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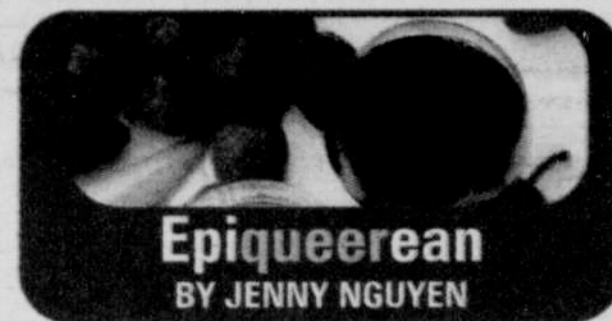
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pacific kitchen

northwest cuisine with asian influence.

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breakfast sat & sun at 9am
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East Eats West

With all the revamping Old Town/Chinatown is seeing these days, this holiday I'm sending all my chi/Asian love to that oh-so-forgotten part of P-town overshadowed by the ostentatious Pearl District. Here's to three places that are helping keep the Orient real and, most of all, alive.

East • 322 N.W. Everett St.

This ultra-sleek bar is one of the sexiest sites to hit Chinatown. More than 3 years old, East offers an obscure space to hear local DJs every night and remains a well-kept secret for fancy-pants drinks and the mod-cool to hang. Not much of a food destination, East does offer tidbits of Asian food flair such as miso soup, edamame with coarse sea salt and three kinds of curry. But the real treasures here are Sapporo on tap, martinis available by the pitcher and feeling like Mr. Cool upon entering.

House of Louis • 331 N.W. Davis St.

This Asian palace has been around almost as long as the infamous Hung Far Low Cock landmark and has been tingling tongues for decades. A sizable menu of mainstays is all fine and dandy, but the true delight is within the tiny morsels during dim sum, served daily till 3 p.m. Cart-wheeling women spin on dimes and dish downtown's most delicious shu mai, hum bao and pot stickers. From beef tripe and chicken feet to the special-order Chinese broccoli, you will not leave one grain unturned. Forget the golden dragons and eff-me-red leather booths; this is Chinatown baby.

Saucebox • 214 S.W. Broadway

Not really in Chinatown, this gay-owned restaurant is close enough and noteworthy enough to include in the makeover of Old Town. After 10 years of wowing the too-hip-to-wow crowd with its loud murals and schmancy decopop, Saucebox welcomes back founding chef Chris Israel, and the food is no worse for it. Pupu Platter for Two is a divine sampling of culinary talent and balance, with lemongrass shu mai, tapioca chicken dumplings and noodle-wrapped meatballs with tamarind. The thick booze booklet is stuffed with mixed potable wizardry from the laboratory-like liquor case with back-lit jars of house-infused vodkas. Javanese roasted salmon is perfect med-rare, as is the Indonesian lamb skewer; both pack plenty cap-sicum kick to appease the spice fiends. Sweet Korean-style baby back ribs fall off the bone and come drenched in a thick caramel of soy and ginger—a welcome reprieve from the stroke-inducing spiciness of the homemade kim chee. Prices reminiscent of highway robbery aside, Sbx is a culinary and sensory adventure that shouldn't be reserved for just the in crowd. 10

JENNY NGUYEN believes in food for thought. Feed her at jenny0080@botmail.com.