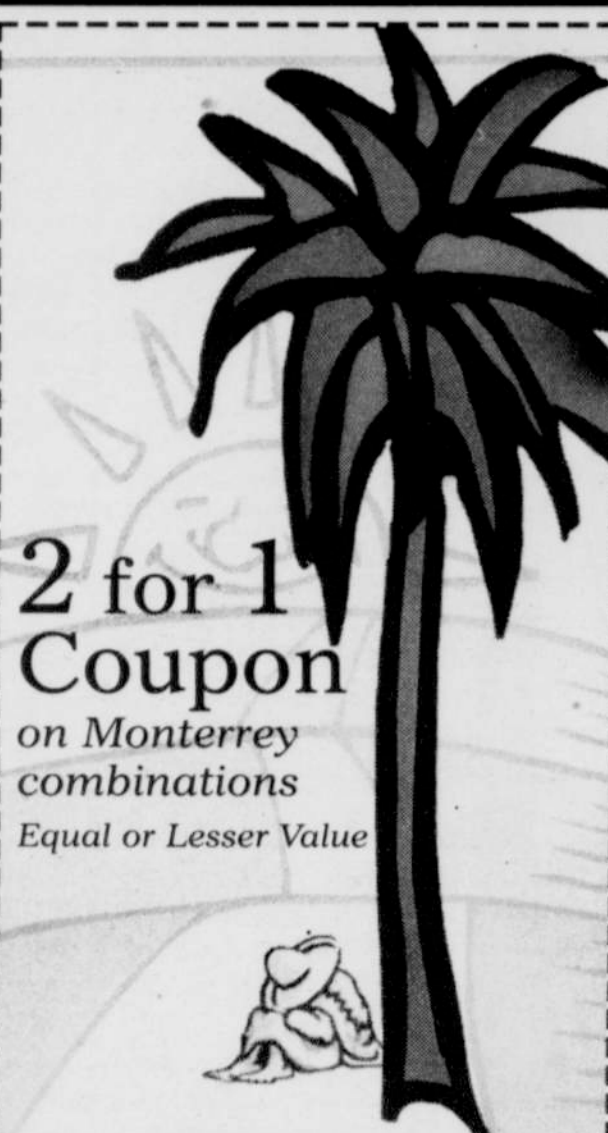




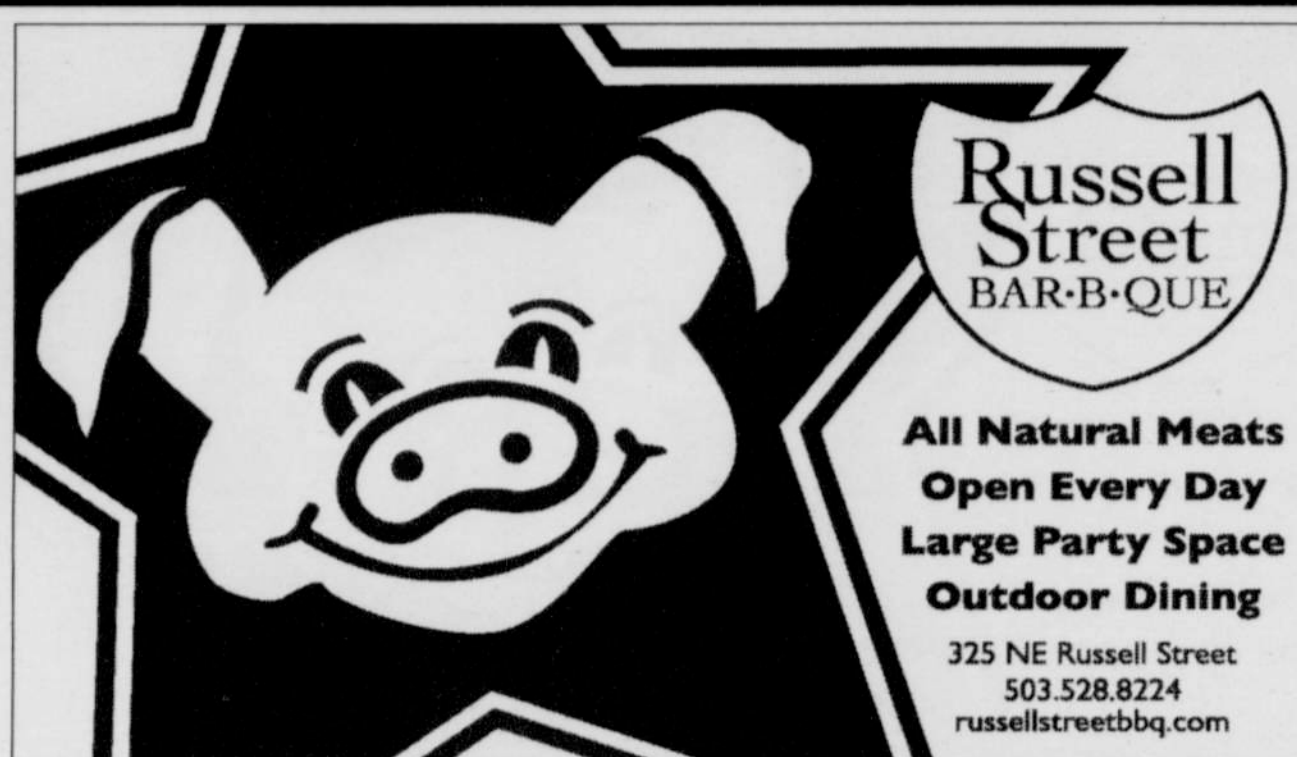
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