

MONDAY, APRIL 26, 2010

---

## **Biking and Biting Our Way Across Portland with Ivy Manning and IACP**

*Note: If you receive Food-G via email, and cannot see the photos in this post, click [here](#).*

Portland seems to be on the tip of everyone's tongue these days. Artsy, progressive, hip, creative, green, and bike-friendly are common descriptors of this magnetic city. I went to Portland last week, as an attendee at the annual IACP (International Association of Culinary Professionals) conference, curious to see how much of the hype was, well, just that.

I came away, infected with 3rd degree **P.O.S.**: Portland Obsession Syndrome. *Man*, they're doing some really cool stuff there. And everywhere you look there's something beautiful and hand-crafted, be it in garden, in glass, or on plate. It's so easy to get around, and the people are friendly, and there's this immeasurable quality of hominess, even downtown. The sprawl has been contained, leaving emerald green vistas around it's borders, and it kinda kills me--now that we bought a house in Missoula-- knowing that surfing is only an hour away.

Portland, I get it. I totally and completely get it. You have taken the sparkle from my new home

town, and given me a major case of the P.O.S. Blues.

Below is a photo essay detailing the responsible parties and purveyors. Suspect number 1 is [Ivy Manning](#), author of [The Farm to Table Cookbook](#) and [The Adaptable Feast](#). She led a couple dozen of us through the streets of Northeast P-Town on an unforgettable Urban Bike and Bite Tour.



That's her in the yellow jacket, as our little biker gang is parking in front of our first stop: [Toro Bravo](#). We walk into this warm and romantic little restaurant and they have the tables set for us with roasted nuts, olives, bread, sherry-spiked chicken liver mousse, pickled beets, and of course, wonderfully juicy Sangria.





That was just the beginning. Plate after platter of food was delivered to table: grilled local asparagus with serrano ham, split prunes stuffed with foie gras, impossibly fluffy salt cod fritters with aioli, and this scrumptious pan of Fideos.



Fideos is a paella made with buccatini-like noodles. Toro Bravo's was bejeweled with fennel sausage, spring peas, and sliced lemon. The perfect amount of saffron-scented nectar tied the dish together, and crispy breadcrumbs added a sparkle of crunch to each bite.

The memory of that Fideos will plague me with longing until my next trip to Portland. It was with great reluctance that we pushed ourselves away from the table, but Ivy had many more stops planned for our tour, and the road beckoned.





Next we toured the main commissary kitchen of Grand Central Bakery, with Piper Davis, co-author of *The Grand Central Baking Book* .



Piper's mother, Gwenyth Bassetti, was the founder of Grand Central, which distributes its artisanal breads and baked goods across the Northwest. I enjoyed eating Grand Central bread when I lived in Seattle, so it was interesting to see the heart of this little baking empire. Most impressive was the fact that this family business has stayed committed to the local/sustainable model, even as it's grown to be a rather large bakery. In spite of the fact that they're baking thousands of pies, pastries, cookies, and breads every day, they're able to create a product that tastes like it came out of Grandma's kitchen. It's about the winning

out of Grandma's kitchen. It's about the winning combination of good ingredients and good management. It was inspiring to see such a successful example of these ideals on a very real-world scale.



Next stop was [The Meadow](#) ,



a little shop filled with beautiful things. Proprietors Jennifer and Mark Bitterman





have impeccable *taste* and it shows. Everywhere you look, something precious, pretty, aromatic, or flavorful entices your senses. What the shop is most known for is it's collection of finishing salts from around the world:



They have the most extensive collection of salts in the world. In fact, [Mark Bitterman](#) is a *Selmerier*; in other words, a bona fide expert on salt. His upcoming book, *Salted: A Manifesto on the World's Most Essential Mineral, with Recipes* (Ten Speed Press), is due out on October 12, 2010.

The Meadow carries more than just salt.  
There is also Chocolate,





Wine,



And Flowers!



These Himalayan Salt blocks are one of the big sellers at the store.



Not only are they a lovely rose color, but you can heat them up and use as a cooking stone. How cool is that?!

Just across the street-- Missisipi Street, that is-- is [Portland's favorite taqueria](#),



Translation: Why not? That's a good question. Why you wouldn't eat here, I don't know. We got to sample much of the menu, including carnitas tacos, pollo verde tacos, and surprisingly good veggie (verduras) tacos. I was especially impressed with the Pescado (fish) taco.





It struck the perfect balance of sweet, creamy, salty, and crisp, and it's the first thing I'll order next time I go.

Moving along...

### [Ned Ludd.](#)

This place got me really fired up. It may have had something to do with the fact that the primary cooking source in the restaurant is a wood-fired oven. Ned Ludd, you see, was the father of the "Luddites", a term now used to refer to those who reject technological advances. There's something very primal happening at Ned Ludd, with it's stacks of chopped wood, and artful rusticity.



We dined on meat pie, house made pickles, and greens wrapped in porchetta. It was all very earthy and low-tech and outrageously inspiring. If you ever have the chance, GO THERE.

Our final pit stop was restaurant, [Lincoln:](#)



A super sexy eatery serving what I would call sleek Italian fare. Our last and final course for the day was a rhubarb-topped panna cotta, superbly airy and light. If only I had more room, or maybe a hollow leg, I would have loved to sample Lincoln's savory options (like Whole wheat fettucine with fiddlehead ferns, morel mushrooms and creme fraiche). Word on the street is that they are highly sought after as wedding caterers.

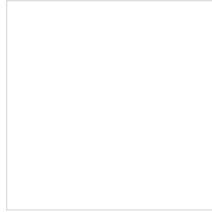
And with that we headed back to [Pedal Bike Tours HQ](#). They did a great job of providing bikes, helmets, and making sure no one went *splat*. Ivy Manning's IACP tour was a one-shot deal, but if you'd like to eat and bike your way across Portland, Pedal Bike Tours is adding a new food tour to their roster this summer.

Thanks for riding along with Food-G. Ivy Manning showed us one helluva good time. It was an incredible, decadent, delicious, and FUN day, and

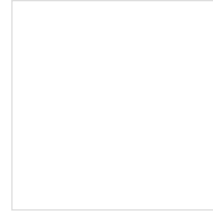
the beginning of a rather persistent case of P.O.S.

There will surely be more to come on  
Portland (my new obsession).

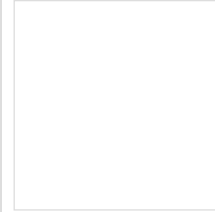
### You might also like:



Portland Food  
Carts: Food-G  
Pushes Her Limits  
in PDX



Food for Thought:  
The Secret of  
Dominica



Lady Budd's Basted  
Eggs

LinkWithin

Posted by Ginny Mahar at 3:56 PM 

Labels: [Grand Central Bakery](#), [Ivy Manning](#),  
[Lincoln](#), [Mark Bitterman](#), [Ned Ludd](#), [Pedal Bike  
Tours](#), [Piper Davis](#), [Por Que No Taqueria](#),  
[Portland](#), [Salted](#), [The Meadow](#), [Toro Bravo](#)

Reactions: