The Lure of the Ocean is just one reason...

Early Spring
3 Day / 2 Night
Stay N Dine Packages
start at just
$268*
per couple!

For Reservations, call
207-363-5112.

Your beachfront getaway is waiting.

All just a short drive from Portland and Boston. The Anchorage Inn and Resort is a complete oceanfront destination, featuring over 200 rooms and suites, 2 outdoor and 2 indoor swimming pools, Sun and Surf oceanfront dining, a poolside café, fitness center, resort-wide WiFi, and more.

Perfectly situated on Long Sands Beach in York Beach, Maine, directly across from famous Nubble Lighthouse, the Anchorage is close to the Kittery outlets, golf, and boating.

For casual but cool dining anytime, try the Sun and Surf. • Serving seaside breakfast, lunch & dinner • Your favorite cocktails • Eat in, or take out • Entertainment and beachfront deck • Enjoy creative takes on fresh New England seafood and more! On the beach, across from The Anchorage Inn. Ask about our catering & wedding packages! 363-2961

*Restrictions apply. Rates based on time of year. Call for details.
You have to have a little moxie to pay half a million dollars for 5,000-plus square feet of empty building in West Bayside that just last year was one of The Bollard’s “That’s My Dump” targets.

Neil Spillane, who, with business partner Eric Holstein, has purchased a hulking, empty brick warehouse at 72 Parris Street, leads the way into the brick-walled gloom.

“This place started as Hirning’s Bakery. There was the wholesale Alma Florist business for a while. Then it went through a phase as a boxing gym.” In its unrenovated state, illuminated by a few bare bulbs, the brick-walled warehouse does have a certain Fight Club aura.

THE VISION THING

“This is going to be the face of Fork Food Lab,” Spillane says. Fork Food Lab is a self-described “collaborative commercial food kitchen serving new and existing businesses.” Spillane and Holstein are now standing in the square, cinder-block former garage attached to the left side of the 1910 brick building. A few days before renovations begin, the future face of Fork Food Lab doesn’t look like much. But this garage will become a tasting room and shop welcoming retail customers.

An embedded video on the forkfoodlab.com website shows the bleak garage transformed into an airy space with table seating indoors and out, the cinder blocks vanished behind attractive siding. The work is being done by Landmarc Construction of Portland, who also built the clean, handsome interiors of Roustabout, Sur Lie, Central Provisions, and Portland Hunt + Alpine Club.

“People will be able to come right into the tasting room and eat, shop, and see what we’re up to,” says Spillane.

And what they’ll be up to is collaborating with food producers of all sorts who need licensed commercial kitchen space to prepare food for sale and use elsewhere.

“We supply everything—prep space; stoves; ovens; storage; cold storage; and clean, inspected, licensed commercial work space,” says Spillane. “We do all the health

Fork’s tasting room—before and after—and lunch from Fork member Fishin’ Ships food truck.
Fork member Gelato Fiasco’s “innovation lab” will test new flavors and offer classes.

Eric Holstein and Neil Spillane credit Union Kitchen in Washington, D.C., as the model for Fork.

Union Kitchen began in 2012 when Jonas Singer & Cullen Gilchrist opened The Blind Dog Café in D.C. Blind Dog’s chocolate chip cookies became so popular they needed an off-site facility to bake them, which led to the purchase of a 7,500-square-foot warehouse, which led to so much kitchen space they started signing up other food producers to share it. This led to becoming a full-fledged “food incubator” with multiple locations, a distribution network, and a grocery story featuring Union Kitchen members’ foods. Last year, it came full circle. Blind Dog closed and turned into a “permanent pop-up” space for Union Kitchen’s members.

Commonwealth Kitchen in Boston, another inspiration for Holstein and Spillane, calls itself “a collaborative community working to strengthen the local economy, particularly for people who have been impacted by racial, social, and economic inequality. We offer shared kitchens with integrated business assistance, creating and growing dynamic food-based businesses and careers.” They have 45 wholesalers, food trucks, and caterers on board and two commercial facilities.

Also in Boston, Stock Pot Malden, a “culinary incubator,” provides guidance in planning, permitting and regulations, finances and bookkeeping, marketing support, recipe development, and event opportunities. Current members include food trucks, bakers, an omega cooking oil producer, and Boston Chai Party teas.

Spillane says. As winners of a Maine food innovation challenge, part of their prize was six hours of legal services. “We used some of it for the real-estate transaction, but we still have some hours left.”

You also need some smarts and experience. Neil Spillane, 29, a Brunswick native, attended “UMaine at Orono. Then I did an MBA at Quinnipiac University.” Eric Holstein, also 29, is from Westchester, New York, and he attended Colby—“which is when he fell in love with Maine,” says Spillane—and majored in hotel finance.

Spillane comes to Fork from the trench-
es of other small Maine businesses that persevered and got bigger. "I was CFO at Urban Farm Fermentory [which shared its kitchen space on a smaller scale], then moved my way up to CEO," says Spillane. "I had a part-time job with Portland Fruit & Nut Company. I worked summers during college at Pine State Trading, Maine's largest food and beverage distributor."

