



Clarklewis's radicchio and apples in pine-nut vinaigrette

Portland cooks

This town has turned into a culinary hot spot, thanks to inspired chefs, an adventurous clientele, and some of the country's best produce BY MOLLY WATSON



Elegant industrial:
Clarklewis's
dining room



Paley's Place double-chile brisket



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE Chef Vitaly Paley of Paley's Place with his wife, Kimberly; an always-changing and ever-interesting menu, cottage-cozy setting, and excellent service have made his restaurant a favorite destination for special occasions—or just a burger and beer at the bar—for more than a decade. Naomi Pomeroy, whose first restaurant, Family Supper, was one of Portland's hottest reservations, opened Clarklewis in 2004. Produce arrives at the restaurant. Clarklewis, housed in a converted warehouse by the Willamette River, glows from within; its one-of-a-kind ingredient combinations (dried chile–basil vinaigrette, pork with anise and dates, mussels with fennel sauce) and imaginative menus (ancient Roman supper for New Year's Eve, aphrodisiac-laced courses for Valentine's Day) lure customers in droves.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ANNABELLE BREAKEY, (FOOD STYLING: KAREN SHINTO), ANDREA GOMEZ (4)



IN 1992, Vitaly Paley was cooking at a small restaurant outside Limoges, France. A box of morels arrived in the kitchen—moist and firm, with a deep, woody flavor. Where, he wondered, were these perfect fungi from?

Paley identified Oregon, birthplace of the morels he'd admired, as a new culinary frontier. He headed there with his wife, Kimberly, and opened Paley's Place Bistro and Bar, in Portland.

"Today Portland still has the same wondrous ingredient base to work with that first drew me here," Paley says, "but now we're also on the forefront of the sustainable movement, and we have a great range of restaurants."

He's not alone in his assessment. "We're really lucky to live in Portland," says Naomi Pomeroy, founder of Clarklewis, a restaurant known for its innovative, Italian-influenced cooking. "The physical proximity of the farms is amazing, and the growers we work with are still very small-scale. Most of our farmers do their own deliveries to our kitchen door." All of her suppliers farm within two hours of the restaurant, and one—Ojala Farm, in northwest Portland—is just 20 minutes away.

But it takes more than superlative and sustainable ingredients to create a restaurant culture like Portland's. Rather than having a predictable top-shelf restaurant selection downtown with a few outlying destination restaurants, it features drive-worthy eateries in practically every neighborhood. Along with showstoppers that get national attention, like Clarklewis and Paley's Place, a tremendous number of small spots serve remarkably good food.

What else makes Portland such an across-the-board great eating town? It's primarily the residents of Portland themselves. Portlanders are proud of their burg and support local efforts accordingly. Their love of their city—its physical beauty, its art, its wines, its quirky sophistication—translates into a restaurant-going public any chef would envy. "Our customers are willing to try anything," says Pomeroy—even an all-organ-meat dinner she and founding Clarklewis chef Morgan Brownlow, who has since moved on, offered one year for Valentine's Day at their previous restaurant. (It sold out.)

This culinary curiosity also explains the wide range of restaurants that thrive here, from Peruvian nuevo-Andean superstar Andina to the recent explosion of Southeast Asian places on 82nd Avenue. As Adam Berger, owner of Tabla Mediterranean Bistro, puts it, "Good food has become part of the culture of Portland, along with bridges and views of Mt. Hood." It all began, he claims, with Paley's Place over a decade ago, along with other pioneering restaurants like Wildwood and Higgins. "They educated their customers, who came to expect more—and now we all keep moving that bar along."

So where are Paley's sights aimed now? "I've become too attached to this way of cooking to leave," he says. "Our farmers structure our menu every day. I'm never sure what's coming in the back door. I just know it's going to be excellent."

Radicchio and apples in pine-nut vinaigrette

This irresistible combination of apples with bitter radicchio, buttery pine nuts, and a rich, sweet-tart dressing is from Clarklewis.

