

MT. RAINIER
NATIONAL PARK



> LOCAL FLAVOR

Gorge Yourself

Order up this roadhouse's tantalizing appetizer.

AMONG THE MANY striking natural attractions of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, one man-made concoction holds its own: the goat cheese and sun-dried tomato torta at the Big River Grill (509.427.4888; www.bigrivergrill.us) in Stevenson.

A torta, depending on the cuisine, might refer to a dessert or a sandwich, but this version is a superior spread. Proprietor Joe Schlick (who co-owns the joint with his wife, Patty) serves up a warm disk of goat cheese, drizzles it with olive oil and balsamic vinegar, and surrounds it with twin scoops of sun-dried tomato pesto and a few soft roasted garlic cloves. Diners are forgiven if they forgo a knife and dip the warm baguette that comes on the side straight into the creamy, aromatic treat.

The chewy bread adds to the homey feel of this comfortably upscale roadhouse, which has been a fixture along river-hugging State Route 14 since 1993. Wooden booths and walls covered in river memorabilia invite visitors to settle in for a leisurely meal.

TRIP TIP

With Stevenson's citywide Wi-Fi, you can go online almost anywhere.

The main menu at Big River Grill offers fish, vegetarian, and pasta dishes alongside steak, pork, sandwiches, burgers, and meatloaf. The

bar list spotlights area microbreweries and vintners, as well as root beer brewed on the premises. Schlick makes a fresh batch every three days so that foam fans of all ages can enjoy a traditional root beer float or a quart jar on the go. —MIKE GREENSTEIN

NAMING RIGHTS

The true story behind Mount Rainier's moniker

TO LOCALS, Mount Rainier doesn't need a name. At 14,411 snowcapped and majestic feet, this volcanic peak towers so emphatically over the Seattle-Tacoma scene that residents all across west-central Washington simply refer to it as "The Mountain." But it wasn't always so easy. For 56 years, Rainier was involved in one of the bitterest custody disputes Washington has ever seen.

In the late 1800s, Tacomans began lobbying for universal use of the mountain's Native American moniker, Mount Tacoma, asserting that Peter Rainier was an obscure rear admiral who never visited the Northwest and actually fought *against* the American colonies during the Revolutionary War. (They also hoped that a name change would soak their namesake city in tourist dollars.) Seattleites countered that a name change would be expensive and bring mass confusion. After setting into motion untold numbers of historical and scientific studies, and making three formal appeals to the U.S. Board of Geographic Names, Tacoma finally admitted defeat in 1939.

On clear days, it's easy to see why so many would want to claim this mountain as their own. Rainier's rocky shoulders bear 35 square miles of snow and ice year-round, making it the most glaciated mountain in the continental United States. And each year, about two million visitors head to Mt. Rainier National Park (www.nps.gov/mora) to hike the

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