

BON APPÉTIT

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DINING OUT

PORTLAND'S HOME COOKING

When someone asks "What's for dinner?" at Mother's Bistro & Bar in Portland, the answer may transport inquiring minds back to childhood—and that's the whole idea. Lisa Schroeder, chef and co-owner, offers a mostly comfort-food menu that comes from both her own repertoire and her mother's recipe box. The home-style food includes such classics as pot roast, chicken and dumplings, and macaroni and cheese; desserts might be coconut cream pie with a chocolate

cookie crust, caramel bread pudding or fruit crisps made with local berries. Schroeder has even created a Mother of the Month (M.O.M.) menu: a selection of recipes from a real mom each month. (Mother's Bistro & Bar, 409 S.W. Second Avenue, Portland; 503-464-1122.)

CULINARY WISHES IN LAS VEGAS

The 33-year-old Aladdin casino was demolished in 1998, giving the way of many other Las Vegas legends. But last year the new Aladdin Resort & Casino opened its gilded doors to welcome visitors into another Sin City fantasy world.

one that offers—along with the requisite gaming—culinary adventures from all over the globe.

The first stop on a magic carpet ride through the resort's restaurants could be the elegant London Club. High rollers might want to leave the casino early to try chef Jacques Van Staden's bird's-nest soup (a labor-intensive dish that's also said to be an aphrodisiac), which at \$125 a bowl is probably the soup's most expensive appetizer. Next stop is the popular Spice Market Buffet, where diners pick their own spices, meats and vegetables for stir-fries or kebabs. There's also Italian fare at *Bonozzo*, and steak and seafood at *Elements*. And in the Desert Passage shopping center, which surrounds the resort, good old southern-comfort cuisine is on the table at *Commander's Palace*. (Yes, it's the sister property of the New Orleans institution.) Southwestern favorites can be found at *The Anasazi* (the original is in Santa Fe), and those delicious lettuce roll-ups are available at *F I Chung's China Bites*. (Aladdin Resort & Casino, 3667 Las Vegas Boulevard South, Las Vegas, 877-333-9474.)

SAN DIEGO FISH STORY

Robbin Haas, one of Miami's hottest chefs, is also heating things up in San Diego at *Bahen*, a new restaurant that focuses on seafood. Part of *Bahen's* charm is its prime location overlooking Mission Bay. Guests can enjoy dinner in a tropically themed dining room or outside on the wraparound deck that extends over the water.

The real draw here, though, is the food. Start with halibut tartare, crab cakes with avocado salad or Thai-style steamed mussels, accompanied by a Key lime Martini, a cocktail that hails from Haas's native Florida. The dinner menu offers a selection of the day's fresh catch, including Asian-style seafood ▶



ILLUSTRATION BY TRACY MITCHELL