

platter

food finds, restaurant news and dining trends

By CHRISTINA MELANDER

PSST! GOOD EATS IN VANCOUVER — We're not ready to proclaim Vancouver the next Brooklyn, but it's heartening to see stirrings of culinary creativity across the river. A quick spin through the city center reveals that the 'Couv now has more to offer than free parking and cut-rate deals on cast-off engagement rings. **La Bottega**, a welcoming cafe-deli-wine shop, is a prime example of considered urban revitalization.

Peter and Lisa Dougherty have lived in the Vancouver neighborhood known as Uptown Village for more than a decade, commuting — like so many others — over Interstate Bridge to work and dine. But last year the Doughertys decided to stick closer to home, opening La Bottega in October.

"People are hungry for culture, cuisine and choices, and they're tired of driving across the river," Peter says. "The Vancouver area has a huge percentage of fast food and corporate chains, but a few quality owner-

operated restaurants are starting to crop up."

Peter, 40, a Western Culinary Institute grad and former executive chef at Paragon in the Pearl — likens his restaurant to a smaller version of Elephants Delicatessen, Portland's version of New York's Dean & DeLuca, and there's truth in the comparison. Inside the airy stucco-and-brick La Bottega, full-service dining, take-away business and retail displays cheerily coexist, creating a convivial ambience. Customers come to lunch with colleagues, to chat with neighbors at the weekly Wednesday wine tastings or to grab a jar of Garlic Lady olives for home. They come for a glass of golden Chimay, for prawn risotto and blackened escolar, for warm chocolate bread pudding. More than anything, they come for a good meal, grateful to have such a place of their own.

A weekly-changing menu that takes advantage of peak seasonal foods, an eclectic dry goods inventory and thematic



LEAH NASH/SPECIAL TO THE OREGONIAN

Full-service dining, take-out deli goods and a wine shop smartly co-exist at Vancouver's new La Bottega.

monthly wine dinners keep Vancouverites coming back — and just might lure a few curious Portlanders. La Bottega's next wine dinner pairs Spanish wines with four courses for \$65 per person on April 17.

1905 Main St., Vancouver, 360-571-5010; 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Tuesday; 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday.

SAY HELLO TO HURLEY'S \$28 BURGER — A tony whop-

per lands in Stumptown next Saturday when Tom Hurley introduces brunch at his eponymous Nob Hill restaurant, **Hurley's**. Before you twist your face in disdain, consider that Seattleites are eating it up at Hurley's new French-Korean restaurant Coupage, which received rave reviews from the Seattle Times and Seattle Weekly.

So what do you get for the hefty price tag? Eleven ounces

of coarsely ground American Kobe beef short ribs spiked with Korean red pepper flakes and a reduction of mirin, sake and soy sauce, then grilled over mesquite. Roasted tomato relish, kimchee onions and a sturdy pretzel-dough bun sourced from a Canadian bakery. Homemade ketchup, mustard and truffle mayonnaise. And a side of potato crisps dusted with Asiago cheese and black truffle oil. At Coupage, a slab of seared foie gras is the topper but Hurley says he might skip it here to avoid the wrath of animal-rights protesters, with whom he has had very public wranglings. The proof, of course, will be in the tasting.

Hurley's brunch lineup will also include chicken-fried steak, brioche French toast with date butter, eggs Benedict with rissole potato and an egg-white omelet with mushrooms. The burger will also hit the dinner menu.

1987 N.W. Kearney St.; 503-295-6487; brunch 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday-Sunday beginning March 24.

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