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Breakfast Club

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Hope you loved your 8 great dates.
Because on the very next morning...

BY CLAIRE Z. CRAMER

Sunlight pours through the plate-glass front window into **Piccolo's** snug dining room. By night, this busy bistro serves clever spins on the country Italian dishes of Calabria and Abruzzi—hearty lamb ragu on house-made pasta, roasted Maine goat, calamari—to eager throngs.

Sunday mornings bring order and brunch: varnished butcher-block tabletops and striped linen napkins are precisely aligned in the upscale-rustic/urban-minimal dining room. Piccolo's Italian peasant menu refreshes American brunch.

"If your first instinct is the 'Campagna,' go with it," says Kelly. "It's got everything you want." How did she know? She brings two poached eggs on creamy, dreamy, mascarpone-spiked polenta sharing a shallow bowl with house-made sausages and toast-

TOP: MEAGHAN MAURICE; BELOW: FILIPP KOTSISHEVSKIY



HUNGRY EYE



To the Source Who'd know more about the Breakfast Club, and getting real, than **Judd Nelson**? "For many years now, ever since I was a little boy, my favorite breakfast spot in Portland has been the **Miss Portland Diner**," says Nelson, the Portland native; card-carrying member of the Brat Pack; and co-star, with Emilio Estevez, Anthony Michael Hall, Ally Sheedy, and Molly Ringwald, in the 1985 John Hughes classic film *The Breakfast Club*.



have spaghetti carbonara for breakfast—hey, it's bacon and eggs. And you can feel like a wealthy Neapolitan, sipping Matt's Wood-Roasted dark roast from a chic, clear glass cup and saucer as you sit in the window, reading your paper, gazing out at your city.

Hustle & Flow

Or you can show up at **Bintliff's** and plunge into the cheerful, controlled chaos within one of the city's most popular and enduring (25 years) brunch palaces. At 8:30 a.m., there's a line out the door onto Portland Street.

A fleet of athletic servers in black t-shirts hefting four and five huge china plates at once are navigating the crowds and ascending the steep staircase like gazelles. This goes on seven days a week.

At the four-stool "breakfast bar" upstairs, endless bloody marys are made in pint glasses—vodka and tomato mix; shake-shake-shake; celery-olive-lemon-wedge; *go*. The red leather upholstery on the barstools and booths, the polished wood trim and paneling, the smooth Sinatra sound track, the framed accolades from national travel mags, and the garden patio seating all contribute to a *louche*

French Quarter vibe.

A river of hollandaise sauce flows through Bintliff's kitchen every day. If you're not in the mood for eggs benedict, there's a wonderful Belgian waffle; it's crisp and light, vanilla-flavored, and drenched in real maple syrup with a dab of whipped cream. Perfect with a strong cup of Coffee By Design's "Bintliff's Blend" coffee.

"It's about two points off one of their darkest roasts," explains one of the black t-shirts as he pours, "so you can pretty much drink it all day long." He disappears down the stairs.

You might think you've outgrown Bintliff's since your Sunday-morning-coming-down days of oyster frittatas and piles of sweet-potato homefries, but you never really do.

True Grits

Bacon and coffee perfume rushes out as **Hot Suppa's** front door opens. In nearly nine years on the Longfellow Square restaurant Gold Coast, this cheerful cafe has earned a huge following. Weekend mornings, the waiting line stretches out the door, but on a weekday the breakfast crowd is manageable.

One wall in the foyer has been painted in flame orange tones across which a black silhouette of a Mardi Gras parade and musicians marches. Someone at the next table has just been served a platter of biscuits drenched in tawny sausage gravy with scrambled eggs and finely grated hash browns.

"My brother Moses went to college at Seawane, in Tennessee," says co-owner Alec

ed slices of "breakfast focaccia" jazzed with golden raisins and fennel seeds. This may be one of polenta's greatest moments.

There are greens braised in olive oil with fried eggs and toast, a frittata, or Ilma's zepoli (classy doughnut holes). You can even



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L-R FROM TOP: ROBERT MAGINA; THE BREAKFAST CLUB; BINTLIFF'S BY DYLAN QUINN; LOBSTER BENEDICT BY JOAQUIN MALLMANN; PICCOLO BY MEREDITH PERDUE

Sabina. “He and his friends started going to Mardi Gras every year—he still does. He fell in love with that cuisine.”

The Sabina brothers—Portland natives—have polished the diner breakfast to a high shine. The coffee’s hot and strong; the napkins are paper; and the aluminum cake pans on every formica-top table hold salt, pepper, a sugar canister, and a spectrum of condiments from sweet to heat: Heinz, McIlhenny, Texas Pete’s, and nearly quart-size bottles of Sriracha. You might be ravenous, you might be hung over, but you’re reassured.

