

Entertainment

Entertain Yourself

Good restaurant vital for Valentine's date success

ROYA ELIZEH

co-Editor-in-Chief

With Valentine's Day quickly approaching, having a perfect dinner for that Wednesday night is key. Looking past the obvious restaurant choices that many couples usually choose, here are a few suggestions to make your romantic dinner more memorable.

The best local dinner date experience:

Lil' Cooperstown Pub & Grill
1817 Willamette Falls Dr.
West Linn
(503) 655-1995

Although not usually a go-to for that romantic dinner, Lil' Cooperstown is perfect for the teenage couple who isn't looking to spend a lot of money. Located in downtown Willamette, the restaurant is a prime spot to spend time with a loved one and have a

quick bite to eat. This sports-themed restaurant offers a casual dining experience with no fuss. A local favorite, Lil' Cooperstown has a wide selection of burgers, sandwiches and salads which are all inexpensive.

The only downfall to this local restaurant is that parking can be somewhat limited. Also, stick with the easy to make dishes. Finger foods like french fries and mozzarella sticks and "pub" style foods are what you should stick to at this low budget place. A cheeseburger with fries runs about \$6.95 while a caesar chicken salad is about \$8.95. With sports games on the many televisions throughout the dining room and a very friendly staff, your date night at Lil' Cooperstown is guaranteed to be great.

The best dinner date experience:

P.F. Chang's China Bistro
7463 SW Bridgeport Road
Tigard
(503) 430-3020

Located in the massive Bridgeport Village, this P.F. Chang's is certain to please your date. With a wonderful atmosphere, the dining area of this huge restaurant really sets the mood. Filled with paintings and big circular booths, your date will be quite comfortable and come out satisfied. The Chinese food at P.F. Chang's is the best, and the ever-changing menu doesn't disappoint. Favorites are the pan-fried vegetable dumplings, the honey crusted chicken and to finish the evening, the "Great Wall of Chocolate." Served family style, be careful not to order too many dishes and be sure to share with the ones around you. Parking and seating can be somewhat tricky so it is wise to make a

reservation. The restaurant has an upscale feeling perfect for a romantic dinner on this cold Valentine's Day.

The best eccentric dinner date experience:

McMenamin's Kennedy School Courtyard Restaurant
5736 NE 33rd Ave.
Portland
(503) 249-3983

With eclectic lanterns in a dark setting, this converted elementary school is a great place to take that special someone. Located in northeast Portland, the building was once used as a school from 1915 to the late 1960's. It contains the restaurant, 35 hotel rooms from converted classrooms, and a movie theater. The restaurant is a typical McMenamins complete with its signature burgers and traditional favorites, which are all decently

priced. Unlike most of the McMenamins chain, the Courtyard Restaurant also serves pizza and calzones, which are massive and are perfect to share between two people.

Even though the dining hall is small (it was the school's cafeteria) don't worry about reserving a table. The halls of the Kennedy School are filled with historic photographs, murals, paintings, and artifacts from the school's alumni. You will be set back and time by exploring this building that was to be torn down. You might also view a movie before or after your meal. Indie hits such as "Little Miss Sunshine" have been featured.

With a setting like the Courtyard restaurant in the Kennedy School, you are guaranteed to have fun eating and enjoy seeing the history of Portland.

"The Departed" favored at 79th Academy Awards

CHRISTOPHER ERBIN

Staff Reporter

Every year on the last Sunday of February, those in the entertainment industry from around the world gather to celebrate the best in filmmaking. On Feb. 25, Ellen DeGeneres will host the 79th Annual Academy Awards at the Kodak Theatre, in the capital of entertainment, Hollywood, Calif.

Factors to take into consideration prior to the Oscars, by category include:

Best Picture

In a category featuring many different and unique films, the most prestigious award of the night might come down between "The Queen" and "The Departed," two of the best drama films of the year. While "The Departed" was challenged by the hype of it's star-studded cast, "The Queen" will likely fall second at the Oscars for one single and disappointing factor: it was trashed by the English press; who obviously took offense to the film's interpretation of Queen Elizabeth II. Expect

the technically sound film to fall second to "The Departed" which may be the end to director Martin Scorsese's search for his first Academy Award.

Best Actor

Actors headlining this category are Will Smith ("The Pursuit of Happiness") in a slight underdog role to Leonardo DiCaprio, who's part in "Blood Diamond" is being talked up as one of the best dramatic performances of the year. Smith, on the other hand, will need better votes from the Academy than those he received from the box office. His first serious acting role in a big time movie was neither raved

about or grilled by reviewers across the world.

