



TODD COOPER

BEST LATIN/CARIBBEAN: RED AGAVE
2nd: Los Jarritos

“Who comes in second in this category?” Head Chef Brendan Mahaney asked. “I mean how many Latin/Caribbean restaurants are there in Eugene?” Well, all the same, Red Agave, located at 454 Willamette St., has found its niche and prevails as the best in Eugene and maybe the only one of its kind. It has been around for about 2 1/2 years, and Mahaney’s been cooking there most of that time. “We have a lot of fun here,” Mahaney said. “Everyone in the kitchen cares deeply about good food. *Worst kitchen disaster?* One winter someone brought in a potent batch of “special” brownies for the chefs and waiters to enjoy, but failed to mention to anyone their ingredients. So naturally everyone dug in innocently enough. Before too long, Mahaney was asking himself if he was having a flashback or if something was wrong with his heart. Because of the dangers involved with operating sharp knives in this state of mind, the restaurant was forced to close early that night so as not to harsh the mellow.

BEST MEXICAN: CHAPALLA

2nd: Taco Loco
3rd: Los Jarritos

EW talked to Edgar, waitstaff
Do you think you really deserve to win? Well, we work hard and we’re trying to do our best. But it’s up to the people to decide, who vote for us. That’s really nice. *Worst kitchen disaster?* Well I think we had the

kitchen catch on fire once, in the beginning, a long time ago. One of the pots caught fire, so we had to close the restaurant for like an hour. *If you could drive any vehicle, which would it be?* Well, I’d like to drive something called a hybrid. I care about the environment.

BEST MIDDLE EASTERN: SORIAH

(See Best of the Best p. 16)
2nd: Poppi’s Anatolia
3rd: Adam’s Place

BEST NORTHWEST: KOHO BISTRO

2nd: Marché
3rd: Adam’s Place
EW talked to Kevin Hyland, the owner:
Do you think you really deserve to win? Yes of course. Because we use tons of fresh ingredients from right in the area. I’ve got mushroom guys at my door all the time. They go out into the woods and pick mushrooms. We use local wild chinook salmon. Our lamb grower is Cattail Creek Farms, our beef supplier is also local, Knee Deep Saddle Company. We take food from here and work it together. We do things right, we don’t take shortcuts. We make all our own stock. And the best thing about winning this year is that neither myself or my employees voted. *Worst kitchen disaster?* We’ve set off our sprinklers in the kitchen four times. That’s far worse than any culinary disaster we could have. We’ve never actually started a fire, it just goes off because it wants to.

BEST PACIFIC RIM: RING OF FIRE

(See Best of the Best p. 16)
2nd: Shiki
3rd: Mekala’s

BEST VEGETARIAN: LOCOMOTIVE

2nd: Café Yumm!
3rd: Morning Glory
EW talked to Lee Zucker, co-owner:
Why do you think that LocoMotive deserves to win? It is very simple: we are the only full service vegetarian restaurant in town.
What is your worst kitchen disaster? We’ve never had one — I don’t know how to answer that question.

BEST DISHES

BEST PIZZA: PEGASUS PIZZA

(See the Best of the Best p. 16)
2nd: Pizza Research Institute
3rd: Bene Gourmet Pizza

BEST BURGER: HIGH STREET MCMENAMINS

2nd: Jamie’s
3rd: North Bank
EW talked to Jenny, the manager:
Do you think you deserve to win? Yes, because they are the best burgers! *Worst kitchen disaster?* Oh my gosh, probably a grease fire, but it wasn’t a grease fire. It was a box that caught on fire.

BEST SEAFOOD: NEWMAN’S FISH CO.

2nd: Fisherman’s Market
3rd: McGrath’s
Located at 1545 Willamette St., Newman’s has the best of both worlds: a restaurant style serve-‘em-up-hot menu as well as fresh raw fish to bring home to cook yourself. For this reason, Dwight Collins, owner for the past 25 years, believes that there is little competition for Newman’s. “We seem to be cheating the category,” Collins said. Newman’s has been around since 1980 offering a great assortment of fresh fish and other seafood treats that are flown in daily from Alaska or shipped from the Oregon Coast. With a small kitchen and few cooks, not much is left to chance at Newman’s.



TODD COOPER

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