**Blog 8 Portland**

4th July dawned bright and sunny and off we set to find some breakfast, not at dawn admittedly. Target: Mississippi Rd. The NE section of this street along with the same on Williams and a portion of N Alberta have become some of ‘the’ places to go for cafes, food trucks and altogether fun food and hangout experiences. The area around Le Pigeon and a bit further south on SE Division also offer some of the ‘must’ places to go….like I said we just didn’t have enough meals to go round, but fear not I shall provide a list at the end of the day, after the fireworks!

Not sure what would be open we thought Mississippi might be the best bet. Like our walk to and fro Le Pigeon, to wander along the streets in this area is a delight. Everyone is doing their thing with their house and garden, sometimes one can’t tell where one finishes and the other begins. As a local reinforced, in this town people don’t have lawns. They have gardens. They plant. Veggies, fruits and flowering stuff in between. Some are extremely manicured others wonderfully, organically wild. Portlanders are into recycling and sustainability and knowing where their food comes from. They even plant on the curb. I have never seen such productive curb sides. We are inspired to extend our garden production when we get home. I wonder what the council will think….

But back to breakfast. The world cup was happening again as we walked past the first bar. A bit further down the street we found a likely coffee stop, but only cabinet food, though it did look good. Just across the road we spotted a small gathering. [Gravy](http://www.eatatgravy.com/). We added our name to the list, maybe a half hour wait, not a hardship on a sunny morning with a coffee opportunity just across the road. So back to [the Fresh Pot](http://www.thefreshpot.com/) for a takeaway and a buckwheat and fig pinwheel scone while we waited for my name to be called. The coffee and scone were so good I returned to check what time they opened the next day so we could stop in for a fix before we hit the 101 and the expected 9 hour trip down the coast to Eureka.

My name was called for a couple of seats on the bar in Gravy with a view directly into the kitchen. Like the chefs in the Streamliner Diner back on Bainbridge these guys were well versed in what they were doing. But they took it a step further. They provided entertainment. Perhaps fuelled by our avid attention the spatula and pan flipping, egg and hash tossing reached new heights. If you ever have a chance, this is a place to check out. Like the Streamliner the menu was extensive, the variations seemingly endless. She constructed her own scrambled eggs, with hash on the side while I opted for a small stack. The food arrived in its enormity. A little more greasy spoon than the Streamliner but delicious in a hearty sort of way. The small stack consisted of two half inch thick buttermilk pancakes each the size of a dinner plate. Goodness knows what a large stack might consist of! Her scrambled eggs piled high the side of crispy golden hash arriving on a separate plate, a meal in itself. Rather than practising the usual restraint she consumed the lot and is now looking forward to lunch two days on….apparently she was undertaking a nutritionally inspired investigation into food consumption…

The morning’s entertainment replete we wandered on down Mississippi. This is a spot to come to check out the food truck scene. Unfortunately we could only look. If only one could rent a stomach for a day…

Probably because I was fast running out of undies it was in my zone of comprehension. Portland is now maybe moving on from food trucks and into the next realm…funky internet café Laundromats. I kid you not. Never has a Laundromat looked more like a place I’d like to hang out for a few hours!

After a few hours of serious digestive work we ventured back out onto the streets to find [Ox](http://oxpdx.com/) and a dinner date with Bree and Kurt our table mates from Le Pigeon. We passed by [Ned Ludds](http://nedluddpdx.com/) again, having stopped in earlier. Luckily they were doing a wedding function that day as choosing between Ox and Ned’s would have presented a conundrum for our last meal in Portland. We had a chat and came away with a menu and a recommendation for a meal in San Francisco. A booking now secured.

Ox is described as Argentinian inspired Portland food. We left it to Bree the sommelier to choose the wine and being a table of four gave us more leeway to order more dishes to sample. Perhaps this should become the strategy for the rest of the trip…but even then we could only choose a portion of what we would have liked to have tried. The empanadas are a must but the highlight was the Fresh clam chowder with smoked marrow bone served in the bone, a spoon provided to scrap it out and mix it into the wonderfully light broth. The meal overall just another reinforcement why cooking over direct flame is becoming increasingly popular. The Uruguayan Beef Ribeye and Wild Alaskan Halibut crisp and juicy and true. The most joyful and surprising part of the meal aside from the company were the desserts. Each of us had our favourite, for me the maple corn pannacotta topped with mini caramelised donuts and fresh berries. I can do something with that!

Bree and Kurt were off down to the riverfront to join 40,000 others for the evening’s celebrations and fireworks. Mindful of a long walk home afterwards, an early start and a double marathon journey on the right (wrong) side of the road the next day we did the responsible thing and wandered home for an earlier night….Cept it wasn’t. As our Air BnB host warned us, on the 4th of July Americans like to ‘blow things up’. We didn’t need to see the main event downtown, we had our own main event going on in the middle of the street next door.

As we left near dawn the next morning, fuelled by our Fresh Pot coffee and buckwheat fig scone we rued the shortness of our stay, amazed at our experiences and realised we hadn’t even ventured into downtown Portland. More than enough to return for:

* [Ava Genes](http://avagenes.com/) is considered by some THE place in Portland currently
* [Beast](http://www.beastpdx.com/), strangely enough known as a carnivorous sort of heaven
* [The Woodsman](http://woodsmantavern.com/), apparently for the best ever hamburger
* [Pok Pok](http://www.pokpokpdx.com/), but go to the bar not the restaurant as everyone goes for the chicken wings which one can get at the bar rather than queueing at the restaurant…
* [Olympic Provisions](http://www.olympicprovisions.com/) for lunch
* [Broder](http://www.broderpdx.com/) café (Swedish inspired breakfast and brunch fare)
* [Clyde Common](http://www.clydecommon.com/)
* [Bar Avignon](http://www.baravignon.com/)
* [The Multnomah Whiskey Library](http://www.multnomahwhiskeylibrary.com/)