PREP AND COOK TIME 30 minutes

MAKES 6 servings

½ cup hard apple cider

1½ tsp. honey

1 shallot, minced

2 tbsp. cider vinegar

About ½ tsp. salt

½ cup pine nuts, toasted

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil

1 head radicchio, halved, cored, and cut into ¼-in. strips

2 Pinova, Gala, Honeycrisp, or other crisp apples, quartered, cored, and thinly sliced

6 slices prosciutto

¼ cup parmesan shavings

Freshly ground black pepper

1. Put cider and honey in a small pan over medium-high heat. Cook until reduced to a syrup (about 1 tbsp.), 10 to 15 minutes.

2. Put shallot, vinegar, and ½ tsp. salt in a medium bowl and let sit 5 to 10 minutes. Meanwhile, put ¼ cup pine nuts into a mortar and use pestle to work into a rough

paste. Set aside. Stir cider syrup into the shallot-vinegar mixture, then whisk in olive oil. Stir in pine-nut paste to create a creamy dressing and add salt to taste.

3. Put radicchio in a large bowl. Drizzle with half of the dressing and toss thoroughly. Toss in apples, adding more dressing if necessary to coat the salad. Divide salad among 6 plates. Top each salad with prosciutto, parmesan, remaining ¼ cup pine nuts, and pepper, dividing evenly.

PER SERVING 239 CAL., 28% (68 CAL.) FROM FAT; 6.9 G PROTEIN; 18 G FAT (3.5 G SAT.); 17 G CARBO (2.2 G FIBER); 386 MG SODIUM; 9.9 MG CHOL.

Tabla Mediterranean Bistro magical egg ravioli

Swiss chard, a bit of cheese, and an egg yolk become much more than the sum of their parts in this dish. Use the freshest eggs you can find. People with compromised immune systems and others concerned about salmonella should avoid undercooked eggs.

PREP AND COOK TIME 2 hours

MAKES 6 servings

NOTES You can make the pasta rounds up to a day ahead: Dust with flour, stack them in the shortest possible layers with pieces of plastic wrap between layers, cover well with plastic wrap, and refrigerate until ready to use.

About 1¼ cups flour

2 whole eggs, plus 6 egg yolks and 1 egg white

1½ tsp. heavy whipping cream

1 tbsp. plus ¼ tsp. salt

2 cups tightly packed stemmed chard leaves

¼ cup whole-milk ricotta

½ cup grated parmesan

⅛ to ¼ tsp. freshly ground black pepper

2 tbsp. butter, at room temperature

¼ to ½ tsp. poppy seeds

1. Mix 1¼ cups flour, whole eggs, and cream to form dough. Turn out onto a clean surface and knead until smooth, about 5 minutes. Cover with plastic wrap and set aside 30 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, bring a large pot of water to a boil. Prepare a large bowl of ice water and set it next to the stove. Add 1 tbsp. salt and chard leaves to pot. Cook chard until water returns to a boil and leaves are tender, about 3 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer chard leaves to ice water. (Keep pot of hot water on stove, but turn off heat.) Drain chard, squeeze out as

much water as possible, and chop (you should have about ½ cup). Mix chard with ricotta, ¼ cup parmesan, remaining ¼ tsp. salt, and pepper to taste. Set aside.

3. Cut a 5-in.-diameter round from a piece of paper and set aside. Unwrap pasta dough, divide into 6 pieces, and pat each piece into a ½-in.-thick rectangle. Working with 1 piece at a time, set a pasta roller on the widest setting and roll piece through, dusting dough with flour as necessary to prevent sticking. Fold piece into thirds (like a letter) and roll it through again. Repeat folding and rolling once more for a total of three rolls on the widest setting. Repeat with remaining 5 pieces of dough.

