



Epiqueerean BY JENNY NGUYEN

Gentrific-Asian

As many local diners already know, P-town is terrific for two things: 1) authentic regional and worldly cuisine and 2) trending them up into something completely different and marketable. How do you upgrade authenticity? Dress it up, add an umbrella and a shiny penny to the tab. *Voilà!* Out with the old, in with the new (and improved?).

Silk Bistro & Lounge • 1012 N.W. Glisan St.

From the same owners as Pho Van comes Silk, serving the same food with a Hollywood makeover. Though the menu options are pared down, more exotic dishes like sesame-encrusted ahi grace the pages. Thankfully the pho, banana blossom salad and hot pots are just as good as ever and even more Feng Shui than before. An extensive Asian-inspired cocktail list is sure to please those with more boozy inclination, while the décor is stunning and the lighting can make even yours truly look like a movie star. With a killer happy hour, spot-on food and a prime post-op locale, the bold and risky transition to Silk is sure to pay off.

Hirosushi • 926 N.W. 10th Ave.

Famed Lake O sushi man Hiro Ikegaya shuttered his 17-year success story, Hiro Sushi, to open up new digs in the Pearl. Not only a slight change of scenery but a complete change of form: The tiny yet spacious dining room looks like a French eatery with white tablecloths and flatware (chopsticks can be requested), both terribly misleading. The menu is riddled with culinary conundrums, so be prepared to ask as many questions as possible—it'll be well worth it. Though the entrees are delicious and innovative, the East-meets-West fusion doesn't hold a light to Hiro's mad skills with his first love: the fish. The overall quality of the seafood is hands-down Portland's freshest. His mastery of knife work, style and presentation is understated in comparison to showstoppers like Sinju, but the *umami* (deliciousness) is tenfold. Though trendy and spendy, with a sushi list twice the size of any I'd seen in town, it is worth every yen.

Masu East • 310 S.E. 28th Ave.

This second site could be the opposite of "gentrific-Asian," in that it has done less and gotten better. The attitude is less haute-to-trot, the décor less svelte, and most of all the food is less pretentious. Though some menu items remain ill-conceived—like venison with mushrooms and filo-wrapped oysters on ramen—many hit their stride. The black vinegar-dressed quail and bibb lettuce with quail egg is delicious and sensible. The udon and soba noodle soups are terrifically savory and deep. The sashimi is good, but the maki are where Masu excel. The Ring of Fire roll pairs oyster and yellowtail with jalapeño, while the I Heart Unagi is a tribute to freshwater eel with asparagus and cream cheese. More suburb and more subdued, this Masu is a definite upgrade. **10**

JENNY NGUYEN would love to hear from her readers. Contact her at epiqueerean@comcast.net. Happy new year, folks!

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