



# YUMMY YUMMY fungi

## Talking and tasting at the Oregon Truffle Festival

STORY BY AMANDA BURHOP • PHOTOS COURTESY OF OREGON TRUFFLE FESTIVAL

**T**hey're back! The second annual Oregon Truffle Festival — after last year's very successful debut — returns to celebrate all that is truffle. Over the course of the three-day event, Jan. 26-28, truffles will be dug up, discussed and digested. A variety of workshops and events are planned around the edible fungi because, according to the event's website, "Secrecy pervades the world of truffles and is part of their mystique, but it has not served Oregon's truffles well."

When I first heard "truffle," I thought of the tasty dessert (see "The Rules of Lodjic," p. 5). Little did I know that another form of truffle existed — and not only do they exist, but they're found underground and cost more than my electricity bill. Considered a supreme delicacy in many parts of the world, wild truffles thrive in Oregon's soil. Want to learn more? Check [www.oregontrufflefestival.com](http://www.oregontrufflefestival.com) to see if tickets are still available for any of the festival's crazy popular events.

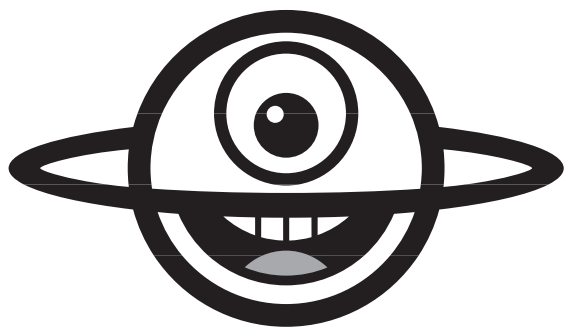
**Grand Truffle Dinner:** Held Saturday evening, the sold-out, five course meal will no doubt relieve all hunger pangs for those lucky (and flush) enough to have tickets. Stephanie Pearl Kimmel and Executive Chef Rocky Maselli of Marché Restaurant will host; the guest chefs, all James Beard Award winners from Portland, include Greg Higgins of Higgins, Vitaly Paley of Paley's Place, Cory Schreiber of Wildwood and Philippe Boulot of the Heathman Restaurant.

**Truffle Cultivation Seminar:** Get your truffle education on in this intensive course on the theory and practice of cultivating the European delicacy. The seminar, which covers everything from "What are mycorrhizae?" to the importance of soil analysis, includes a truffle hunt for wild Oregon truffles and a truffle-farm tour.

**Truffle Grower's Forum:** This day-long lecture, for advanced students and practitioners of truffle cultivation, provides up-to-date information on the truffle industry. New to the festival; expect knowledgeable presenters and international guests.

**Oregon Truffle Market:** I'm well over halfway through this article and I still haven't mentioned the tasting event. All right, stop drooling. The Sunday market is an inexpensive way to try a variety of truffle dishes. For \$15-\$20, you get truffle tasting, cooking demonstrations and a lecture series, which covers topics like truffle diversity and the cultural and economic issues concerning truffles. Expect yummy samples of organic and artisan wine, cheeses and meats.

Organizer Steven Remington is enthusiastic about this year's festival predictions: "Total, unabashed success!" He adds, "I personally look forward to the happy faces on the people who have never tried the Oregon truffle, especially for three days, in these combinations!" ■



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