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DO IT WITH FRIENDS

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ASSAGGIO



trattoria & enoteca

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Neighborhood Dining7742 SE 13th Avenue
Reservations 503-232-6151

epiqueerean

BY MEG DALY

Trés, muy romántica!

I've discovered the perfect cuisine for the bi-, tri- and omni-sexual among us: the "Mediterranean-inspired" menu. It's one part Sapphic, one part Roman-warrior-esque, with a flourish of French zest, all in one bite! Adherents to the, ahem, singular note should enjoy it, too. You don't have to feel guilty for crossing over to the other side when all the categories are swirled into one unbridled and exquisite meal.

For savory Latin fare with a French twist, try:
Zinc Bistrot • 500 N.W. 21st Ave.

I recommend Zinc's nightly "Soirée Cocktail Hour," from 5:30 to 7, when all bar selections are half-price. The décor is swanky theater hall: blue walls, red lighting, black tables and chairs. Unlike other "light bite" options in town, Zinc's bar plates are hearty and created with the same care as the dinner menu. Try the "Asparagus and Fresh Taragon Risotto," the "Butter Lettuce and Citrus Salad" with Oregon hazelnuts, the "Cone of Pommes Frites" and the mouthwatering gruyere cheese fondue.

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For Italian-style tapas, visit:

Tabla • 200 N.E. 28th Ave.

Guess what? All the hype about this Laurelhurst-area sensation is based in delicious reality. The wine list is terrific, and the food is even better. But get ready for tiny, tiny plates and to pay \$2 for bread. I'd suggest Tabla for a gourmet snack rather than a full-on meal. We fawned over the pan-roasted salmon with sunchoke purée and grape molasses as well as the mushroom risotto. If you're feeling especially daring, try the eel with lemon and "mojo riojo." Oh, oh, oh!

And don't miss the new kid on the block:

Lauro Kitchen • 3377 S.E. Division St.

This may well be the hottest hot spot in Southeast Portland. Just opened in July, Lauro takes its cue mainly from Portugal, with hints of Spain, Morocco, Greece and Italy. The soup special I sampled was operatic—white bean and pasta with fresh herbs and shaved pecorino on top. Your appetizer list should include the crispy calamari with Portuguese piri piri sauce. Though not cheap, entrees like a Moroccan chicken tagine or pork with clams, roasted potatoes and red peppers or linguine with mussels are all worth the indulgence.

And for dessert:

Pix Patisserie, 3402 S.E. Division St.

Though I'm sure Lauro's desserts are divine, you might want to indulge your Mediterranean spirit by traipsing across the street to Pix, and try a piece of "Ambrosia," a beautiful truffle filled with rosemary ganache and a port reduction. Or perhaps you'd prefer the "Tart Ménéage à Trois," with almond cream, chocolate ganache and orange vanilla bean crème brûlée.