Holstein was a food and beverage manager for "the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in New York and Boston, and I worked for LRA Worldwide, a subsidiary of Deloitte. I focused specifically on food and beverage consulting. I worked on projects around the world through them—New York, California, Dubai, Singapore."

And then there's location, location, location. Fork Food Lab is on Portland's epicurean peninsula, literally down the street from Back Bay Grill, Bayside American Cafe, and Isa bistro on Portland Street. It's a short walk from Deering Oaks or Monument Square, as well as right off 295 at the Forest Avenue exit.

THE GRAND TOUR
On Fork's first floor, adjacent to the tasting room, will be "Gelato Fiasco's flavor innovation lab," says Spillane. Gelato Fiasco began as two guys with a shop in Brunswick and has become a Maine business success sto-
ry itself, with distribution to stores in most of the 50 states. “This won’t be their main production facility. They’ll be testing flavors and teaching gelato-making classes here.”

“Other things on the first floor will include tables, members’ lockers, a meeting room, offices, ovens, a dishwashing station, dry storage, and walk-in cooler/freezer. The tasting room itself will offer Fork Food Lab members’ products and be staffed by Fork employees.”

The shared commercial kitchen/lab is going on the second floor. The renderings indicate a long room with ovens, stoves, and cold-storage units lining the walls.

STRATEGIC PLANNING
Spillane and Holstein did a lot of homework before deciding to start Maine’s first innovative, collaborative food incubator/commercial kitchen. The tasting room, however, was their own idea.

“Our model was Union Kitchen in Washington, D.C., and places like Commonwealth Kitchen and Stock Pot Malden in Boston,” says Holstein. These are all bigger operations with multiple locations. “New York has them, too, and the city encourages them with grant money.”

Fork has enlisted a few high-profile “think-tank” consultants who will be available to members for advice on branding, labeling, distribution, and legal matters. Among them are Ben De La Cretaz, finance director of Stock Pot Malden; Sen. Justin Alfond (D-Portland), a fellow Bayside entrepreneur and co-owner of Bayside Bowl; Caroline Paras of the Greater Portland Council of Governments; Taja Dochendorf, founder of Pulp + Wire (branding and marketing); attorney Ezekiel Callanan; and Mac McCabe, the veteran sustainable-business guru and former CEO of the O’Naturals restaurants.

It’s worth noting that Holstein and Spillane have so far put Fork together without any crowd-funding campaigns.

“We’re going to have one Kickstarter effort, though, for the retail tasting room. We’ll be announcing it soon,” says Holstein.

WHAT’S COOKING?
So who are these members, other than Gelato Fiasco, and what will they be creating?

“We’re not quite ready to name names, but some of the foods include specialty popcorn, smoked nuts, craft soda, maple syrup, and kale chips,” says Holstein.

Kale chips are still a thing? Spillane laughs. “We try to steer away from calling trends. We’ve also got bakers, caterers, and diet-specific food-ready-to-go.” This last is
prepared meals or prepared ingredients for specific diets such as gluten-free or Paleo.

“Bakers are great for the shared-kitchen concept. They put bread in the oven at 3 a.m., so they’re gone when others come in. We’ve got 32 letters of intent from various businesses already. We’ll cap membership at 50 to start.”

“At this point it looks like about half our members will be specialty-food producers,” says Spillane. “About a one quarter will be food trucks. And the other quarter will be caterers and restaurants—existing businesses that just need another space.” There will be food truck charging stations outside and some overnight parking for food trucks. Sam Gorelick and Arvid Brown of Fishin’ Ships food truck fame are signed up.

This means Fork Food Lab is likely to operate around the clock.

“We’ll have Fork employees running the tasting room and constantly monitoring food safety standards,” says Holstein. “Food safety is absolutely paramount. By law, every new business needs an inspection to start operating. We expect to be inspected all the time.”

—

SHELTON SLATE is a family-owned business with four generations of experience. We mine and manufacture our own slate products from our own quarries. The range of our colors will complement any kitchen or bath. Our slate is heat-resistant, non-porous and non-fading. It has a polished/honed finish and is very low maintenance. Let us help you design and build a custom sink, countertop, or vanity. Custom inquiries are handled through the Monson, Maine, division.

PRODUCERS OF SLATE FLOOR TILE, FLAGGING, STRUCTURAL SLATE AND ROOFING, MONUMENTS AND SLATE SINKS
Monson • Maine 04464 • 207-997-3615 • Middle Granville • New York 12949 • 518-642-1270 • FAX 207-997-2966
WWW.SHELDONSLATE.COM

NEW ENGLAND’S TRUSTED APPRAISAL & AUCTION PROFESSIONALS

“We’re thinking about moving to a smaller place, but we don’t know what our things are worth...”

Find out what your treasures are worth.

• FREE APPRAISAL TUESDAYS
10:00 AM-NOON & 1:30-4:00 PM

• SCHEDULED APPOINTMENTS

• SEND US A PHOTO

THOMASTON AUCTION GALLERIES
51 ATLANTIC HIGHWAY (US ROUTE 1), | THOMASTON, MAINE • 207.354.8141
THOMASTONAUCTION.COM | APPRAISAL@KAJAV.COM