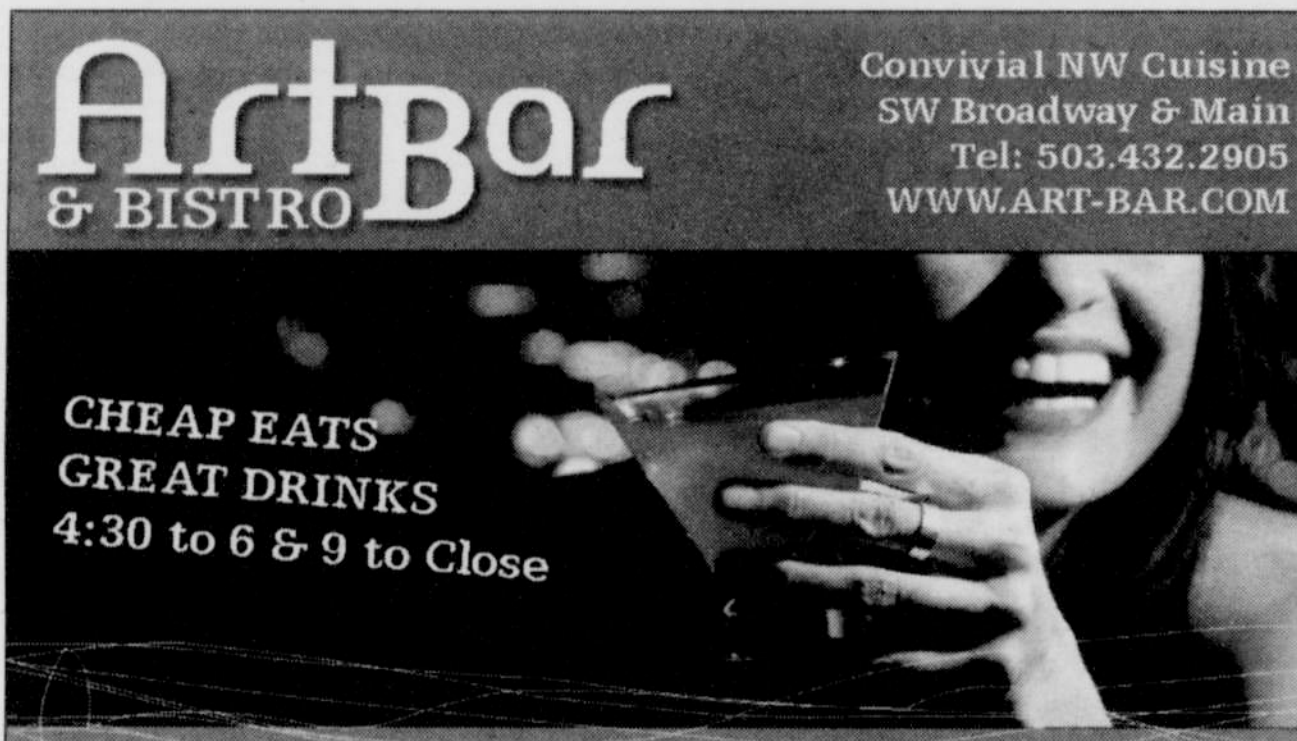
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