



Epiqueerean
BY JIM RADOSTA

Arbor Day

After years and years among the skate punks at the foot of the Burnside Bridge, *Just Out* has moved from its centrally located office to the rapidly changing Arbor Lodge neighborhood in North Portland. Bordered by Lombard Street to the north, Ainsworth Street to the south, Chautauqua Boulevard to the west and Interstate 5 to the east, Arbor Lodge is a 555-acre neighborhood containing 6,065 residents, according to the 2000 census. *Portland Monthly* magazine recently named it as one of the city's most desirable neighborhoods.

Fortunately for the hungry *Just Out* staff, Arbor Lodge also is filled with yummy, affordable restaurants for us to satisfy our lunchtime hunger pangs. Here are three of our favorite destinations.

Thai Ginger • 2020 N. Rosa Parks Way

I must admit that I'm pretty predictable when it comes to Thai food. No meal feels complete without the right appetizer, soup, curry and noodles. That said, Thai Ginger has everything I need. The fresh salad rolls are stuffed with vegetables, tofu and noodles, although I wish they came with peanut sauce instead of sweet 'n' sour. The Tom Kha coconut milk soup is packed with flavorful mushrooms, tomatoes, cilantro, galanga root and, most importantly, lemongrass. The Pad Thai noodles come with a perfect blend of chicken, shrimp, egg, bean sprouts, onions and ground peanuts. And the curries—well, take your pick from six spicy menu items, but keep your eye on the specials board for limited-edition concoctions.

Las Nayaritas • 2727 N. Lombard St.

This taqueria boasts a huge window overlooking the cars whooshing by on busy Lombard, but inside you'll be calmed by the friendly service and authentic Mexican cuisine. The Big Breakfast Burrito is generously stuffed with scrambled eggs, ham, bacon, sausage, potatoes and cheese. The gut-busting house specialty, La Preferida, features a tamale, stuffed chile, enchilada, taco and carne asada with guacamole, tomato, rice and beans. For those on a budget, how can you go wrong with \$1.50 tamales?

Corner Spot Tavern • 6008 N. Greeley Ave.

If you can get past the smoky air, the murky aquarium, the inflatable blimp advertising the Oregon Lottery...OK, who am I kidding? Most folks would consider this place a dive. But the waitresses couldn't be sweeter—although they'll fine your ass a quarter if you cuss while playing billiards—and the price is right. The breakfast menu, which is served all day, features homemade biscuits and gravy for \$4, French toast for \$3.25 and a short stack of pancakes for just \$2.50! However, the tavern specializes in hamburgers—regular, bacon, pepperjack, pastrami, mushroom and chili—ranging from \$4.25 to \$6.25. For those looking for some greasier grub, the appetizers include deep-fried mushrooms, pickles and mozzarella sticks. Wash 'em down with a few draft brews, which are 50 cents off from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. 

Arts and Culture Editor JIM RADOSTA is temporarily filling in for columnist Jenny Nguyen while she gets her stomach pumped.

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