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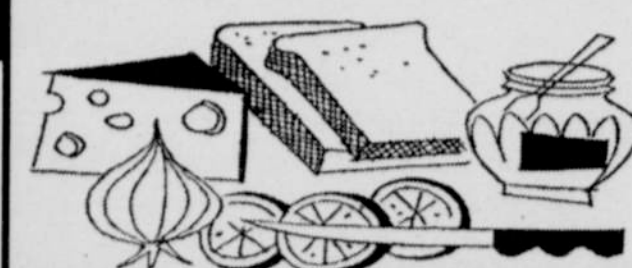
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epiQueerean

BY JENNY NGUYEN

A foreign tongue not hard to swallow

The beautiful thing about a booming restaurant industry is that anything goes—even something as simple as a name. Here to prove that a little tongue-twisting can still draw a crowd (and please one, too) are three locales that will give you multiple orgasms.

Apotheke • 1314 N.W. Glisan St. #2A

The 2001 A Space Odyssey-meets-mod-art atmosphere is out of this world at Apotheke, located between Andina and the sky above. A verbose drink menu illustrates the insightful history behind each spirit, indicating that an entire liqueur culture went untapped in Portland until now. No frou-frou frosties here—just 50-plus pure, unadulterated elixirs served straight up or with water. From the 500-year-old French Chartreuse to the Hungarian national drink, zwack unicum, Apotheke (German for “apothecary”) has opened doors I didn’t even know existed. Food takes a serious back seat to the drink, but even so, there is little to complain about. Go now and you’ll be fortunate enough to experience the digestif, herbal liqueur or eau de vie flights.

Zaytoon • 2236 N.E. Alberta St.

This gorgeous new spot (meaning “olive”) has a spectacular fine-dining feel paired with casual-dining prices. A balcony overlooks the hotspot bar below, and the open dining room is sure to satisfy the sweetest eye-candy tooth. Fancy drinks don’t dub like Jail-bait, Alberta Drop and Snoop Dogg, fo’ rizzle. Dips and spreads dominate the starters (less than \$4), including delicious renditions of zaatar, lebne and laban along with more popular dishes like hummus and olive tapenade. Entrees are somewhat limited, but the timman u marag, a chickpea and tomato stew, is loaded with all the complexities of flavor and spice I’d expect from the Arab region. Though Zaytoon is still very, very young, this olive is no pit and has sky-high potential.

D.F. • 1139 N.W. 11th Ave.

This 6-month-old offspring of Taqueria Nueve has some critics a-rustlin’. With a pricier menu and a fancier fanfare, D.F. (pronounced “day effay” and short for “districto federal”) has taken some heat. But all comparisons aside, dining here was enjoyable. Tall ceilings and big glass windows frame CondoCopia as large murals emblazon the walls with color. A ceviche menu changes regularly and is perfectly executed with lime, chilies, salt, etc. Platos pequeños are small offerings that make decision-making and peso-pinching a little easier. But I’ll lay down a Big Ben for how bomb the mole negro is. Wrapped in banana leaf and steamed with chicken and masa, the tamale was perfectly balanced with the dark and misunderstood Oaxacan delicacy. Maybe with time folks can appreciate D.F. for what it is, a Pearl District restaurant. **JN**

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