Best Actress

Although she received the most direct criticism from the English public, Helen Mirren took it in stride and her performance, interpreted as "outstanding"

by the "New York Times," should be enough to outshine the efforts of some of the younger nominees. A dark horse to look for in

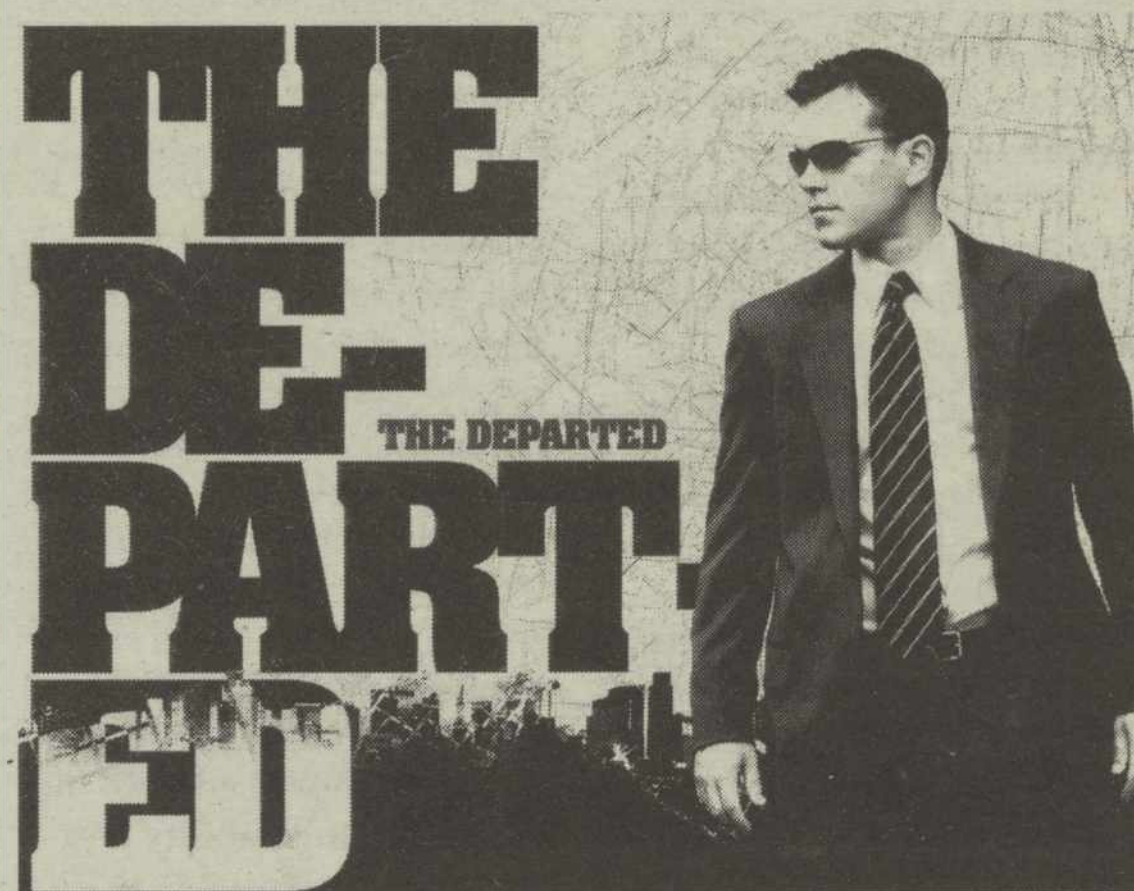
this category is Meryl Streep ("The Devil Wears Prada") who, despite being a veteran, has taken home the hardware for Best Actress just once in 1982 ("Sophie's Choice").

Best Supporting Actor

By far the most wide open of the major categories, Eddie Murphy will be the actor to beat for his role in the film "Dream Girls." Murphy headlines a large group of contenders who are vying for a first Academy Award. Actors Brad Pitt ("Babel") and "Ben Affleck" (Hollywoodland) are two actors who pose potential surprises in this category, and because their movies were released later in the year, their strong performances may remain clearest in the minds of voters.

Best Supporting Actress

It appears Simon Cowell had rejected his invitation to this year's Oscars, but can you really blame him? Cowell was frowned upon for his comments in season three of his show "American Idol," for his harsh comments about finalist Jennifer Hudson. Racism, sexism and other controversial topics were tagged to Cowell's image, but Hudson, the first time Oscar nominee, has had very little to do with Cowell since her role in the hit film



"Dream Girls" has caught the attention of millions. Her voice, her comedic sense of humor and her natural acting ability has made her the frontrunner for best supporting actress, although many argue that she deserved a nomination for best actress.

Best Director

Anybody who follows the Academy Awards closely knows the pain and suffering which Martin Scorsese has endured. Five times Scorsese has been nominated, and not once has he walked away a winner. However, his quest for an Oscar is as strong as ever, and his search should end at this Academy Awards. Past attempts included "Gangs of New York" and "The

Aviator," both movies that could have been legitimate winners any other year, but the Oscar eluded Scorsese. This year, he made yet another push, coming out with his film "The Departed," which includes a cast that is deserving of an Oscar in itself. Although he should walk home a winner on Oscar Night, all eyes will be on Scorsese, as he makes what could be his final attempt to become part of Academy Award history.

Oscar night already holds the promise of surprise and excitement. First time winners and emotional victories should be expected. Go to www.Oscars.org for up-to-date predictions and nominations.