4. Set roller to next narrowest setting and roll each piece through once. Repeat with next narrowest setting. Cut each piece in half and roll through on each remaining setting twice, turning 90° between rolls and trimming as necessary to fit and to keep a basically square shape, until dough squares are thin enough to see through and measure at least 5 in. on all sides.

5. Using paper round as a template, cut 5-in. rounds from each dough square.

6. Assemble the ravioli: Lay 6 pasta rounds on a clean surface dusted with flour. On each round, use a small spoon to arrange ⅙ of the chard-ricotta mixture in a circle about ¾ in. from the edges, creating a well in the center large enough to hold an egg yolk. Repeat with remaining 5 pasta rounds and chard mixture. Put an egg yolk in the center of each well. Brush edges of pasta with egg white and place a second pasta round on top of each ravioli. Working from the center of each ravioli, gently press the top pasta round onto the filling to make sure there are no air pockets in the ravioli. Press edges firmly together to seal.

7. Bring pot of water to a slow boil. With a 4- to 5-in. strainer or slotted spoon, lower ravioli one at a time into the water (cook in batches of 2 or 3). Cook ravioli 3 minutes. Using the strainer, transfer them to a serving plate, blotting excess water with a paper towel. Top each ravioli with 1 tsp. butter.

8. Sprinkle ravioli with poppy seeds and remaining parmesan. Serve immediately.

PER RAVIOLI 293 CAL., 80% (234 CAL.) FROM FAT; 13 G PROTEIN; 15 G FAT (6.9 G SAT.); 26 G CARBO (1.2 G FIBER); 617 MG SODIUM; 306 MG CHOL.

Paley's Place double-chile brisket

Vitaly Paley is known for his eclectic style and interesting twists on comforting favorites. The two-chile combination with this brisket heats up a winter night. The recipe is based on one in Paley's forthcoming cookbook, which will be published by Ten Speed Press in 2008.

PREP AND COOK TIME 3 to 3½ hours

MAKES 8 to 10 servings

7 to 8 dried mild New Mexico chiles, stemmed and seeded

5 dried pasilla negro chiles, stemmed, seeded, and broken into pieces

1 star anise

1 tsp. fennel seed

1½ tsp. salt

½ tsp. black peppercorns

1 beef brisket (5 to 6 lbs.), trimmed of fat and membrane

½ cup sherry vinegar

3 tbsp. olive oil

1 medium onion, diced

1 can (14 oz.) whole peeled tomatoes

1 cup beef or chicken broth

1. Preheat oven to 350°. In a medium bowl, pour 3 cups boiling water over New Mexico chiles and let soak until softened, about 30 minutes. Drain, reserving 1 cup liquid.

2. Meanwhile, grind pasilla negro chiles, star anise, fennel seed, salt, and peppercorns in a spice mill or clean coffee grinder.

3. Rub brisket with spice blend; set aside.

4. Whirl soaked chiles, vinegar, and chile liquid in a blender until puréed. Set aside.

5. Heat a large roasting pan (not nonstick) over medium-high heat (set it over 2 burners if necessary). Add olive oil, swirl oil in pan, and add brisket. Cook brisket until well browned on one side, about 3 minutes.

Turn and brown on remaining sides, adjusting heat to keep brisket sizzling but not burning. Remove and set aside.

6. Add onion and cook, stirring, until soft, about 3 minutes. Chop tomatoes and add with juice. Add chile purée and broth. Bring to a boil. Add brisket, cover, and bake in oven until fork-tender, 2 to 3 hours.

7. Place brisket on a serving platter, cover with foil, and set in a warm place. Whirl pan juices in a blender until smooth. Slice brisket thinly and serve hot, with blended pan juices on the side.

