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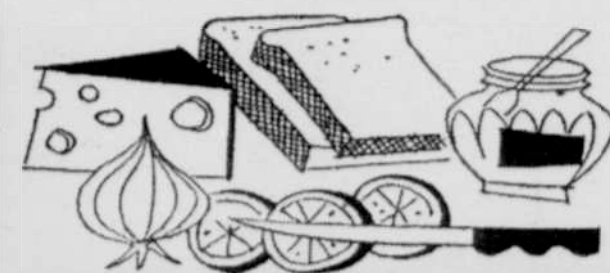
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BY MICHAEL E BARRETT

Bye-bye sweetie!

The best indication of a bona fide Scorpio is his love of two of life's greatest pleasures: food and sex. Your minds are free to wander on the latter, but suffice it to say that reviewing restaurants for *Just Out* is the best job this Scorp has ever had. This being my final Epiqueerean column before moving to New York, I feel compelled to reveal my sweet-side and offer you some suggestions for the last course: dessert.

Alotto Gelato • 931 N.W. 23rd Ave.

Not since Florence have I tasted gelato so fantastic! This tiny artisan ice creamery offers a cheerful detour to your 23rd Avenue stroll. Though the quantity of flavors is limited by Italian standards, new flavors appear with frequency and could be described as ambitious: Chocolate chipotle may appeal to your chocolate fetish, but be prepared for the zing of jalapeno! The chocolate peanut butter is a personal favorite, but the best combo is chocolate, stracciatella (vanilla chocolate chip) and espresso. Alotto clearly uses the highest-quality cocoa, making its chocolate truly superior. While we still have a bit of autumn left, don't miss out on the pumpkin gelato!

Pazzo Ristorante • 627 S.W. Broadway

Pazzo is renowned as one of Portland's finest established restaurants, perfect for a night out or a long lunch. Since my discovery of their dolce di melo, it's now a dessert destination, too! Dolce di melo is, quite simply, apple cobbler served warm under a mound of vanilla gelato. Its buttery crust is baked to flaky perfection, and mildly spiced apples find themselves swimming in their own sugary juices. Tempted? It gets better. What makes Pazzo's cobbler stand out among all others—even your mom's—is the streusel topping. Like the jagged peaks of Italy's Alps, mountains of warm, sweet, buttered brown sugar will captivate you. The streusel's moistened crunch mixed with bubbling apples and the cool, silky touch of gelato perform a symphony of flavor on your palate.

Redwing Coffee and Baking • 1700 S.E. Sixth Ave.

Nov. 2 notwithstanding, Portland would draw the attention of Marx and Trotsky (were they still alive) with Southeast's Redwing Coffee and Baking. This collectively owned coffee shop may not be as luxurious as Vienna's Cafe Central, but its socially conscious business model enforces a kinder, gentler kind of capitalism. The workers are equal shareholders, giving everyone a genuine incentive to please the customer. Dare yourself to indulge in a number of homemade pastries, cakes and pies, many of which are vegan, all of which are fabulous. Peanut butter banana bread with chocolate chips is sure to satisfy, but a vegan pecan bar? Simply amazing, and not overly sweet. Coffee is fair trade, organic and roasted on premises.