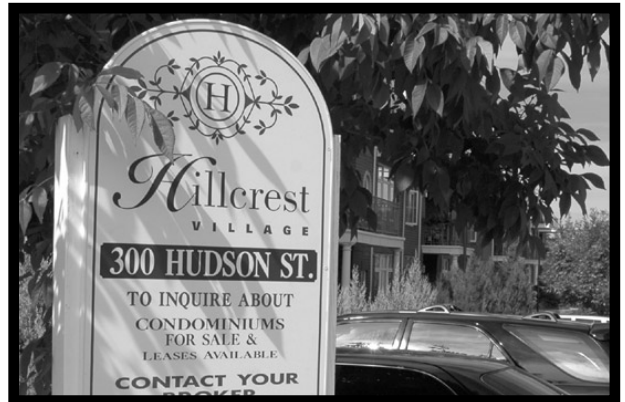




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# Choice Shopping in Hilltop & Crestmoor

SPENCER TRACY ONCE DESCRIBED CO-STAR Katharine Hepburn as having “not much meat on her, but what’s there is cherce (choice).” Savvy shoppers know that the same is true about Hudson Place, a tiny plaza at the corner of Third Avenue and Holly Streets tucked in between the Hilltop and Crestmoor neighborhoods. Although the selection of shops and eateries is small, each offers exceptional goods and services.

## THE CHEESE COMPANY

Say cheese. Say it hard or soft, with rinds or without, imported or domestic. However you say it, the knowledgeable staff at the Cheese Company will find it for you. This gourmet emporium began in the Belcaro Center in 1976 and relocated to Hudson Place six years ago where it is now a neighborhood hangout as well as destination for metro area cheeseheads.

Although cheese is the focus, the Cheese Company offers delectable sandwiches and

prepared entrées. During my visit, folks popped in to order the Number 4 (lean roast beef with herb cream cheese, tomato and lettuce on ciabatta) and the Number 8 (house made chicken salad piled on sourdough bread). These sandwiches, \$6.25, served with chips, are hefty enough to satisfy a good-sized appetite. If you’re really hungry, add a salad and a lemon bar, brownie or freshly baked cookie all for \$9.50.

After tucking into lunch, check out the shop’s small, but well-selected, variety of



gourmet grocery items including crackers, sauces, relishes, fresh baguettes and drinks. I was intrigued by the Fentiman Victorian Lemonade from England as well as the lemon and raspberry wasabi sauces. The Cheese Company is also a wonderful place to put together a hostess basket of epicurean goodies.

#### **HOLLYHOCKS FINE CHILDREN'S APPAREL**

I must 'fess up—I'm a sucker for baby clothes, even though my daughter is only 20 years old and grandchildren are a long way off. That said, I have never seen a more beautiful collection of timeless children's wear than what Tami Budish has pulled together at Hollyhocks. It's no surprise that moms from the shopping meccas of San Francisco, Chicago and Beverly Hills order from Hollyhocks when they want classic styles for their children.

With 35 years of experience in the children's clothing business, Budish is an expert when it comes to picking out togs for communions, flower girls, cotillion, portraits or any occasion when kids need to shine. Everything from layette collections, to size 10 separates, is beautifully made with exquisite detailing. The girls' party dresses would fit

right in at a royal wedding. Miniature prep looks for boys include navy blazers, wool dress shorts and pinstriped shirts with button down collars. Complete layette collections including clothing, bedding and imported cradles are available. Accessories to complement any look include hair ornaments, socks, slippers, jewelry and shoes. A pair of pink sequined Mary Janes with delicate satin rosettes was almost too cute for words.

Not surprisingly, all this elegance doesn't come cheap. However, Budish is happy to accommodate a budget—she can come up with a lovely baby gift for \$25. And if you're inclined to save them, the clothes can be worn by your family's next generation of tots. Be sure to rub Alexander the stuffed bear's snout on your way into the store.

#### **HILLCREST GRILL**

When the working folks of Hilltop and Crestmoor aren't up to cooking dinner, they head for the HillCrest Grill. Open Tuesday through Sunday, from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m., the Grill serves simple, yet tasty, fare. Fun starters include "mini" pot roast sandwiches and burgers, mussels in a spicy tomato broth and the Grill's special spinach dip served with ciabat-

ta bread. Main courses include build-your-own sandwiches, pastas, the house meatloaf, veal Marsala, steak of the night and a pan sautéed salmon. The comfort food desserts include crisps, mud pie and ice cream.

Traditional kids' offerings include chicken tenders, mac and cheese, ravioli and burgers. Order your children's food quickly, let them gulp it down and send them off to play in the kids corral. Then order dinner and a lovely glass of wine and enjoy your meal and some adult conversation in peace.

No kids? Head to HillCrest for Happy Hour from 4 – 6 p.m., with half-priced munchies and well drinks, domestic beer and house wine for just \$2. Sunday brunch is served from 10 – 2. ■

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