PER SERVING 458 CAL., 10% (47 CAL.) FROM FAT; 54 G PROTEIN; 24 G FAT (7.2 G SAT.); 5.2 G CARBO (1.4 G FIBER); 647 MG SODIUM; 156 MG CHOL. ■

Portland dining

Alberta Street Oyster Bar & Grill In a lively setting, pan-American regional favorites with plenty of seafood offerings. \$\$\$; closed Tue; 2926 N.E. Alberta St.; 503/284-9600.

Andina Sophisticated Peruvian creations in an airy dining space in the Pearl District. \$\$\$; 1314 N.W. Glisan St.; 503/228-9535.

Ciao Vito Simple trattoria food done right: Bolognese with wild boar; sugo (simple, thick sauce) of pork with Oregon wild mushrooms. \$\$; 2203 N.E. Alberta St.; 503/282-5522.

Clarklewis Innovative, ever-changing menu served in a converted warehouse awash in urban style. \$\$\$; closed Sun; 1001 S.E. Water Ave.; 503/235-2294.

Lovely Hula Hands The world comes to North Portland. Thai-style steak with sticky rice and retro cocktails make the wait worthwhile. \$\$; closed Mon; 4057 N. Mississippi Ave.; 503/445-9910.

Mother's Bistro & Bar Upscale comfort food and perhaps the best breakfast in a breakfast-blessed town. \$\$; closed Mon; 212 S.W. Stark St.; 503/464-1122.

Navarre Wine bar extraordinaire with a sushi-style check-off menu, plus monthly regional wine and food specials. \$\$; 10 N.E. 28th Ave.; 503/232-3555.

Nostrana Menu stand-outs (besides the practically perfect pizza) include rabbit crostini and wood-fired crab. \$\$\$; 1401 S.E. Morrison St.; 503/234-2427.

Paley's Place Bistro and Bar In a sophisticated, cozy space,

French technique meets Oregon's bounty and an American penchant for plentiful experimentation. \$\$\$; 1204 N.W. 21st Ave.; 503/243-2403.

Pambiche: Cocina y Repostería Cubana Nicely priced, delicious Cuban food and lots of it, both on the menu and on your plate.

We're powerless before the croquettes. \$\$; 2811 N.E. Glisan St.; 503/233-0511.

Park Kitchen Chef-owner Scott Dolich sits on the board of the Portland Farmers Market and is a devoted forager and trained butcher. \$\$\$; closed Sun; 422 N.W. Eighth Ave.; 503/223-7275.

Pok Pok Thai street food: roasted game hen, green papaya salad, and noodle soups. \$\$; closed Sun; 3226 S.E. Division St.; 503/232-1387.

Tabla Mediterranean Bistro Smartly simple dishes (like rabbit ragù on housemade pappardelle) keep things interesting at this charming bistro. \$\$\$; closed Mon; 200 N.E. 28th Ave.; 503/238-3777.

Three Square Grill American regional favorites with a heavy dose of Southern—pulled pork, okra, hush puppies, and stupendous pickles. \$\$; closed Mon; 6320 S.W. Capitol Hwy.; 503/244-4457.

Wildwood Cory Schreiber opened his lively spot, serving Northwest dishes, within months of Vitaly Paley's opening his—the big bang for the current Portland restaurant renaissance. \$\$\$; 1221 N.W. 21st Ave.; 503/248-9663.



*Tabla Mediterranean Bistro
magical egg ravioli*



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT Adam Berger owns four-year-old Tabla Mediterranean Bistro. Tabla's dining room, on N.E. 28th Ave., is one of Portland's restaurant rows. Clove vodka-infused Eleanor Rigbys are served in the restaurant's bar. A simple menu, stellar components, and consistent technique make Tabla a quintessential neighborhood restaurant. Berger learned to make pasta—including the chard- and egg-filled ravioli—while living in Italy's Tuscany and Piedmont. The kitchen uses 95 percent local, organic ingredients and offers special events such as "Un-Winemakers' Dinners," which feature winemakers' favorite foods and nonwine drinks. Berger recently opened another restaurant, Ten 01, in the Pearl District.