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Inkwell at the Press Hotel

Mixing Business with Pleasure

If you're working after hours why *not* make it somewhere special?
 Discover the best places in the city to seal a deal over a drink.

BY KAREN HOFREITER

IT'S SAID THAT the most important business is conducted on the golf course, not in the office. But when the weather turns chilly, you've got to bring you're A-game indoors. Luckily, Portland is home to a host of savvy restaurants and bars perfectly suited for mixing cocktails and contracts or dinner and deals.

WHERE THE CLOSERS GO

No one knows the best places to woo clients better than Portland's top professionals. For

John Hatcher, owner of The Hatcher Group of Keller Williams Realty, the **Cumberland Club** means a done deal. "The Cumberland Club is one of Portland's undiscovered jewels where I can meet with clients in a discrete location in the heart of downtown. The food is outstanding—the lobster BLT is the best lobster sandwich in Portland—as well as the craft cocktails and signature drinks. The staff knows every member's name, and my guests are always made to feel special." From the Club's impres-



TOP: KERI HERER, INKWELL AT THE PRESS HOTEL; LOWER RIGHT: TOP OF THE EAST, THE WESTIN PORTLAND HARBORVIEW

PORTLAND AFTER DARK



Clockwise from above: **Hunt + Alpine** on Market Street boasts a creative menu of cocktails in a minimalist Scandinavian-inspired setting; members of Maine Women's Newtwork enjoy sunset at the **Top of the East**; get some fresh air after a long day in the office at the **Treehouse Cafe and Lounge**; and cozy up to the bar at the **Cumberland Club**.

sive white-columned entrance to its stately Victorian-style dining room and bar (complete with chandeliers, fireplace, and crown molding), one can smell sweet success. The Club offers private meeting rooms, three cozy living rooms, and the “Chamberlain Bar” named for Joshua Chamberlain who was a member of the club.

Nicole Olivier, author and owner of the literary events company BookSpeak, likes to keep it casual and low-key. “It’s fun to talk books with an author at the **Hunt + Alpine Club**, with its crisp, Scandinavian atmosphere and cleverly crafted bartending. Their cocktails also honor the ’50s with a twist, not to mention their windows on Tommy’s Park and people-watching if you sit at the counter, waiting for your guest to arrive. For a quiet, cozy neighborhood feel, definitely [head to] the **Treehouse Cafe and Lounge**.” Olivier recently met with **Ann Beattie** (*The State We’re In*) at **Pai Men Miyake** on Longfellow Square.

“Small, quiet and a bit off the main drag” is how Tom Landry, broker/owner of Benchmark Real Estate, describes his favorite places to charm clients. “For a quick meeting with drinks and apps, it’s **Lolita** in the East End. It has a great local beer selection and in-



ventive cocktails (clients love the Boss Lady II). The staff knows me and is always polite, helpful, casual, and welcoming—a rare blend. If I really want to impress and have time for dinner, it’s off to my new absolute favorite: the **Drifter’s Wife**. Owners Peter and Orenda Hale and the staff are among the most knowledgeable of food and beverage of anywhere we’ve dined. Clients are always impressed by the simple, ingredient-centric dishes.”

Other favorites for sophisticated schmoozing include the **Top of the East**, with its spectacular panoramic city views and decor that reminds us of a hotel in

Reykjavik, so it may be the perfect spot to negotiate with our Eimskip friends; the indigo-hued, modern and airy **Glass Lounge**; and the sleek and studios **Inkwell** (pictured previous page), where contracts are certain to get, well, inked.

TOAST OF THE TOWN

If it’s potential clients, partners, or just like-minded industry folks you are looking to meet, Portland’s numerous lively networking events are the way to go. Events hosted by the **Maine Women’s Network** are a great example of what can be expected: top locations (e.g., Portland Country Club, Top of



the East), light hors d'oeuvres, and a large crowd of all ages representing a wide range of industries (corporate, healthcare, education). "Our organization is about women supporting women to grow their professional and leadership skills through networking and education. Attendees have really enjoyed the speakers we feature and

love the open networking event. It's an opportunity to create collaborations," says Kris McCrea, Chair of the Portland Chapter MWN.

Many networking groups are tailored to certain interests; for example, **Greendrinks** is for those with an interest in sustainability and the environment, while **Think Local** is especially for individuals and small businesses and spotlights local non-profits. Young professionals will want to check out **PROPEL**, which hosts themed events including "Welcome to Maine" for newcomers; "Portland Eats!" for foodies; and "Live from the C-Suite" for picking the brains of the top execs in town. **Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce** events are key to getting to know the movers and shakers in the local business community. ■

The Cumberland Club: 116 High Street, Portland, 773-6402, cumberlandclub.org; membership required

Hunt and Alpine Club: 75 Market Street, Portland, 747-4754, huntandalpineclub.com

Treehouse Cafe and Lounge: 484 Stevens Avenue, Portland, 874-0706

Lolita: 90 Congress Street, 775-5652, lolita-portland.com

The Drifter's Wife: 63 Washington Avenue, 805-1336; drifterswife.com

Top of the East: Westin Portland Harborview Hotel, 157 High Street, 207-775-5411, topoftheeast.com

Glass Lounge: Hyatt Place Portland, 433 Fore Street, 207-775-1000

Inkwell: 119 Exchange Street, Press Hotel, 207-808-8800, thepresshotel.com

Maine Women's Network: open networking evening events the 3rd Thursday of every month. mainewomensnetwork.com

Greendrinks: second Tuesday of every month, 5:30 p.m. portlandgreendrinks.com

Think Local: Business Mixers. thinklocalnetworking.com

PROPEL: propelportland.org; After Hours events. propelportland.org

Portland Regional Chamber of Business: "Business After Five" events. portlandregion.com.

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