

■ Restaurant review

# Come all ye hungry to enjoy this delectable home-style eatery

*Ye Olde Pancake House on West 11th Avenue serves fine food for breakfast and lunch*

BY KRISTEN GERHARD  
PULSE REPORTER

The first time I walked into Ye Olde Pancake House, I felt as if I had stepped into an oversized version of my grandmother's kitchen. Ceramic frog knick-knacks welcomed me at the door. Ivy wound its way up a criss-crossed trellis on the tacky-yet-endearing wallpaper, and the smell of hot, buttered toast and fresh coffee filled the air.

As a good Irish Catholic New England mother of 10 children, my Nana made her kitchen the heart of her home, and just like the meals she cooked, the food from this greasy spoon diner in Eugene is nothing if not good for your soul.

It's easy to recognize Ye Olde Pancake House, located at 2421 W. 11th Ave., on any given Saturday or Sunday morning because the restaurant's parking lot is almost always packed with cars. In fact, the spots that lie along the fence separating the lot from the Wendy's next door are clearly marked: "Parking for pancake house only." It needs all the space it can get.

Visiting on the weekend during the restaurant's peak morning hours will pretty much guarantee a wait, but it isn't too long. The wait was about 15 minutes for two people at 11 a.m. on a Saturday, and the free Boyd's coffee in the lobby area helps tide customers over until they are seated.

Speaking of coffee, when customers order it at Ye Olde Pancake House, they receive an entire pot. In the waitress station, a large cluster of machines lines the wall, constantly pumping out fresh-brewed pots. As an admitted caffeine addict, this little benefit made me buzz with joy.

For our meals, my dining partner and I decided to try two of the items marked as "Mike's favorites" from the menu. Our waitress explained that Mike is the owner, and ordering one of his favored dishes is definitely a good choice.

I ordered the chicken fried steak, which comes with three fried eggs, toast and hash browns

or pancakes for \$7.99 from the breakfast menu. My partner ordered the chicken delight sandwich (chicken, ham, Swiss cheese, lettuce and mayo on a French roll), which came with french fries (regular or seasoned) for \$4.89 from the lunch menu. Both breakfast and lunch are served all day.

Our dishes came in less than 10 minutes, but quality was not exchanged for this speedy delivery. My over-medium eggs were cooked to perfection. The french fries were just the right combination of crispy and soft. And the hash browns were real hash browns, not the quartered breakfast potatoes so many restaurants serve in place of the shredded, fried delicacy I love so much.

Service at Ye Olde Pancake House was both friendly and efficient. It's easy to tell the women who work the tables know how to deal with a crowd. Requests take mere seconds to be filled, and you never feel like an inconvenience.

All-in-all, the prices are extremely reasonable — no single item on the menu costs more than \$9. However, for those with only a few bucks in their wallet, specials are also a satisfying alternative. Breakfast specials, for instance, are offered Monday through Friday for \$4.49. Some options include: French toast, one egg and two pieces of bacon or sausage; or one egg, two potato cakes and four pieces of bacon or sausage.

Just for good measure, my companion and I ordered a short stack of pancakes to make sure the restaurant's namesake was appropriate. We were more than convinced. The three well-portioned cakes came with two large rounds of butter and warm maple syrup (boysenberry, strawberry and apricot syrup are also served). They were a fluffy, sweet and delicious end to an entirely satisfying meal.

Ye Olde Pancake House is open daily from 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. They accept cash, debit cards, travelers checks, Visa and MasterCard. The restaurant can be reached at 541-344-7830.

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■ Video game review

# 'Battlefield 2: Modern Combat' exchanges complexity for fun

*The game is more suited to battling other gamers in multiplayer mode, but the singleplayer game is still fun*

BY ANDREW MCCOLLUM  
PULSE REPORTER

"Battlefield 2: Modern Combat" for the Xbox and PlayStation 2 is not a port of the much lauded "Battlefield 2." Instead, "Modern Combat" is a simplified, arcade shooter that sacrifices complexity for fun.

The game's plot is about as standard and vestigial as shooters get. UN peacekeeping forces move into the politically unstable Kazakhstan, the Chinese get nervous and move their forces in as well, and they fight. In the single player game, players alternate between playing as both the Chinese and the UN forces.

Even though "Modern Combat" is clearly slanted toward multiplayer, its single player campaign is actually quite a bit of fun.

Arguably, the game's best mechanic is HotSwapping. At the press of a button players can instantaneously take

control of any AI squad mates. If players run out of ammo they can jump into a soldier who has a full clip. If players don't like their weapons they can take control of the sniper lording over the battlefield, or better yet take control of a helicopter circling above.

To fuel the fast-paced arcade shooter feel, the single player game grants rewards for all sorts of activities. Players will get medals for everything from HotSwapping a hundred times to killing three enemies with the same clip. The game also rewards players with damage boosts, armor and other power-ups for killing multiple enemies in a row. HotSwapping and power-ups aren't available in the multiplayer mode.

The game boasts more than 30 drivable vehicles and five different soldier classes. Players can play all five, and each unit type has a unique weapon and set inventory. The Assault class is

the basic infantry. Snipers are ... uh, snipers. Special Ops are stealth units that get C-4. Engineers can heal vehicles and Support units can heal people. Each class has its own strengths and weaknesses, and all are fun to play.

"Modern Combat" supports up to 24 players online. There are only two game modes: Capture the Flag and Conquest. In Conquest, two teams try to capture and hold control points on the map. The maps are small when compared to maps in the PC titles, but their size better suits the game's fast-paced play. The games are fun and frantic, but in an average game, players might team up with other players like "2Stoned4u420" and "The Kyleinator" on Xbox Live, so don't expect too much teamwork.

It is debatable whether "Battlefield 2: Modern Combat" is worth its \$50 price tag, but for players into shooters with an arcade feel it's worth checking out. Rent it.

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