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BY JENNY NGUYEN

## New World Orders

Last issue we focused on American cuisine, so this time around it's a shout-out to the rest of the world and our interpretation of the cuisines that undoubtedly enrich and nourish epiqueereans around the globe. Here's to the newest exotic additions to our palatable patchwork that is Portland.

### Siam Society • 2703 N.E. Alberta St.

A street that keeps on feeding us, Alberta is now home to a real prize of an Asian eatery. Housed in an old cement-lined factory/church building, the atmosphere is breathtaking. Thom kha, chicken satay and spring rolls are familiar on paper but take on an alter ego when they arrive tableside. Beautiful plate-ups aren't deceiving as flavor bombs explode from every item. Mussels in basil cream are sautéed to buttery bliss with just a hint of spiciness. Fried calamari is ultra crisp and addictively salty. Entrees test the most indecisive palates to a multitude of temptations. The "Sexy Beef, flank" steak sautéed with spicy coconut cream and roast garlic, is outstanding. The Friday night we visited, a cellist belled into the space like something out of a movie; just as scripted, we left enlightened.

### Baraka • 3203 S.E. Division St.

Not to be confused with the tiki explosion of Baraka Bar on Alberta, this Baraka is a frickin' Moroccan temple of serenity and oral pleasures. Dark merlot walls, velvet couches and low, candlelit tables rife with Eastern-influenced décor ready the senses for dinner. Though small and somewhat amateur, this new restaurant is making a name for itself through its perfected cookery. *Zaalouk*, a braised eggplant and tomato puree, is exquisite with homemade pita. The Taste of Baraka is a five-course dinner for less than \$20 and plenty of food for one. *Pastilla*, a filo pastry with ground lamb and powdered sugar, is flaky and full of flavor. The apricot chicken is heavenly: fork tender on a cloud of saffron couscous with sultanas, almonds and candied apricots. Experience Baraka on a Saturday and hopefully you'll catch the professional belly dancers who will have you feeling as if you'd rubbed the bottle yourself.

### Wong's King Seafood • 8733 S.E. Division St.

Not exactly new, Wong's King could be the Chinese community's best-kept secret. Take the dim sum Portlanders are familiar with and throw in some Las Vegas and *Iron Chef*; you've got Wong's King. While you wait in the undoubtedly long weekend line, take the extra hour and scope out the trophy case. Then ready that belly for the best GD chicken feet, beef tripe, pork shu mai and gai lang the city's ever seen. Feeling really adventurous? Return in the night for whole roast duck, skewered goat, stuffed cuttlefish and a multitude of things you'd never dreamed of putting in your mouth. You'll experience the royal feast that is literally fit for a King. 10

Free-lance food writer JENNY NGUYEN is cooking in a kitchen near you. Write her at jenny0080@hotmail.com; she'd love to hear from you.

**DINNER AND A DATE**

justoutpersonals.com