

Salt & Straw

Ice cream with an edge

Portland ice cream shops usually open with optimism, then quickly melt into soup stands. The new Salt & Straw has not been tested by Oregon's 10-month winter, but judging by late-summer lines more typical of rock shows than ice cream shops all signs point to something more than a passing scoop. Cousins Kim and Tyler Malek tapped the local spirit of craft and collaboration, went their own flavor-crazy way, and are now challenging expectations of what an ice cream parlor might look like: a place that embraces both an iPad cash register and a vintage waffle iron that stamps out made-to-order cones. Each scoop is wildly different, bulging with luxurious texture, daring combinations, and an unmistakable taste of place, perfumed with Steven Smith's Teas, a changing tap of local beers, Olympic Provisions meat, and chocolate "chips" from budding bean-to-bar stars Woodblock Chocolates. Limited-edition batches are in the works, like a holiday combo of fresh pecans, molasses, and celebratory shots of Oregon's Stonebarn whiskey. How far will the Maleks push to redefine ice cream on our turf? Bone marrow-and-smoked cherry is already a hit. "I just have to get used to foie gras in ice cream," says Kim. "Tyler says, 'Get over it.'" **2035 NE Alberta St; saltandstraw.com**
Eat: Homemade almond brittle with salted ganache, Stumptown single-origin coffee with local cocoa nibs, Li'l Smoky Sundae (sea salt and handmade caramel ice cream, slivers of fermented black garlic, whipped cream, burnt caramel sauce, and smoked bourbon cherry)

Wafu

Rock-'n'-roll ramen

Old Japanese cinema posters shoot, squint, and kick their way off a long

wall that leads to samurai film icons, flickering through the door of the back room. Pals, daters, and bar hoppers perch on tall stools that line a seemingly never-ending bar, where cocktails arrive with lurid colors and hand-carved ice. The music is jacked to blistering levels, like a hot peppercorn in your ear. Handrolls are packaged with roasted crab, lamb tongue comes brazenly dunked in gin-spiked ponzu, and the pork-intensive ramen is richer than Paul Allen. Welcome to Portland's rock-'n'-roll ramen spot, where the drinking is serious and the food is designed but decidedly playful. Does it all work? It's too early to tell. (Smoked chicken schmaltz has already been yanked from the house noodle soup formula.) But last year, chef Trent Pierce proved to be one of Portland's most electric talents at the short-lived Fin. Now Wafu, with its nicely curated whiskey flights and

sake on tap, is already as spirited as a Miyazaki movie. **3113 SE Division St; wafupdx.com**
Eat: Ceviche, cured saba with crystalized ginger, aburasoba (brothless ramen with pork belly, kimchi, fried egg)

Bluehour A kitchen reborn

The marshmallowy furniture, the slim-chic bar, the chandeliers floating like otherworldly halos, the loading-dock tables lordling over the Pearl District's tribes of wandering tourists. Since 2000, Bluehour has stood as Portland's iconic night on the town. But as the kitchen revealed in caviar parfaits, Portland's food-first, pretense-last revolution passed it by. That's what makes the late-summer arrival of chef Thomas Boyce so significant: Bluehour is back in the conversation. Boyce is a

Bluehour's new chef, Thomas Boyce, carves a rack of lamb.



BOYCE IS UNLEASHING A FRESH VOICE, MINGLING HIS FEEL FOR TRADITIONAL RUSTIC ELEGANCE WITH SURPRISING LITTLE INCURSIONS INTO KOREAN AND JAPANESE FLAVORS.

cook's cook, fresh from the trenches of Wolfgang Puck's Spago in LA, and he has the skills to, at last, make Bluehour a food destination, aided in part by the raiding of a private cellar to deepen the wine list. Bluehour cranks brunch, lunch, dinner, and late-night menus, and everything needs revisiting, including the service—but dinners are the priority for now. Boyce is already unleashing a fresh voice that mingles rustic elegance with surprising incursions into Korean and Japanese flavors. He knows his way around seafood, and his homemade pastas show the magic of simple perfection. No guarantees, but potentially, this could be the turnaround of the year. **250 NW 13th Ave; bluehouronline.com**
Eat: Crudo (raw fish), terrine of octopus, fromage blanc gnocchi with lamb sugo, braised veal cheeks, chocolate and confection platter

TOO NEW TO REVIEW

Fall unleashes a fresh wave of eating from notable names.