Sunny-side-ups arrive perfectly quivery. The bread’s from Sorella’s Bakehouse on Anderson Street, so the toast is excellent. Sausage links are fat and juicy.

The grits are in their own league, impossibly creamy, pale yellow, coarse-ground. “There’s nothing in them except butter,” says a server. “A good amount of butter, but that’s it.”

Alec explains later. “We order the grits from Geechie Boy Mill in Edisto Island, South Carolina. We serve classics like barbecue shrimp and grits for dinner, and something we call Hot Cat—catfish in spicy butter sauce on grits. The grits are a main character. We couldn’t use instant.”

Bontemps

“Start you off with some coffee, hon?”

It’s 7:20 a.m. on a weekday morning; the **Bayou Kitchen** is already hopping with Van



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HUNGRY EYE

muffins; hollandaise blankets everything. A spinach omelet is fluffy and tasty. The home fries are undistinguished.

Marcy's is the downtown weekday red-eye go-to. A diner in a time machine with a classic counter, backless round pedestal stools and big, deep booths, it's open at 6 a.m. Cash-only here, and no mystery: boxes of Kellogg's and loaves of sliced Country Kitchen are all right out there on shelves, and the waitresses are friendly in a mildly bossy way. It's cheap. Two eggs, plenty of bacon, a nicely grilled English muffin, and hash-browns that are finely shredded and crusted are yours for \$6.

Any Given Sunday

The one peril of Sunday brunch in Portland is that everyone else is out there going for it, too.

On a sunny autumn Sunday morning, an impromptu attempt to find brunch at around 11 a.m. starts at the **Front Room** on Munjoy Hill. This cafe is the home of the utterly brilliant gnocchi/eggs benedict combo plate, and it's always busy. It's like a movie set on Sundays—a raucous, packed, surging party. Not so much as an empty barstool. I retreat to the West End and set out on foot. **Caiola's** for house-smoked salmon with a bagel and fixin's? Not a chance—every seat's taken and a cluster is waiting. Hot Suppa has a line out on the sidewalk. **Local 188** is mobbed, so forget the *huevos*. I'm starting to get hungry and not a little panicked. Back in the car and up Forest



Morrison and Merle Haggard on the soundtrack; and tiny, smiling Christine Hess is doing the heavy lifting. Local favorites Lost Woods hot sauce and Captain Mowatt's Canceau Sauce stand on the table with a dish of foil-wrapped butter pats. The thick ceramic mugs are not ironic. The atmosphere and the middle-aged, golf-capped chef are authentic. No hipsters in sight.

The joint underwent a significant spiffing in 2012; now the walls are squash-yellow with forest green and purple trim, the tile floor is spotless, and the stainless exhaust hood and ductwork gleam. A gigantic wooden alligator clings to the back wall; there's a mounted bookshelf of assorted hot sauces; the wall behind the chef's steel prep table is decorated with another row of hot sauce bottles and a couple of Mardi Gras masks. The menu's theme is Cajun—sausages, jambalaya, gumbo, crawfish. What's with this town and New Orleans?

Chef Theodore Parsons presides at a vast griddle, turning a mountain of browning homefries. "He's been here for years," says manager Patrick Hartford, "Ever since the Village closed down. Knows his stuff."

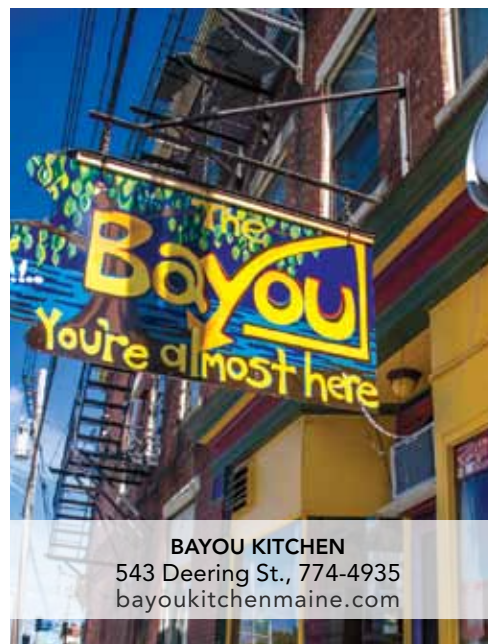
Parsons personally delivers a perfectly executed andouille-and-cheddar omelet. It's old-style, poured out large and thin on the flat-top and then rolled into a long cylinder. A tender, crumbly biscuit is split and toasted and the grits are as hot as lava.

