

## TRAVEL NEWS

MORE THAN 50 BOATS, elaborately adorned with lights, are launched in the Mekong River at night. Admission is free.

Tel: 66-02-6941222 or [www.thailandgrandfestival.com/TAT/the-magnificent-mekong-river.asp](http://www.thailandgrandfestival.com/TAT/the-magnificent-mekong-river.asp)

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AUSTRALIA

**South Australia / Flinders Ranges**

*Tastes of the Outback, throughout the region, October 12–20*

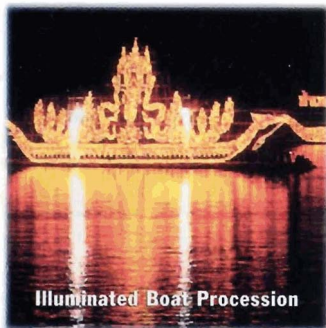
AUSTRALIAN GOURMET CHEFS USE traditional foods (including kangaroo and emu) and local produce to create delicious, and uniquely outback, tucker. Food: A\$10 a plate. Tel: 61-8-8463-4599 or [www.southoz.com](http://www.southoz.com) or [www.outback2002-southaustralia.com](http://www.outback2002-southaustralia.com)

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CANADA

**Quebec / Gatineau**

*Grand Hall, Canadian Museum of Civilization, permanent exhibit*

IN THIS HALL, SIX PACIFIC COAST Indian house façades are connected by a shoreline and boardwalk. The exhibit examines both traditional culture and contemporary issues and is animated with storytelling, demonstrations, and performing arts. Admission: ▶



Illuminated Boat Procession

## ROVING GOURMET: PORTLAND, OREGON

*The natural bounty of the Pacific Northwest is richly showcased in Portland's best restaurants. Locally produced fruits and vegetables and an abundance of fish and fowl ensure that area chefs have the ingredients for an unaffected cuisine that's always fresh and varied.* | By Tiffany Amy-Ashley Woods

SEASONAL LOCAL INGREDIENTS ARE a fitting foundation for the restaurants of Portland, Oregon—an environmentally conscious city that prides itself on sustainable living and was the birthplace of James Beard. As a boy, the dean of American gastronomy picked mushrooms at dawn in the dewy grass on his family's Oregon farm and carried them home to his mother to sizzle in butter for their breakfast.

To sample Oregon's bounty is to take a lesson in the state's geography. In the spring, foragers hunt for mild morels, wild fennel, and fiddlehead ferns from the Coastal Range to the Cascades. As spring turns to summer, Chinook salmon are plucked from the Columbia River, families flock to gather strawberries in "pick-your-own" fields of the Willamette Valley, and roadside stands sell the valley's sweet corn. Fall produces crisp apples and pears from Hood River and hazelnuts from Aurora, south of Portland. As the rain sets in during winter, heartier comfort food appears, including squash from Sauvie Island, a farming oasis near Portland. Winter also means that the oysters in inlets along the Oregon Coast are at their peak. Always in season are Oregon's signature Pinot Noir wines and locally produced microbrews.

Many of the farmers, ranchers, and fishermen who supply this cornucopia are on a first-name basis with some of Portland's chefs. One organic farmer, Gene Thiel, is known by chefs as Gene the Potato Machine. In his mid-60s, he pulls into town once a week in a green, retired Forest Service rig and slings around 50-pound sacks of hand-harvested potatoes. Then he drives more than five hours, sometimes on icy roads, to his home in the foothills of Oregon's Willowa Mountains. Pierre Kolisch keeps Portland's finer restaurants supplied with ▶



*Chefs at Portland's top eateries are on a first-name basis with local farmers and fishermen.*

## TRAVEL NEWS

C\$10. Closed Mondays. Tel: 819-776-7000 or [www.civilization.ca](http://www.civilization.ca)

## EUROPE

## Belgium / Bruges

*"Cloistered World, Open Books,"  
Episcopal Seminary,  
through November 17*

**MORE THAN SIMPLY A** collection of works of aesthetic beauty, this exhibition shows medieval manuscripts in dialogue with contemporary art, providing insight into medieval and contemporary people's understanding of themselves and the world. Episcopal Seminary, a former abbey built in the 17th and 18th centuries, is itself a part of the exhibition. Admission: €8 Tel: 32-70-22-5005 or [www.visitbelgium.com](http://www.visitbelgium.com) or [www.brugge.be/trade/en/tentoonstellingen.htm](http://www.brugge.be/trade/en/tentoonstellingen.htm)

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## Ghent

*Flanders International Film  
Festival—Ghent, various venues,  
October 8–19*

**MUSIC IS THE MAIN THEME OF** this festival: musical films, films on music, concerts of film music, and presentations of silent films with live musical accompaniment. Admission: €8–€31. Tel: 32-9-242-80-60 or [www.filmfestival.be](http://www.filmfestival.be)

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## France / Paris

*Foire Internationale d'Art  
Contemporain, Paris expo, Porte de  
Versailles, October 24–28*

**FOR THIS MODERN AND** ▶

cheese from his 80 milking goats in the central Oregon desert town of Redmond. Fed up with the urban lifestyle as a lawyer in California, the Portland-born Kolisch traveled to France 16 years ago to learn to make cheese. It's that kind of passion that fuels many Portland chefs' fondness for locally produced fare, a fondness that trickles down to diners—the ultimate beneficiaries of such relationships.

