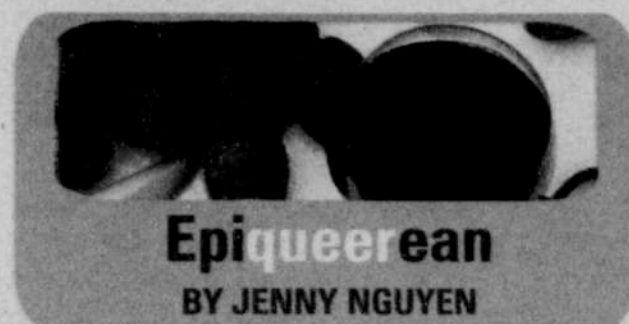




Belmont Bourgeoisie

With the abundance of new hotspots sprouting up around town, it's easy to forget the places that helped make Stumptown the landing spot for many a folk. Belmont and Southeast Portland are neighborhoods that have transcended time to paint the perfect Portland portrait. Here are three places to help reconnect the old with the new, reminding us why the Rose City is what it is.

Belmont Station Biercafe

4500 S.E. Stark St., 503-232-8538,
www.belmont-station.com

One thing that is synonymous with our city is beer, namely microbrews. With more than 1,000 hand-crafted beers on hand, Belmont Station is a virtual beer garden of Eden. The most wonderful thing about it is the cafe where you can sample your lager on-site. The menu is small and everything is less than 10 bucks, so go ahead and grab a 22 and find out just how well a dubbel and a turkey club go together.

Opposable Thumb Gallery & Cafe

3312 S.E. Belmont St., 503-235-0146

Situated in the midst of all the hubbub on Belmont is a sacred refuge. This two-sided cafe/gallery is both relaxing and inspiring. On the one side you have a beautiful, serene cafe that beckons to be lingered in. Enjoy a cappuccino, a grilled panino or a glass of wine while you gaze out the large panes toward the bustling street. Or opt for a delightful Aviator Bloody Mary while turning the pages of *Adbusters* or any of the in-house mags. Students, business folk and neighbors alike can be found here reading, writing and just gathering. Opposable Thumb is a comfortable throwback to community in our new age of on-the-go. And that, to me, deserves two thumbs up.

Kinta Restaurant

3450 S.E. Belmont St., 503-234-2623

Being of a carnivorous orientation, I take veganism and vegan food with a grain of salt. Sure, I understand the logic behind it, but I really love the taste of meat. So, when it comes to dining out, I'm automatically turned off when I hear that a place is vegan. Fortunately, I have friends who point out my incredulous prejudice and forcefully drag me to new meat-free zones. Kinta is a spectacularly fresh and delicious alternative to the flesh-heavy Asian restaurants around town. The use of delicate sauces, fresh vegetables and a variety of noodles and rice makes dishes both vibrant and the opposite of bland. I did, however, like the idea that I could add chicken or shrimp to many of the dishes (I resisted, thank you very much); it just showed that Kinta wasn't about to be one of those radical "I hate meat" places. And that fed me a little slice of humble pie; I will definitely think twice before saying, "I hate vegan places." 10

JENNY NGUYEN is a long way from home. Write her at epiqueerean@comcast.net to get her back from Los Angeles.

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