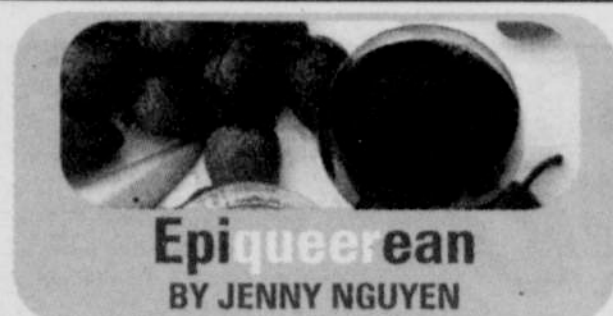




Ventana de Delisioso

I've taken it upon myself to nickname North Lombard Street the Mexican "Street of Deliciousness." Absent of top-shelf tequila and fancy fonts on gourmet letterhead, these thrifty in 'n' out joints truly represent the foodstuffs from beyond the border. Millions of immigrants have made America home, and with border policies blasting the headlines, it is time we open our hearts, our borders and our mouths. So, set aside your Tex-Mex tastes and ready yourself for the real deal.

The Giant Torta • 2727 N. Lombard St.

Ever heard of a buffet for \$5.99? Well, at the Giant Torta it's true seven days a week. The braised pork in spicy green chile is fabulous, as is the chicken mole and roast goat. The menudo (tripe stew) is unbelievably tender and flavorful, and the *pesole* (hominy and pork stew) is ultra savory and piquant. Lettuce, beans, rice, tostadas and other accompaniments round out the buffet, while the friendly staff brings fresh steamed tortillas to your table. Leave room for *tamarindo*, a refreshingly tart drink, and you'll have had your stomach travel 4,000 miles for under a 10-spot.

King Burrito • 2924 N. Lombard St.

This camouflaged Goliath of taco shops is renowned for its giant burritos and tiny storefront. Drive too fast and you'll miss the painted windows teeming with tacos that await your *boca*. Nothing costs more than \$5, so fear not, cheapskate—filling up isn't the point, but it is inevitable. Meats here are seasoned perfectly, making things like *caritas*, *carne asada*, *steak picado* and *al pastor* unbeatable. Five quarters (\$1.25!) will get you a mobbed taco with anything from shredded chicken to *cabeza* (beef head). But if you're in the mood for a little tongue in your taco, look no further: The *lengua* (braised tongue) is so tender and delicious it hurts. If you can stomach a fine beverage with your mighty meal, wrap yer lips 'round some iced *horchata*, a mysteriously divine dairylike drink with hints of cinnamon.

Javier's Taco Shop • 121 N. Lombard St.

Yes, it's true, folks: This full menu in all its *muy grande* glory is available 24/7. Enormous combo portions fill platters, and burritos outweigh King's in both heft and quality. Javier's was the only taco shop of the three to have seafood on the menu. What's more is on the particular day we patronized, not one person behind the counter spoke a word of English, which to me translates, "Oh, hell yes." Handwritten specials abound, and though misspellings are often tedious, here they were like authentic prophecy. If King delivered the best tongue, then Javier gave the best head. The *cabeza* taco is succulent and spicy. For those a little less adventurous, the Oregon Burrito wraps steak and potatoes with all the trimmings for a two-fisted manly man meal. Did I mention it's open twenty-friggin'-four seven? (io)

It's "Feed me, see more," not "Feed me, Seymour," OK? Feed JENNY NGUYEN by writing to jenny0080@hotmail.com and you'll see more.

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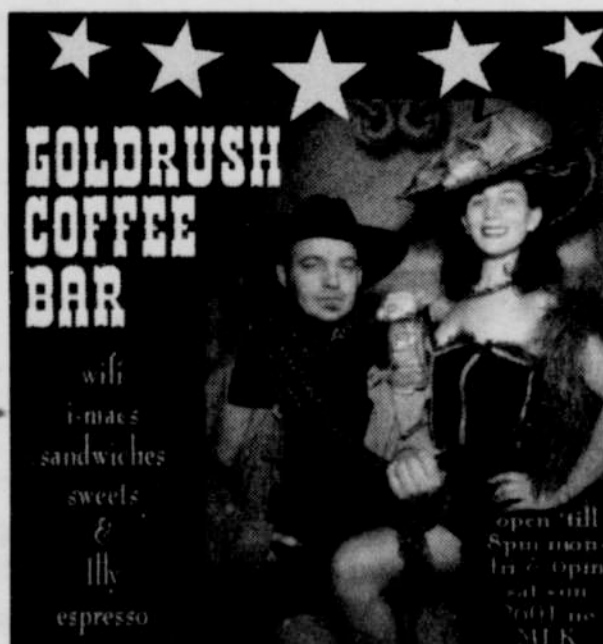
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