**Higgins Restaurant & Bar / Greg Higgins'** philosophy is: If it's out of season, don't ask for it. That's why you won't find tomatoes on his legendary burgers in the winter. That's also one of the reasons why just this past summer he won the James Beard Foundation's American Express Best Chef: Northwest/Hawaii 2002 award. Higgins offers an abundance of delectable items at his restaurant, many of which are made in his storage room across the street. That pickled green tomato garnishing your pastrami sandwich was made from his mom's recipe. His staff makes the ketchup, ages the ham for 12 to 15 months, and pickles the cucumbers in 5-gallon buckets, just like in grandpa's basement. Thanks to the open kitchen, you can see some of the preparations yourself. Organic salami from a friend's farm hangs beside the copper pots as a cook prepares goose breasts for curing.

Higgins and his restaurant are *so* Portland. Starched white tablecloths and sparkling wineglasses await the night's theatergoers in a dining room subdued by dark mahogany walls. And then there's Greg in his Birkenstocks and T-shirt talking about the 400 selections on his wine list. The restaurant is located adjacent to the theater district and across the street from the state's major newspaper and is housed in a building that dates back to the early 1900s. The location has been home to a number of businesses, including a soda fountain, a speakeasy, a carriage house, and a go-go club.

Dishes vary according to what's in season, obviously, but past plates have included bruschetta topped with a spicy herbed purée of white beans harvested during the summer. It's served with wild mushrooms from the Coastal Range, drizzled in a red wine vinaigrette with walnuts. For dessert, locally grown apples are spotlighted in a strudel topped with halved walnuts and a dollop of homemade ice cream with dried cranberries.

*1239 Southwest Broadway; Tel: 503-222-9070. Restaurant open Monday–Friday 11:30 a.m.–2 p.m. for lunch and Monday–Sunday | continued on page 71*



*Last summer,  
chef Greg Higgins  
became Portland's  
latest James Beard  
Award winner.*

PHOTO

JOHN A. RIZZO



continued from page 28

5 p.m.—10:30 p.m. for dinner. *Bistro open Monday—Friday 11:30 a.m.—1 a.m. and Saturday—Sunday 4 p.m.—2 a.m. Three-course dinner for two about \$75, excluding tip and drinks. Reservations recommended.*

**Castagna** / When it comes to interior design, Castagna is unpretentious. You'll still find your surroundings stylish, but the real focus is on the food. "We have a menu that allows the character of the ingredients to shine through," says co-owner Monique Siu. "The room is part of that same concept. Simple décor allows you to enjoy what you have."

The menu is grounded in French and Italian techniques and features Northwest ingredients with a few out-of-area items that will delight proponents of free trade. Before you peruse the menu, ask your server if the ducks are laying eggs on nearby Sauvie Island. If the answer is yes, then deliberate no more. Order the silky *agnolotti* pasta appetizer, which is made from the ducks' eggs and, depending on the season, can be filled with asparagus or locally harvested wild nettles.

If the ducks are on hiatus, you might inquire about the silver dollar-sized, sautéed sea scallops atop locally grown, heart-shaped miner's lettuce. The dish is accentuated by thinly shaved wild porcini from Lars Norgren, a native Oregonian who has been selling mushrooms to Portland's restaurants since 1984. His woodland wonders come from places that include the Blue Mountain region in eastern Oregon and the slopes of Mount Adams in southern Washington.

If the salmon are running, try the line-caught, wild Oregon Chinook with the "Potato Machine's" roasted spuds and a wine reduction with coriander seeds and butter. Depending on what vegetables are fresh, the menu might feature a stew of asparagus, artichoke hearts, cardoon, fava beans, carrots, and pearl

onions, some of which is likely to come from Your Kitchen Garden, a farm in Canby just south of Portland. Oregon is ranked as the United States' leading grower of hazelnuts, so it would be a shame to miss the hazelnut torte if it's on the menu. Just as tempting is the napoleon made with local rhubarb.

The restaurant (its name means *chestnut* in Italian) opened in 1999 and is located on the east side of the Willamette

River in the Hawthorne district, where houses from the early 1900s mingle with bistros and bookstores. The neighborhood behind the restaurant makes for a delightful stroll under the tree canopies. Siu and her husband, Kevin Gibson, also own the more casual Café Castagna, which is adjacent to the restaurant and offers lower prices and expanded hours.

