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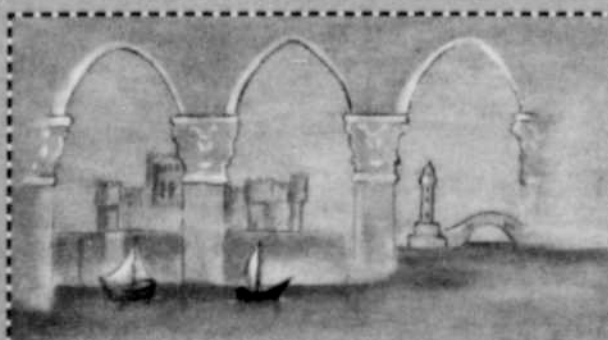
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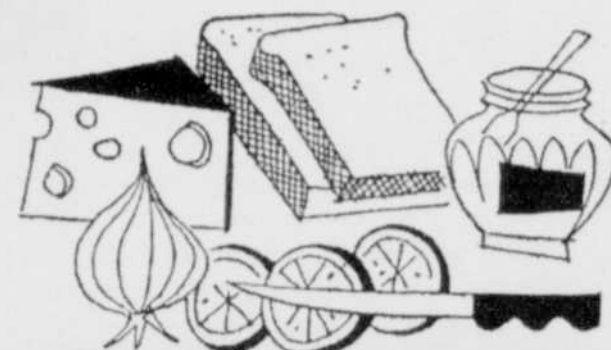
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BY MEG DALY

The Beau Monty!

Such a sweet, unassuming neighborhood. Such a haven for homebodies. According to last summer's survey of the queer community, the Beaumont area is one of the top ZIP codes we call home. It warms my heart to think of all those same-sex couples fixing up adorable bungalows and just generally keeping up with the Joneses. For those who live near 45th and Fremont, you know how lucky you are. For those who hail from other parts of the city, pay attention: Beaumont is one of the happenin' foodie spots in town. Even if you can't afford a dinner at the upscale sensation Fife, you can eat in style at some other area hot spots.

Alameda Café • 4641 N.E. Fremont St.

This is, by all accounts, the place to go for brunch. What's the draw? Friendly, bistro atmosphere for sure (coffee mugs never go empty) and a general air of openness. My friend and I partook of the enormous omelets—mine was Swiss, sautéed mushrooms and spinach; hers was the Greek, with the usual suspects, including Kalamata olives. Alongside our eggs beckoned the most scrumptious home fries this side of the Rockies. We couldn't figure out the chef's secret: Potatoes are light and fluffy inside, crispy and seasoned outside. Perfection! Next time I go I'm trying the famous Corn Flakes-crust French toast!

Malanga Cocina Cubana •**4627 N.E. Fremont St.**

Say the word "Cuba," and I immediately feel all sultry. It's a land of rich flavors, vibrant colors, incredible music and persistent spirit. Malanga Cocina Cubana is the special creation of Eric Laslow (Laslow's Northwest). Dedicated to his Cuban grandmother, the restaurant serves up traditional fare with a nod to her preparation secrets. The fried plantains are outrageously good—tangy, salty and sweet. Coupled with a fresh mojito, the appetizers alone will make you heady. But don't miss main courses like the Picadillo Cubano, a traditional meal of ground beef, capers, tomatoes and raisins with black beans and rice—it is superb.

Alameda Brewhouse •**4765 N.E. Fremont St.**

This large, airy lunch and dinner spot has the feel of an old grain shed decorated by an avant-garde Swede. The booths here are so cool! Slatted, blond wood back-lit from below and stainless-steel tops. Despite the proverbial TV set showing soundless sports games above the bar, any macho het attitude is kept to a minimum. For lunch I tried the homemade Black Bear Stout Turkey Pot Pie (with a glass of Black Bear Stout, of course, to match)—the fresh mushrooms, turkey and veggies were much more than your average pub fare, as was the buttery, flaky crust. A good veggie choice is the falafel sandwich with fresh cucumbers and tomatoes and thick cut fries on the side.