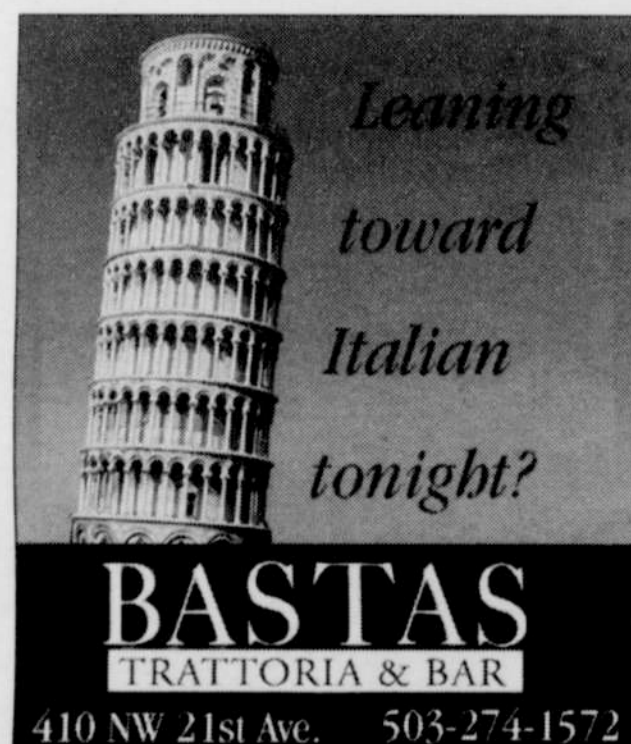
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BY JENNY NGUYEN

