

# Northwest *palate*

FOOD, WINE & TRAVEL OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

## AMAZING PLATES

at the International Pinot Noir Celebration

**Plus:**

Journey to  
Basqueland

Asian Night  
Markets

Blooming  
in Bellevue

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*Sip* into  
Summer  
Tasting Notes  
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## Blooming Bellevue

### Pearl Bar and Dining

700 Bellevue Way NE, Bellevue, WA  
425-455-0181, [pearlbellevue.com](http://pearlbellevue.com)

**WA** This restaurant is flat-out beautiful, and Bradley Dickinson cooks what diners love, like Dungeness crab cakes with shaved fennel and apple salad, rather than what the chef decides you want to eat.

Menus follow the seasons and Chef Dickinson uses local ingredients as much as possible. Recently a Columbia River sturgeon was rich and heady, sparked by fresh ginger in the sauce, and roasted chicken with wild mushrooms was tender and fully flavored. The Sunday Supper menu is a bargain with \$15 entrées and \$15 bottles of wine like the 2006 O-S Winery Red and a 2006 Di Stefano Sauvignon Blanc.

The Northwest-empowered wine list has 44 wines by the glass, with the likes of Hudson Shaw 2007 Viognier, Chatter Creek 2007 Pinot Gris, and 2005 Côt Pinot Noir from the Willamette Valley.

Lush grays and vibrant creams color the modern interior, and you can opt to dine at the chef's table or behind a silk curtain. Local winemakers, bon vivants, or sports stars may be sitting next to you, and the mood here is set to enjoy, rather than revere, your dinner.

The bar in front vibrates during happy hour. Classy cocktail choices include a whiskey, lime, and lemon sour and the Perfect Pearl Martini built on Cascade Mountain gin or Crater Lake vodka—your call. But the real draw is just beyond, in the dining room full of good food.

Open daily for lunch and dinner. Happy Hour: Daily from 3–6pm, and again from 9pm–close.



The chef's table at Pearl Bar and Dining crowns the posh interior.

### El Gaucho

450 108th Ave. NE, Bellevue, WA  
425-455-2715, [elgaucho.com](http://elgaucho.com)

**WA** This luxe restaurant in the City Center Plaza building was built for cushy, joyous dining. From the floor-to-ceiling windows and the spiffy patent leather bar in front, to the rust, brown, and black dining room, it's a class act all the way. For meetings and special evenings, there are six private dining rooms with Washington wine themes, and the Horse Heaven room is an actual wine cellar. It's definitely where you'll want to celebrate the next market boom, or even a boomlet.

As usual for El Gaucho, the food is stellar and the drinks are strong. The certified Angus beef is dry-aged for 28 days, and that makes it not only complex and delicious but a relative bargain for lunch at such a posh place. To wit, the flat iron steak with caramelized onions is \$18.

For dinner you'll find the classic Caesar salad made tableside, the tenderloin on a flaming sword, or a celebratory 24-ounce Porterhouse chop. Follow them up with one of the flambeé desserts—Bananas Foster or Cherries Jubilee—set on fire right in front of you, while live jazz soothes in the background. Could you really ask for more?

Drop by the Broker's Happy Hour from 1–3pm for juicy financial gossip or the regular 3–6pm Happy Hour and maybe, just maybe, you'll forget the "ow" (formerly "wow") of the Dow for now.

Open daily for lunch and dinner. Broker's Happy Hour: Monday through Friday from 1–3pm. Power Hour Happy Hour: Monday through Friday from 3–6pm.



The serpentine-shaped bar snakes its way through El Gaucho's expansive lounge at its new Bellevue location.