

eatingout eatingout eatingout eatingout eatingout eatingout

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BY JENNY NGUYEN

The 'Couv groove

So, gentle eaters, you're craving a real dining experience, eh? You may not be aware of it, but Vancouver is spurting with growth these days. No joke: With ginormous steps forward in the city center with the beautiful Esther Short Park and the year-round indoor market, dining choices are steadily increasing. Head north across that green giant bridge and visit your fat, bad-driving, anti-cultured, inbreeding, tax-dodging neighbors; maybe you'll find something good to eat other than your words.

The Igloo • 3128 E. Evergreen Blvd.

This shiny tin can and neon-embroidered eatery is loaded with down-home diner goods. The menu reflects no change in time from the good ol' days, and neither do their prices (or their clientele—you'll forgive 'em). The dreadfully delicious and greasy burgers are a standard half-pound patty loaded with anything from blue cheese, pineapple and bacon to the works for a mere \$6. Daily specials include smoky clam chowder, lasagna and roast turkey sandwiches, all made in-house. Remodeled two years ago, The Igloo has outdoor seating and an outdoor patio for a decent burger feast or a place to sip real ice cream milkshakes.

Vancouver Pizza Co. • 2219 Main St.

Quite possibly the best pizza in town, Vancouver Pizza Co. is all about the toppings. With more than 40 variations to choose from (all named after artists), you'll have to narrow it down to five first. The restaurant is a little small and cramped inside, so the best place to enjoy a pan is outdoors in its roped-off sidewalk area. Perfect crusts and deliciously distinguishable sauces make VanCo hard to beat, even by Portland standards. Our Stravinsky came out tall with Italian sausage, mushrooms, peppers, spinach, garlic and artichoke hearts, which sealed the deal.

Ice Cream Renaissance • 2108 Main St.

Drive down Main Street and you'll see a mini P-town developing here. Hell, its got a Starbucks, some fancy condos and a vintage clothing store. Is this what Hawthorne used to look like, Grandma? Well, maybe. Anyhow, there's a beautiful, artsy ice cream place popping out of its training bra that's created quite a buzz 'round here with weekly events featuring live local bands and fashion shows from local designers. Serving homemade ice cream made fresh daily with flava faves like bittersweet chocolate, honey vanilla and pistachio, the fun has only just begun. Local artwork is on display all over the restaurant, but the kitchen staff are artists in their own regard. A glance through the verbose menu is testament to Renaissance's passion to art and food. From the custom-made sampling platter labeled Picasso's Palate to an edible interpretation of our beloved Mount St. Helens, it's food art, and that's cool, man. **JN**

Have a restaurant suggestion? Write to JENNY NGUYEN at jenny0080@hotmail.com.

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