1752 Southeast Hawthorne; Tel: 503-231-7373. Open Wednesday—Saturday ▶

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5:30 p.m.—10 p.m. Dinner for two, including appetizers and dessert, about \$80, excluding drinks and tip. Reservations recommended on Friday and Saturday.

**Wildwood Restaurant & Bar** / You might need a roadmap to read chef Cory Schreiber's menu: bivalves from Tillamook Bay, Yamhill County bacon, and salad greens from Ridgefield. Put it all together and you've got crispy oysters fried in flour, cornmeal, and polenta

atop a crêpe with pancetta. And you didn't even have to gas up the car.

The philosophy at Wildwood might best be summed up as elegant but unfussy. Rather than expending energy coming up with clever fusions or piling on the extra notes, Schreiber takes the building blocks of Pacific Northwest cuisine—ingredients like salmon, wild mushrooms, nuts, pork, and duck—and creates winning combinations that are

the perfect accompaniments to all those rainy Portland evenings (and all those earthy Willamette Pinots). A typical evening's menu might include porcini-crusted salmon atop a potato-and-pearl-onion hash, or Yamhill County pork loin on crème-fraîche mashed potatoes served alongside rosemary walnuts and sautéed greens. For dessert, indulge in the apple-and-dried-apricot buckle with cinnamon ice cream.

Schreiber, who is a fifth-generation Portlander, wrote the book on Northwest cooking—literally. *Wildwood: Cooking From the Source in the Pacific Northwest* intertwines recipes with his boyhood stories of clamming alongside 85-year-old Aunt Christina and getting wrapped up in thorny blackberry brambles. The 1998 winner of a James Beard award, Schreiber got his start in the business by washing dishes at his family's restaurant, Dan & Louis Oyster Bar, before opening Wildwood in 1994. Wildwood is located in the trendy Nob Hill neighborhood, which is filled with upscale restaurants, coffee houses, shops, and trees festooned with tiny, white lights.

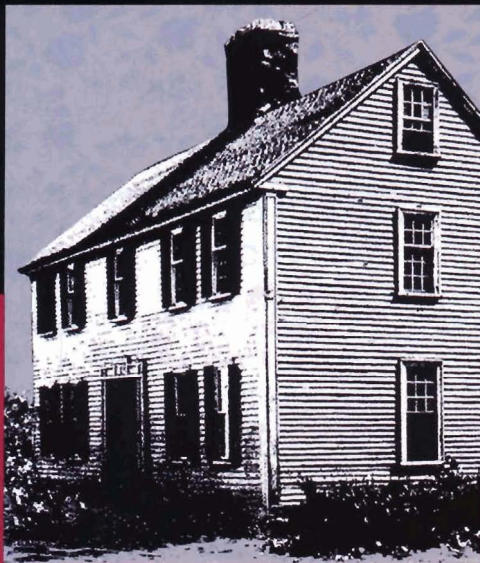
1221 Northwest 21st Avenue; Tel: 503-248-9663. Open Monday—Saturday 11:30 a.m.—2:30 p.m. for lunch, Monday—Thursday 5:30 p.m.—9 p.m. and Friday—Saturday 5:30 p.m.—10 p.m. for dinner, Sunday 10 a.m.—2 p.m. for brunch. A chalkboard menu, a late-night menu, and a Sunday family-style supper are served at other hours. Three-course dinner for two about \$75, excluding drinks and tip. Reservations recommended.

**Paley's Place** / It's Friday afternoon and Vitaly "Vito" Paley's countertop is piled with cardboard boxes of organic baby leeks, Asian greens, and baby fennel that just arrived by overnight delivery from Brownsville in the Willamette Valley. They were grown by George Weppler, who has worked as a ▶

## Discover Within These Walls...

Watch History Come Alive

The National Museum of American History,  
Behring Center  
14th St. and Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC  
Hours are 10 am to 5:30 pm daily  
Admission is free  
[www.americanhistory.si.edu/house](http://www.americanhistory.si.edu/house)



The NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® is proud to be the sole sponsor of "Within These Walls...", a new exhibition at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. Visitors to the 240 year-old Georgian-style house will learn about five families who lived there, the times in which they lived and the part these citizens played in our country's history.



football linebacker, stonemason, and biologist but now farms five acres to stay active. Soon Paula Hodge, who manages three children and a mushroom business, walks in with her weekly delivery. This time it's yellow-footed chanterelles, hedgehogs, black trumpets, and truffles from the Willamette Valley.

