is one of the trademark desserts at the Excelsior Inn, only one of the options for a romantic dinner in Eugene.

The Excelsior Inn Ristorante Italiano, located at 754 E. 13th Ave., will feature a menu on Valentine's Day that will include several special dishes. The filetto amore mio, beef demiglose topped with a special sauce, is one of the dishes, but Maurizio Paparo, the Excelsior's head chef, recommends the lobster to charm that special someone.

Assistant chef Gustavo Pardo revealed how the restaurant spices up a couple's evening.

"Our Valentine's Day food is based on aphrodisiacs," he said.

The restaurant also offers an intimate atmosphere and old-world ambiance. A typical dinner costs \$50 to \$60 per couple. Paparo said many people, especially poverty-stricken University students, opt to come in after 10 p.m. for dessert and Spanish coffee, which costs anywhere from \$15 to \$30 a couple.

Another option is Jo Federigo's, a restaurant and jazz club located at 259 E. Fifth Ave.

The restaurant's fare is largely Italian, but it also incorporates a Northwest flavor. The alder salmon, for example, is a pasta dish containing smoked salmon, sun-dried

tomatoes, kalamata olives, garlic, goat cheese and parsley.

While the restaurant's entrees cost between \$14 and \$18.50, the menu also contains cheaper but equally tasty alternatives such as pastas, sandwiches and gourmet pizzas.

Candlelit tables add to the warm romantic ambiance, and there is live jazz nightly.

High Street Brewery and Café is a cheaper and more casual option. The restaurant, located at 1243 High St., serves burgers, sandwiches, pizza and pasta. The entrees are typically less than \$10 a plate, and many of the portions are large enough to be shared by a couple, said Brian Clark, a wait staff member and cook. The restaurant also has a number of McMenamin's ales on draft and a selection of red and white wines.

"(We have) a full bar ... so pretty much everybody can be happy," Clark said.

While the ambiance is on the casual side, the restaurant has candlelit dinners and a fire in the evening to add to the coziness.

Becky Droback, the innkeeper at A Secret Garden Bed and Breakfast Inn, helps guests find restaurants around Eugene.

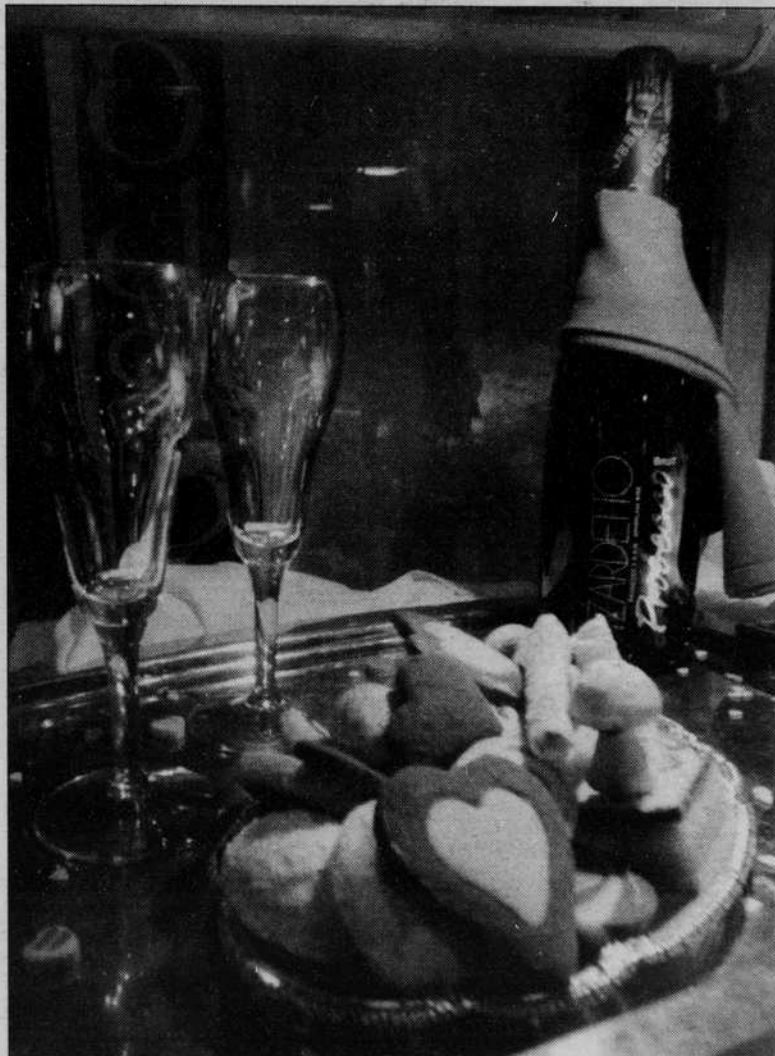
"There is a lack of nice student-priced restaurants (in Eugene)," she said.

