



LUXURY LAS VEGAS,
SEPTEMBER 2006

RESTAURANT **REVOLUTION**



PHOTOS ON PAGE COURTESY OF Hotel Lucia

PORTLAND RENAISSANCE— RESTAURANT REVOLUTION

For decades, Portland's claim to fame was its annual Rose Festival (est. 1907) and Rose Garden (est. 1917). However, the "City of Roses" has blossomed far beyond its horticulture. Without the city's renaissance, the restaurant revolution might have withered and died. Fortunately, retrofitting, not implosion, has reincarnated wonderful old structures and revitalized neighborhoods.

Our hotel, the Hotel Lucia, captured the spirit (www.hotellucia.com). Farmers and ranchers who stayed there in the 1920s, when they were in town to sell their crops and cattle, would never recognize it. It's now a trendy boutique hotel with bold colors, stainless steel elevator doors, a pewter and brass chess set in the quiet fireplace lounge, an eclectic art collection, and the largest permanent collection of fascinating black and white images by Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer David Hume Kennerly, a Portland native. Just off the lobby, Typhoon, the exotic Thai food chain, will curry your favor.

DINING DIVERSITY IN PORTLAND

You'll never be bored with the wide-ranging cuisine in Portland restaurants.

Steeped in tradition, afternoon tea lured us to the gloriously restored grand lobby, a.k.a. Tea Court, of THE HEATHMAN HOTEL (1927) (www.heathmanhotel.com). An elegant crystal chandelier, carved paneling, and string quartet music, albeit recorded, set the mood. Comfortably ensconced in high-back chairs, we sipped our individually brewed tea and immersed ourselves in scones, smoked salmon Napoleons, profiterole chicken salad, wonderful brownies and lemon bars, and the ultimate French Opera Cake.

Dinner at THE STEAK & CHOP HOUSE (www.portlandchophouse.com) at the reborn 1912 Multnomah Hotel (now Embassy Suites Portland-Downtown) continued our nostalgic dining. Mahogany paneling, burgundy leather booths, and gas jet sconces create a "clubby" atmosphere. The menu is huge, and it helps to have an appetite to match. Certainly there are trendy dishes like seared ahi tuna and almond crusted brie cheese. However, our satisfying trip down culinary memory

lane revisited pan fried Willapa Bay oysters, jumbo prawn cocktail, and "colossal" house-made onion rings. Understandably, beef abounds, from a seven-ounce petit filet to a 22-ounce porterhouse.

Originally a warren of warehouses, the Pearl District is now a people-packed enclave of trendy shops, artists' galleries, condos, lofts, and hoards of restaurants, beer pubs, and bars, including a martini bar named Olive or Twist. In many restaurants, industrial chic design exposes the overhead ventilating ducts and electric conduits.

Executive Chef Amy Jermain and her all-Peruvian-staff kitchen at ANDINA create "Novo-Andean" and traditional Andean cuisine in an open kitchen (www.andinarestaurant.com). They start with the basics, then crank up the flavor by crusting diver scallops with quinoa, an indigenous plant of the Andes; marinating chicken in a balsamic vinegar-aji panca sauce; and pairing New York strip steak with rocoto hollandaise-filled artichoke hearts, Andean tuber gratin, and roasted asparagus. Seco a la Norteña, a savory, slow-cooked lamb shank prepared using an old family recipe, presents