The mushrooms might turn up in a rich risotto with the baby leeks, or maybe they'll be showcased with braised veal sweetbreads, creamy polenta, and grilled asparagus. But first, try an appetizer of plump, melt-in-your-mouth mussels from the Puget Sound, steamed with garlic and white wine and accompanied by Gene Thiel's french fries. If Paley has been supplied with salmon, you're likely to find it prepared in the oven atop an olive oil-coated cedar plank to give it a distinctively woody flavor.

In the meat department, don't miss the grass-fed, hormone-free hanger steak, marinated in olive oil and about a dozen spices, then grilled. The pudding cake with Hood River apples, hot buttered apple brandy sauce, and homemade buttermilk nougatine ice cream finishes the meal nicely.

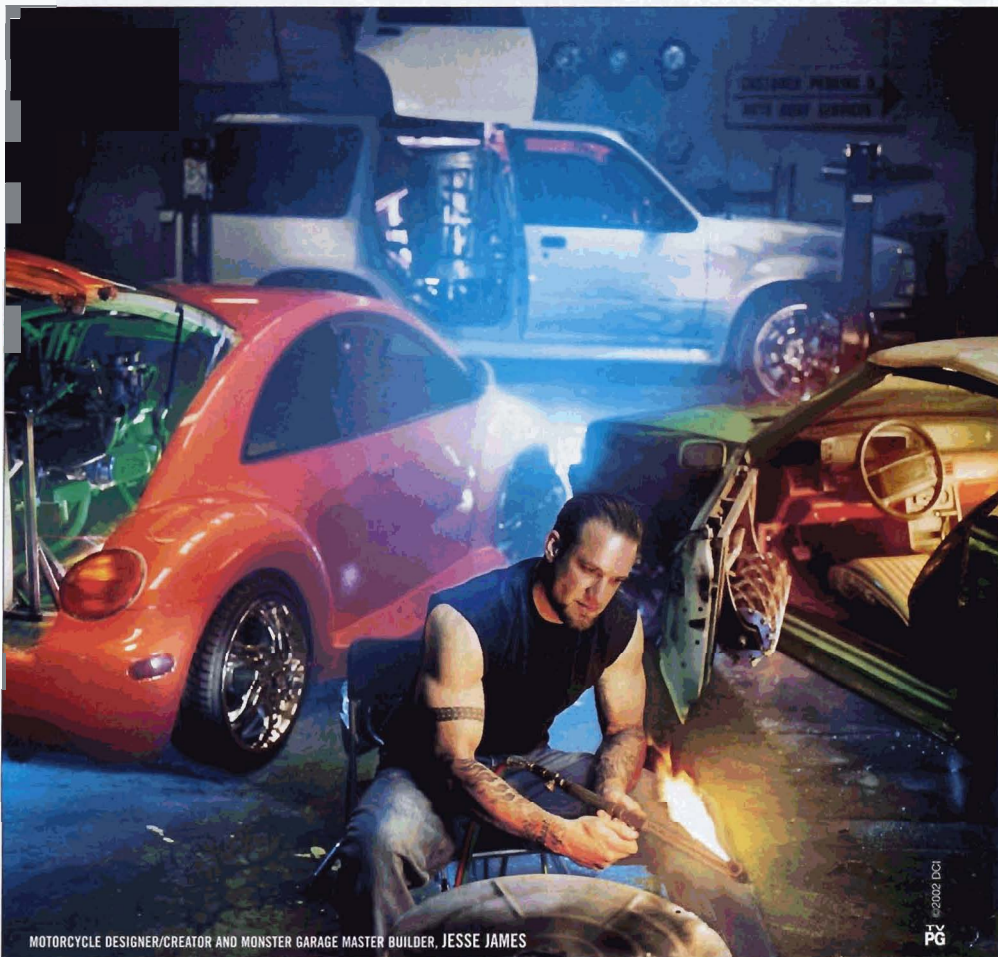
Paley's is a cozy and romantic place. Fashioned from two remodeled adjoining houses from the early 1900s, the atmosphere makes you feel like saying, "I'm

home, June," when you hand your coat to Paley's wife, Kimberly. Antique French posters hang on the walls, and tables are set with colorful plates painted with a checkerboard-and-vegetable motif that adds a homey splash of color. The veranda is ideal for those energized summer evenings that make Portlanders forget about the rain.

1204 Northwest 21st Avenue; Tel: 503-243-2403. Open Monday–Thursday

5:30 p.m.–10 p.m., Friday–Saturday  
5:30 p.m.–11 p.m., Sunday 5 p.m.–10 p.m. Three-course dinner for two about \$80, excluding drinks and tip. Reservations recommended. /END/

**Tiffany Amy-Ashley Woods**, a writer and outdoorsy third-generation Oregonian, can frequently be found picking blackberries in the summer until her tongue and fingers are purple.



MOTORCYCLE DESIGNER/CREATOR AND MONSTER GARAGE MASTER BUILDER, JESSE JAMES

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