She suggested students pick up supplies at a deli and set up a picnic.

"Decorate your room with Christmas lights and have (the meal) there ... that's what we did," she said of rainy-weather plans.

For an option that won't break the bank, visit outdoor locals such as Skinner Butte, Alton Baker Park and the Owens Rose Garden.

Moriah Balingit is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.



Tim Kupsick Freelance Photographer

The Excelsior Inn, located at 754 E. 13th Ave., will have a special menu for Valentine's Day. A dinner at the Italian restaurant will cost couples around \$50 to \$60.



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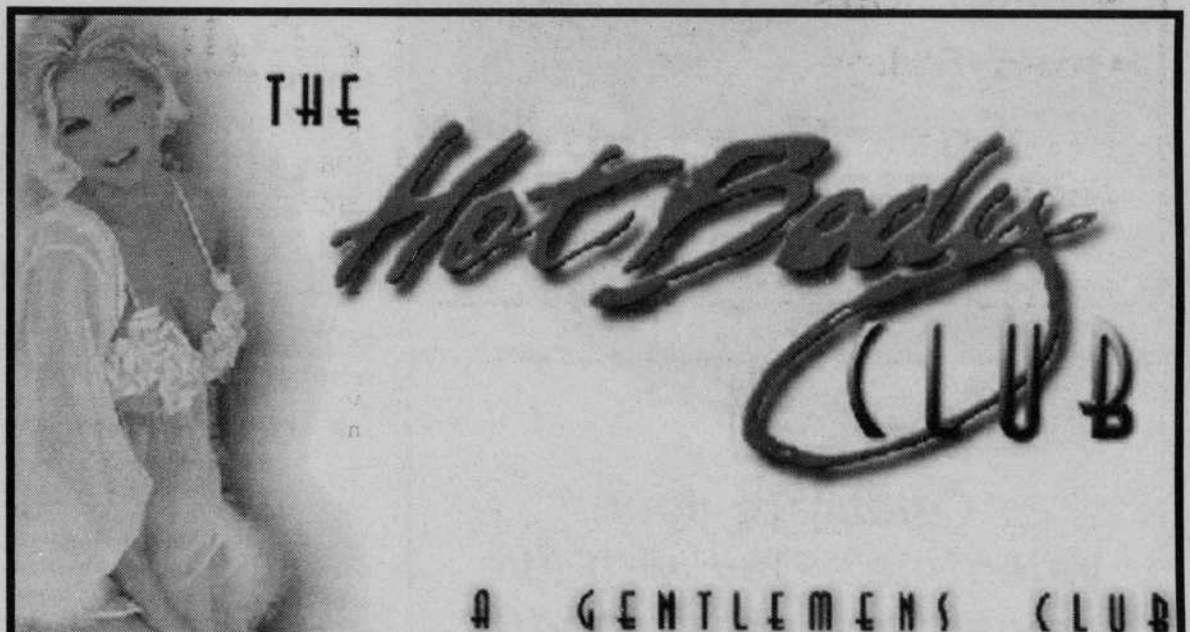
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