

THIS WEEK'S DINING

FOOD FINDS, RESTAURANT NEWS AND DINING TRENDS

By MICHAEL C. ZUSMAN

RAISING A TOAST — It is hard to imagine a better sign of neighborhood revitalization than a family-friendly, good-food-focused cafe opening in a former adult book store in Southeast Portland. That is the side story of Woodstock newcomer **Toast**.

For the owner, Donald Kotler, a longtime restaurant hand, Toast is a twist on his dream to open a place selling "waffles and beer." The reality is a brunch stop serving simple dinners, after input from nearby residents.

Brunch, served five days a week, emphasizes original takes on the morning meal. Most impressive, all the baked goods are made in house, including three kinds of bread, English muffins and multiple pastries and turnovers. It takes real dedication for a tiny place like this, with fewer than 30 seats, to do its own baking.

Menu items can be as simple as "That's a Flapjack" (\$7.50), two sizable pancakes with real maple syrup and a slice of house-cured "griddle ham," or as elaborate as the "Benedict oh," (\$9) with homemade sau-



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Homemade goods are the specialty at Donald Kotler's new Toast, including three kinds of bread, English muffins and turnovers.

sage instead of Canadian bacon, béarnaise sitting in for the hollandaise, and the addition of

chard, presumably for color. A sandwich of fried eggs, cured pork and shaved gouda on toast

is served with potato rosti, a hash-brown variation in which the potatoes are boiled,

shredded, mixed with egg yolk, then griddle-fried (\$7.50).

Toast has been open only a few weeks, but the good food and Kotler's intention to run a fun place where folks can feel comfortable is playing well with patrons, especially those who live within walking distance. They sell adult beverages, by the way, but bring your own reading material.

Toast is at 5222 S.E. 52nd Ave.; 503-774-1020; Brunch 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Wednesday-Sunday, dinner 5:30-9:30 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday.