

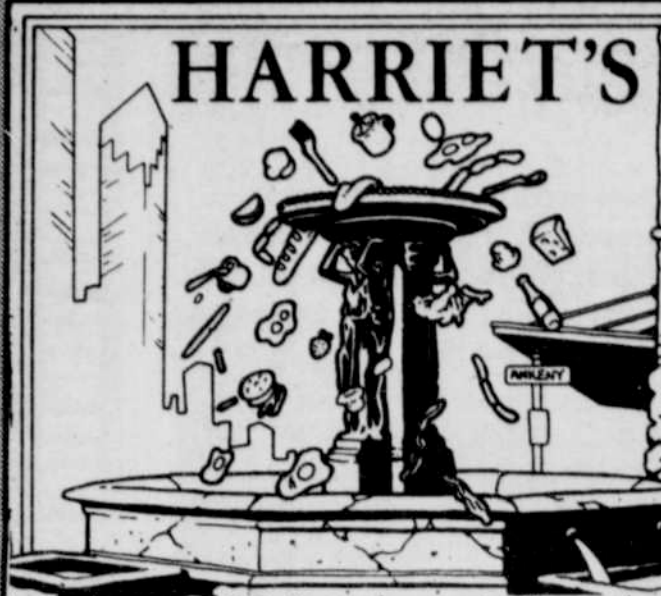
Genoa

★★★★

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DINING OUT

Cascades

333 N.W. 23rd Avenue, Portland, (503) 274-2305

On Portland's power alley of dining, hard by cholesterol palaces where pastrami and cinnamon rolls still hold sway, there's a monument to trimmer, more up-to-date dining. Cascades, originally conceived as an emporium of "spa cuisine," is one of the healthiest and tastiest new places in the city. The fare was inspired by that of luxurious fat farms, where pampered guests dine on nutritious and gorgeously prepared food. Modified for tastes not exactly Spartan, it's a far cry from yogurts, grains and other deprivations of health-food enthusiasts.

Cascades does much of its cooking in non-stick pans requiring little oil. Salting is minimal; grilling, steaming and roasting are favored. Presentations are striking—splashes of color that jostle each other for attention: ruby, jade, gold in an enameled setting.

Under the category of "small plates" are such California refugees as fresh mozzarella with fire-roasted peppers, and briny clams steamed with peas and fresh mint. All din-

ners come with soup or salad; the former is inevitably chockablock with integrity.

Here's a restaurant whose several vegetarian dishes have little relation to our conventional images of vegetarianism. Squash enchiladas with an avocado-and-red-onion salsa are heady with fresh coriander; the city doesn't possess a better Mexican dish. A more ordinary entree is a succulent roast chicken with 40 garlic cloves. A lasagne stuffed with duck and wild mushrooms is a rich new treatment of an old favorite. The scallops in orange sauce and duck breast in blueberry sauce speak for themselves.

A small, carefully selected dessert tray keeps the quality high throughout. A poached pear in burgundy is most fitting, though for those who feel to restrained by such modesty, a chocolate hazelnut torte in an intense raspberry sauce is just the thing.

Decor is simple, even self-effacingly plain, a kind of Denny's with a touch of class. The hedonism-cum-health is a signal of what's ahead when fresh, local ingredients fuel the right-minded intentions of a virtuous kitchen.

—Roger Porter in Portland

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Cascades

NORTHWEST REGIONAL CUISINE

333 N.W. 23rd Ave., Portland, OR 97210, 274-2305

BREAKFAST • LUNCH • DINNER—DAILY