Dessert islands

Suppose you were stranded on a dessert island. What would you eat? Perhaps ladyfingers covered in soft Italian cheese. Maybe you'd like to bring a date named Edith just so you could say you "had your cake and Edith, too." Any which way you go, remember this: You don't have to choose just one.

Via Delizia • 1105 N.W. Marshall St.

Step inside and you'll find yourself outside again, only you've been miraculously transplanted onto the "Street of Delights," where an olive tree canopies above a faux building side and the dessert case beckons from beneath an awning. The beauty of Via Delizia is not only in its fantastic décor, or the creative whim of the pastry chef, but in its finer details. The gelato is perfection I hadn't experienced since Milan. The classic cheesecake was light and titillatingly creamy and had me moaning from beginning to end. Everything is home-made, and the cheerful service was strictly Italian.

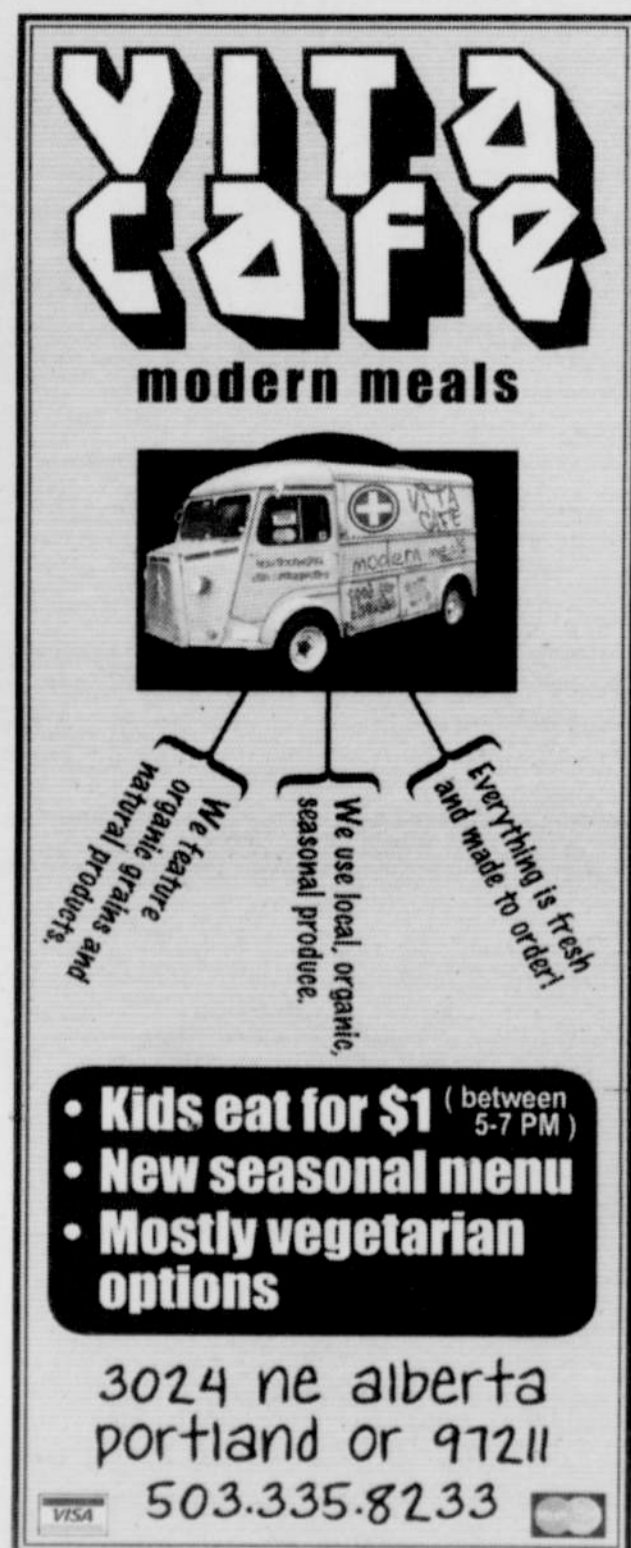
Palio Dessert House • 1996 S.E. Ladd Ave.

This dessert oasis is actually located on an island—you know, that hell of merging, circling traffic known as Ladd's Addition. But inside this beautifully quaint getaway are some of the most luscious cakes outside of Papa Haydn's, only without the fluff. From towering German chocolate cake to a million-layer carrot cake, everything looks fit for Lucy Lawless herself. Seventh Heaven was where I found myself after eating Palio's appropriately named seven-layer bittersweet chocolate cake layered with white chocolate cream and the lightest butter cream frosting I'd ever had. If you're searching for a place with just simple desserts, no-frill service and an atmosphere laden with coffee shop sitters and iBook junkies, this is the place.

Dessert Noir • 3205 S.W. Cedar Hills Blvd.

Having opened two months ago in Egypt (OK, Beaverton), this restaurant already has people filling it despite a dessert list that's only nine items long. But behold the drink list: At least 25 specialty dessert drinks—a death sentence for any dieter—beg for one to pass on the traditional idea of dessert. Yet after quenching my thirst with a potent Chocolate Raspberry Truffle martini, I opted for the most out-of-the-ordinary dessert on the menu of classic standbys: Mandarin Orange Napoleon with crisp layers of buttery phyllo and vanilla cream infused with anise. I was subtly surprised. The flourless chocolate cake, dubbed the Vivacious Valrhona Torte, was like eating a gigantic chocolate truffle covered in tempered chocolate. I thought I might go to hell for being a lesbian, but now I'm sure I'll be going for gluttony. **jn**

JENNY NGUYEN studied to be a chef at Western Culinary Institute and now works at the best kitchen in town. The Cuisine Queen would love to hear from you at jenny0080@hotmail.com.



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