BY BENJAMIN TEPLER

LUCE Navarre's John Taboada and Giovanna Parolari have remade the Italian corner store with antipasti bites, fresh-cut pastas, and rustic classics to match handmade shelves of hard-to-find European pantry items and cookware imports. (2140 E Burnside St) **OPEN**

THE WOODSMAN TAVERN Stumptown's Duane Sorenson and Clyde Common alum Jason Barwikowski join forces in a Craftsman-meets-Pendleton space complete with a coveted indoor charcoal oven capable of crisping any meat to Peking duck status. (4537 SE Division St) **OPENS MID-OCTOBER**

NOISETTE Tony Demes, famed chef behind the long-shuttered Couvron's evening-length French meals, returns to Portland with a new spin on white-tablecloth French: contemporary, market-driven, and with a choice of à la carte or tasting menu. (1937 NW 23rd Pl) **OPENS LATE OCTOBER**

OVEN AND SHAKER Nostrana's Cathy Whims, Portland's poet laureate of Italian cuisine, teams up with mixologist Ryan Magarian and innovative restaurateur Kurt Huffman (see p. 71) to bring a potential powerhouse of wood-fired pizza and craft cocktails to the Pearl District. (1134 NW Everett St) **OPENS EARLY NOVEMBER**

INTERURBAN Meat king John Gorham (Toro Bravo, Tasty n Sons) and Dan Hart (Prost) envision comfort food with rugged butcher cuts crisped in a rotisserie, boar shepherd's pie, smoked oyster boards, ice cream from Lovely's Fifty-Fifty, and classic cocktails. (4057 N Mississippi Ave) **OPENS MID-NOVEMBER**

knife plunged through the heart of its ciabatta bun. It's the destination of the year, as imagined by Le Pigeon's Gabriel Rucker, a master of culinary send-ups. Rucker's longtime aide-de-camp, chef Erik Van Kley, has the keys to the car on most nights, and he's finding voice in the likes of oxtail terrine, a carnal fantasy dressed in dark burgundy onion jam. Not everything soars at Little Bird, especially service, but any place that appeals to your bandmates and your power-broker parents is doing something exciting. 219 SW Sixth Ave; littlebirdbistro.com
Eat: Charcuterie plate, potted duck liver, roasted chicken with pickled peppers, daily fish specials, grilled flatiron steak, ice cream sampler

Castagna

Modernism's rising star

The recipe for the best dessert of the year: a crazy salad of herbs, a few science moves, and chef Justin Woodward's bold imagination. Creamy, quietly floral tonka bean ice cream danced with tufts of brown butter cake so shockingly light they almost levitated off the plate. On top, a cocoa-colored tube cracked open and gushed a rich, hot, chocolate-hazelnut liquid over everything, including the fragrant surprise of tarragon, bergamot, mint, and lemon verbena leaves, so that each bite was charged by a different experience. It was a modernist plate three days in the making, and a signal of yet another exciting chapter at Castagna: food steeped in botanicals but grounded in the familiar. Portland's most risk-taking restaurant has played host to a sequence of respected chefs—most recently, avant-garde forager Matt Lightner, who grabbed headlines—and then a major restaurant deal in New York. Now Woodward, formerly Lightner's right-hand man, who earned his pastry creds at Manhattan's famed experimental lab WD-50, is taking his place at the table with impressive technique and dramatic designs. Wood-

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ward is still finding his way, but his best dishes signal a young artist in bloom. At \$65 for four courses, led by a procession of snacks, a dinner at Castagna is an extraordinary deal. Eat it while you can. 1752 SE Hawthorne Blvd; castagnarestaurant.com
Eat: Harvest composition (30 herbs and vegetables with a dressing of pickled fennel bud and smoked bone marrow); smoked pork; lamb collar with a salad of roots, stems, and sprouts; tonka bean ice cream and brown butter cake



LEFT & BELOW: Honey balsamic strawberry ice cream with black pepper at Salt & Straw (p. 66)
RIGHT: The Harvest composition at Castagna

