

Best Bites of 2009: Dessert

A sweet finish to my roundup of last year's best bites—this week I reveal my choices for Portland's tastiest desserts of 2009.

Parsnip Cake at Clyde Common

Pastry Chef Danielle Pruett creates modern interpretations of dessert classics to follow the precocious offerings on the Clyde's menu. Her list is often drizzled, soaked, or bathed in alcohol—such as Elijah Craig 12 Year whiskey ice cream or absinthe chocolate cake—perhaps to seduce the buzzing bar crowd. But it's that parsnip cake, served with cream cheese ice cream, walnuts, and caramel, which tempts my sweet tooth.

clydecommon.com

Chocolat at Suzette

Though this new crêperie's namesake crêpe, the classic Suzette, is a close second, Chocolat steals the show. Owner Jehnee Rains draws from her experience as a pastry chef at Chez Panisse, then Bluehour and Clarklewis in Portland, to perfect her chocolate crêpe batter slathered with homemade Nutella and topped with cinnamon ice cream and a scattering of candied hazelnuts.

suzettepdx.com

Foie Gras Profiteroles at Le Pigeon

It's been on the menu for a few years, but I recently revisited Chef Gabriel Rucker's awe-inspiring dessert of airy pâte à choux sandwiching cool, creamy foie gras filling. It was even better than I remembered. The rich sweetness is enhanced by dark caramel sauce and an unusual foie gras powdered sugar, and then balanced by crunchy sea salt.

lepigeon.com

Vietnamese Wedding Cake at Jade Teahouse and Patisserie

Since moving here from Vietnam in 1975, Lucy Eklund has been preparing her country's traditional wedding cake for Portland's Vietnamese community. She now offers this delicious delicacy by the slice at her family's café in Sellwood. Don't be afraid of the bright green hue derived from pandanus leaves, which also impart a vanilla essence to the layers of crisped puff pastry and buttercream.

jadeteahouse.com

Raleigh Bar from Xocolatl de David

Originally created for his friends at Pine State Biscuits, David Briggs' miniature candy bar is now available at gourmet shops around town like Foster & Dobbs, Steve's Cheese, and Cacao. Layered pecans, nougat, bacon, and caramel coated in a sheath of fine chocolate is worth the search for two blissful bites.

xocolatldedavid.com