The Trend-Resistant

Some places make an art out of specializing in 'nothin' fancy.'

The refurbished **Porthole** retains the spirit of the old dive. This is the working world. The magic is the location on the wharf. When weather permits sitting out on the deck, you can enjoy the waterfront bustle. Here's a place where you can order a drink from 6 a.m. to 1 a.m.

Portions will feed hangovers. Eggs Florentine come heaped with caramelized onions and sauteed spinach on the English





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HUNGRY EYE



BREA LU
428 Forest Ave. 772-9202.

Avenue, the sight of **Brea Lu's** sign pulls me to a stop under a shady tree on Pitt Street.

Yes! One seat left at the counter, and it's mine. Brea Lu is Old Portland, a cozy place of checkerboard linoleum flooring; a high, handsome tin ceiling with a slow-spinning fan; classic oak booths; and cheerful little signs here and there advising things like *No bitchin' in the kitchen*. Complete strangers make casual small talk.

The pancakes are flying saucers the size of frisbees. But they're heaven: feather-light and delicate, studded with tiny, bright Maine blueberries, topped with a knob of butter and lashings of Maine maple syrup. No way to finish even two. The young guy on the next stool who looks like Jude Law did 15 years ago is flirting with the counter waitress, who looks a little like Katy Perry posing as a USM student. He's working his way through ham and eggs and home fries and toast *and* a stack of two pancakes. *And he's finishing all of it.*

He shrugs. "I just played football. I'm kind of hungry." ■

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We look forward to being of service...

Respectfully Yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Wayne J. Yee, D.D.S., P.C." The signature is written in dark ink on a light background.

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Plasma Arc, Laser, and Digital Dental Technology helps to Create Beautiful Smiles Often in Only One Day!

By: Marianna Gold

A smile that gives self-confidence and happiness is priceless. It can help you to start a new life, or to succeed at that interview for the job that you always wanted. Having a healthy appearance is a quality of life issue that can affect how others see and judge us, and how we see ourselves.

Obtaining High Quality Aesthetic (Cosmetic) Dentistry is easier to achieve than you may think. Just doing a professional 4 session Plasma Arc Bleaching is sometimes all that is needed to brighten a smile. And with today's Laser and ultrasonic filling technology you can in most cases totally avoid local anesthesia using needles. No more pain or hours of numbness. For Crowns the process of Digital Dentistry uses a Computer that guides a porcelain milling robot into the fabrication of custom designed and precisely fitted cosmetic teeth. Crowns/Laminates that could take several weeks to make can now be completed in as little as 1.5 hours.

The following photos were taken of an actual case completed in the office using Computer Assisted Design (CAD), and Computer Automated Milling (CAM) techniques. Temporaries that could easily fall off were not needed. This entire crown case was completed from start to finish in only One Day. Laser white fillings required less than 3 minutes per tooth because no wait time is needed for the patient to get numb. Plasma Arc bleaching helped to balance the colors prior to the start of treatment.



Will people know?

After this "Dental Make Over," few (even close friends) recognized what was done. But they all knew that the patient looked a lot better, and appeared healthier. This phenomena occurs because in conversations people focus more upon each other's eyes -- the teeth are not typically noticed as the immediate source of this healthy



new look, even if within their field of view.

But if the smile looks too white, or too flat, or too perfect the secret is given away and it draws attention immediately to the teeth; in which case they would appear fake. The secret to a perfect smile is by adding imperfections, but in the way that Mother Nature would. Look at the before and after pictures again. See if you can identify the natural teeth from the cosmetic bondings and porcelain crowns. The answer will be in next month's issue.

A Healthy Foundation

In order to have a lasting affect, all Aesthetic Dentistry must start with quality Dental care, healthy gums, and proper hygiene. A comprehensive approach requires your willingness to get your teeth and gums into the best shape possible. This critical effort on your part will greatly increase the life of your Aesthetic Dentistry.

Having a perfect smile is really specific to each individual. One smile cannot fit all. A perfect smile is subjective to the person who wants it, and the environment in which the person intends to be in.

Philosophy of Dental Aesthetics

"In over 20 years of Practice I have learned that the best Aesthetic Dentistry occurs only in an imperfect world. I try my best to copy and maximize the beauty of that imperfect world. Rather than trying to make every tooth geometrically the same I try to lean in the direction that nature's form and function takes me; unique to each individual.

I purposely make teeth ever so slightly 'imperfect' with tiny chips, waves, twists, and turns, but I do so in the way Mother Nature would make these teeth. The net result is a 'perfect smile,' but not a fake smile."

-Quote by Dr. Wayne J. Yee