



### A Tasty Dinette in EastSide

As a student at New York University studying urban sociology, Sonja Finn of Shadyside wrote her senior thesis about East Liberty and the urban planning that took place there in the late 1960s and early '70s. It was a project that most agree spelled doom for the once-thriving neighborhood.

Today East Liberty is on the rebound, and Finn is now part of its exciting revitalization, having just last month opened Dinette, a "California Mediterranean-style" café specializing in personal pizzas, in the new EastSide complex.

"I've been away from Pittsburgh for 11 years," says Finn. "When I visited my parents, I was really shocked to see Whole Foods go up and see people going into East Liberty who would never go there before." So she came home to be a part of it.

During her 11 years away, Finn veered off her urban sociology course and went to the Culinary Institute of America. (She caught the bug spending her college summers working as a prep cook at the defunct Baum Vivant Restaurant in Shadyside.) After graduation from the CIA, she spent several years cooking at restaurants including James Beard award winners Magnolia Grill in Durham, North Carolina, and Zuni Café in San Francisco. She resigned from her last position as Chef at the Rotunda Restaurant in San Francisco to open Dinette.

Bringing a California sensibility with her, Finn is committed to a fresh, simple menu and local and organic ingredients. Her thin-crust, personal pizzas, which run from \$13 to \$15, combine such ingredients as goat cheese, lardons (rendered cubes of bacon), grilled leeks, and mozzarella, or grilled eggplant, oil-cured olives, mozzarella, and tomatoes. Her menu also features a wine list that changes weekly—no bottle priced above \$44—and creative starters.



The restaurant is located on the upper level of EastSide, next to Borders. "I picked the space because of the windows," says Finn. "You couldn't ask for better scenery to surround you—Motor Square Garden, East Liberty Presbyterian. Sometimes the church looks like it's painted on the sky. It's really beautiful."

The ornate church spires stand in stark contrast to the sleek, modern, interior of the restaurant,

which features an open kitchen, a bamboo bar top, and eco-friendly tables and chairs.

"I'm pushing for everything to be sustainable," says Finn, who uses only energy efficient equipment and supplies and has implemented programs for reuse, recycling, and composting.

*Info: Dinette, EastSide, 5996 Penn Circle South, East Liberty • 412-362-0202, Tuesday through Thursday, 5 to 10; Friday and Saturday, 5 to 11; www.dinette-pgh.com*



### Six of One, Half-Dozen of an Eyetique

Norman Childs is becoming the king of eyewear, at least in Pittsburgh—and potentially beyond. He recently opened his sixth Eyetique, this one at the SouthSide Works, and he warns customers not to get lost inside it.

"It's a gigantic location," he says with a laugh, describing the 275-square-foot shop. (For reference, that's even smaller than the Walnut Street location.) But it's big on personality. "It's a whimsical store," says Childs. "It's colorful and bright, with flat-screen TVs. It's a lot of fun; a great environment to be in."

And it's stocked with eyewear targeted to appeal to the South Side Works shopper. "It's more of an impulse store. Price points are a little lower," explains Childs. "We have a lot of cool, fun products there, and we have our regular core products." That would include lines like Oliver Peebles, Paul Smith, and, of course, Norman Childs Eyewear. Also look for a new line, ic! berlin, which features German frames made of

hammered titanium. The line is being introduced at the SouthSide Works store before being rolled out to the others.

So why open another store? "We're spreading the Eyetique brand out a bit," says Childs. "One of the business models we have is a small location, and we've been very successful with it in Shadyside." So successful that Childs is exploring taking it to other cities. "I'm going to D.C. to scope out and see if this model will work in that area. It needs a lot of foot traffic to work."

Childs is quick to point out that customer service is one of the keys to his success, noting that, even in the smaller stores, eyeglasses can be made to order quickly. "We have our own in-house courier service," he explains. "If someone needs glasses in an hour or two, we can have them made."

*Info: Eyetique, South Side Works, 436 South 27th Street, Southside, 412-431-2222, Monday through Saturday, 10 to 9; and Sunday, noon to 6; www.eyetique.com*