

eatingout eatingout eatingout eatingout eatingout eatingout eatingout



**Epiqueerean**  
BY JENNY NGUYEN

## Eat, Sleep and Be Merry

**A**s Portland becomes more of a destination for affluent tourists and upscale business travelers, the market for fine overnight boutiques has grown. Inside you'll find not only some of the city's finest amenities and services but also fine restaurants. Thank goodness these eateries aren't just for guests.

### The Driftwood Room • 729 S.W. 15th Ave.

Hotel DeLuxe, recently remodeled as an ultra-modern Hollywood throwback joint, has held onto its dimly lit bar, the Driftwood, since the 1950s. The small, intimate setting is a perfect alibi for movie stars ducking out of the limelight. Sneak on in for any number of tasty alcoholic concoctions, each with its own Hollywood namesake. Film references continue to the menu as well; appetizers are "Short Films," while entrees are dubbed "Feature Length." The food is spectacular—from perfect lobster corn dogs served with a shot of lager to the most divinely delicate fried taleggio cheese puffs with powdered sugar and strawberry conserve. The showstoppers are the sliders (mini-burgers), served in a paper bag with crisp, shoestring potatoes. Though pricey, you'll feel like yer starring in the bar scene, and for all that it's worth every cent.

### Clyde Commons • 1022 S.W. Stark St.

What used to house C.C. Slaughters is now another place to get yer meat on. Clyde Commons, the restaurant inside the nationally acclaimed Ace Hotel, is unique, daunting and delicious all at once. Located smack in the middle of Vaseline Alley, this voluminous space does low-key bling the way only Portlanders know how. The menu is printed daily on an old-school Bill of Fare featuring rarities like nettles and squid ink and perfectly executed standbys like barbecue pork short ribs and carrot gnudi. Go ahead and feast your eyes on the shirt-and-tie chefs in the open kitchen and stare at the diners, too. Nestling up with a hot stranger is made easier with gigantic communal tables set for 20. Not for the timid, Clyde's atmosphere is loud, the flavors forward and the drinks mighty. This is a terrific spot for both the socially outgoing and the culinarily adventurous.

### Aquariva • 470 S.W. Hamilton Court

An infamous locale for restaurants of years past, Aquariva is filling the void left most recently by Rivers. Adjacent to the Avalon Hotel and Spa, Aquariva offers diners the Italian version of *tapas*, the small plate. The atmosphere is glamorously chic and formal, with flat-panel televisions as art, a 180-degree view of the Willamette and a somewhat annoying enthusiasm for scented candles. The menu is cleverly designed with whites and reds by the glass and small plates to match. The seared sea scallops, braised beef short ribs, sweet pea ravioli and fennel-crusted pork tenderloin were all stellar. The food, though I was doubtful, was exceptional. Again, I broke the bank, but the million-dollar atmosphere and incredible service were more than worth it. 10

JENNY NGUYEN is a freelance food writer and eating enthusiast. She'd love to hear about your eating; let her in by writing to [epiqueerean@comcast.net](mailto:epiqueerean@comcast.net).

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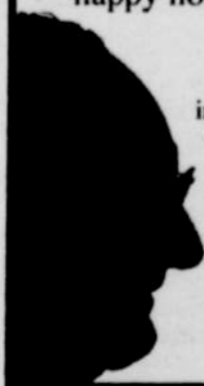


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