

# Bleeding Heart Butcher

Berlin Reed brings a vegetarian sensibility to meat eating BY ERIN ROOK

In a city full of bacon-loving former vegans, queer Portlander Berlin Reed is giving more than lip service to the idea that eating meat can be ethical, too. His labor of love, *The Ethical Butcher*, serves as an umbrella for a multitude of meaty projects aimed at revolutionizing the way animals end up on menus.

What started as an odd job behind the butcher counter of a small New York grocer—odd given that Reed was expecting to work with cheese, and also because he didn't even eat meat at the time—has turned into a passion that allows Reed to incorporate his food politics into his renewed respect for meat eating.

"Being a vegetarian for most of my conscious life meant that I came to butchery with a very different background than most butchers," Reed, 28, explains. "I'd say the way my veg days show up is that I am always interested in talking [about] politicizing my food, a very veg person thing to do."

Hailing from San Francisco, Reed had been a vegetarian for 14 years when he started working as a butcher in 2008. While his abstention from meat began as an act of preteen rebellion, it persisted because of a sense of compassion for the way animals suffer in factory farms. When he realized it was possible to ensure that meat came from animals that lived and died well, Reed figured it was safe to step off the wagon.

After biting off a baptismal hunk of rib-eye on the job, Reed was converted, eventually setting out to share *The Bacon Gospel* with communities across the country. In each city, he found local heritage breed pork and combined it with a rich assortment of other local flavors, allowing him to highlight hometown purveyors of produce, spirits and coffee.



Bacon for it: Berlin Reed in an ethical butchery demonstration

Drawing inspiration from "favorite cocktails, dominant spices in certain regional cuisines and crackpot flavor combos," Reed has compiled a little black book of more than 80 bacon varieties.

There are the "fruity and floral," such as Tea and Cake (candied spiced orange and lemon preserves and jasmine and chamomile teas); the "spiked and spicy," including I'll Love You Until My Veins Explode (guajillo, pasilla, ancho, habanero and Scotch bonnet chiles, cherry preserves and espresso); and the "deep, dense and dark," with such indulgent varieties as Box of Chocolates (raw cocoa nibs, dark chocolate and amaretto with a coconut-almond crust).

"I play with bacon because it's fun. I get to take this common yet beloved food, spin it around and do crazy new things with it and then bring it back to blow minds and palates and guess what? It's still just bacon," Reed says. "That's the fun, stretching the limits of this very traditional and essentially unchangeable food. Each of my now 80-plus flavors taste unlike any bacon you've ever tasted, yet each one tastes just like bacon should."

In addition to creating specialty cured meats, Reed organizes whole animal dinners, helps run *The Butcher's Guild* and writes about ethical butchery. He even has a book in the works, part memoir of his transition from vegetarian to butcher and part how-to-eat-meat guide, and he's currently working on a film project.

"My drive right now is in working for this movement for a sustainable meat system," Reed explains. "My work, my events and writing, these are my contributions to the movement and to my community. Putting on events like *Primal Cuts* at the Ace back in November, where over 100 queer artists and DJs were mixing it up with food bloggers and farmers over a table brimming with insanely decadent local meaty goodness and a wall of photos of animals from many of the farms I've visited—that is what my work is about."

To learn more about *The Ethical Butcher*, visit [theethicalbutcher.com](http://theethicalbutcher.com), and read the full interview with Berlin Reed at [justout.com](http://justout.com).

## Mississippi Rising

Q Center gets fresh for inaugural farmers market

BY RYAN J. PRADO

It's no secret that Portland loves its some farmers markets. Regardless of which quadrant of the metro area you reside in, fresh produce, artisan crafts and organic wares of all shapes and stripes are within but an arm's reach. Ali Williams, Q Center's new special events and projects intern, knew this too, which is why one of her first undertakings at PDX's much loved LGBTQ home base was to organize Market Q.

Beginning Saturday, May 7, Market Q will offer up fresh fruits, vegetables and other goods like cupcakes, pies, vegan cheese, crafts and coffee from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the center's parking lot (4115 N. Mississippi Ave.). The market runs every Saturday through September 3, save for during the Mississippi Street Fair on July 9, when the center's parking lot will be in use.

The closest farmers market to the Mississippi District's bustling milieu is the Interstate Farmers Market, located at 3500 N. Interstate Ave. next to Overlook Park, operating Wednesday evenings from 3 to 7 p.m. Williams decided that starting up a weekly farmers market in the heart of the pedestrian-heavy business sector of Mississippi Avenue—and on a regular weekend morning—would be a twofold beneficial operation.

"I really wanted to be more active within the community that we exist in," says Williams. "A lot of people use the center, but I wanted to expand that and have a way for not just visibility within the LGBTQ community, but also to partner up with all citizens that come—tourists, and people from all surrounding neighborhoods. I thought it would be a really good way to bring the community together."

Williams says the vendor lineup is likely to change from week to week, providing oppor-

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