

# What's

It happens every year—  
you look up and discover  
Portland is full of exciting  
new shops and restaurants.

BY MICHAEL SCHOCH

**E**verybody has a different way of saying it, but the sentiment remains the same—Portland is restless and constantly shifting. So take a deep breath and let's see what's new in this old city.

## START DOWNTOWN

Tucked into the former home of Soakology at 30 City Center, **Hero** is a high-class sandwich shop built on big flavors. A collaboration between Congress Street stalwarts Otto and Empire, this is the new power lunch. "You have all these people who have to eat within a very small window of time, and we're at their doorstep," says general manager Max Brody.

The interior is a study in contrasts. A white tile floor is offset by dark bricks and teal paint. A window counter looks out on the banking bustle and panhandling hustle of Monument Square. Vines drape from a suspended ledge above the open kitchen. Hardwood booths with gleaming steel frames complete the motif of paired opposites.

# New?

Brody describes the fare as “refined comfort food”—hearty dishes based around chicken, sirloin, and *porchetta* cooked in a rotisserie oven. The shop’s bread and butter are its sandwiches. The Chicken-and-Chip features rotisserie chicken with salt and vinegar chips, pickled red onion, pickles, buttermilk ranch dressing, and shaved iceberg lettuce. “We make the chips ourselves, and the bread is made for us at Tiqa’s bakery,” Brody says.

Meatless options include an acorn squash or cauliflower sandwich with grilled rabe, portobello, fresh tomato, and mozzarella. Glancing at the cooks hunkered over their prep work, Brody says, “You can get a sandwich at a lot of different places, but it’s elevated to another level here.” Hero has

Big doings on Maine Wharf: The 15,000-square-foot **Portland Science (and Art) Center** will follow its Robot Zoo and Space shows with the summer blockbuster *Titanic* exhibit, including salvaged artifacts and underwater photos of the wreckage. The center shares the wharf with **Scales**, Portland’s latest supernova restaurant.

## DOWNTOWN

### Scales

An 8,000-square-foot, 145-seat, overnight seafood sensation, **Scales** is the latest home run by Dana Street, Sam Hayward, and chef Michael Smith, and it comes with a view. There's a lively bar scene and delicious seafood, such as the mussels and scallops below, served in cast-iron vessels.

"It's a fun space to be in—it gets rocking and very social."

—Michael Burke, Scales general manager



take-home dinner options, including whole and half chickens. The shop will roll out a delivery service soon, and "when the weather warms up a little bit we'll have outdoor seating and be doing pop-up dinners."

**A**round the corner underneath Arabica Coffee is one of Jason Loring's new projects, **Rhum**. The only tiki joint in town, Rhum will make you feel like a tourist as you search for its elusive entrance. General manager Rebecca Ambrosi advises new visitors to "just



look for the octopus and the gas lamps."

Ambrosi says she and her husband and fellow manager, Frank Anderson, were going for the "tiki escapism feel," which they've achieved in an unusual setting. The space is dark—nearly black, with the light coming from multi-colored lanterns and shaded fixtures up high. A bar of blonde wood bisects the space. Abstract paintings with black and blood-red color palettes decorate the perimeter, leaving no doubt that Rhum eschews the Jimmy Buffet vibe entirely in favor of Hawaiian film noir.

There are tiki cocktails like Mai Tais and the Pain Killer—a combo of white rum, pineapple, and coconut. According to Ambrosi, the drink menu "is evolving all the time but will always keep the classics." She describes the food as "elevated

bar snacks," but with beef tartare, celeriac apple salad, and a kimchi *croque madame*, these "snacks" offer flavor and sustenance in equal measure. "We do these giant tow-

Sausage with peppers, onions, mustard, and fresh mozzarella make a tasty sandwich special at **Hero**.



A King Kong Sledgehammer flirts with a Mai Tai at **Rhum**, and yes, the wacky vessels are available for purchase.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: SARAH MORRILL (3); MIKE SCHOCH; COURTESY PHOTOS

ers with oysters, raw scallops, mussels, king crab, and Maine lobsters.”

Heading east into the beating heart of the Old Port’s retail section, you’ll find the first U.S. site of U.K.-based clothing franchise **Fat Face**. At 34 Exchange, among a slew of other boutiques, Fat Face claims a “price point that’s lower than other stores in



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## Thai Garden

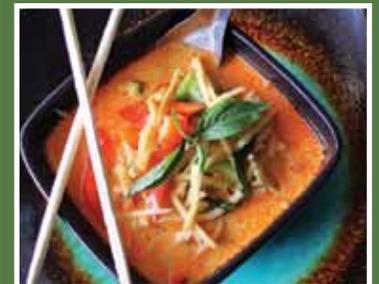
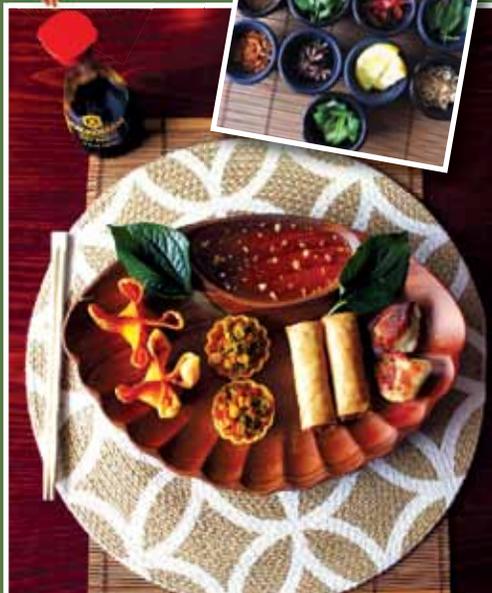
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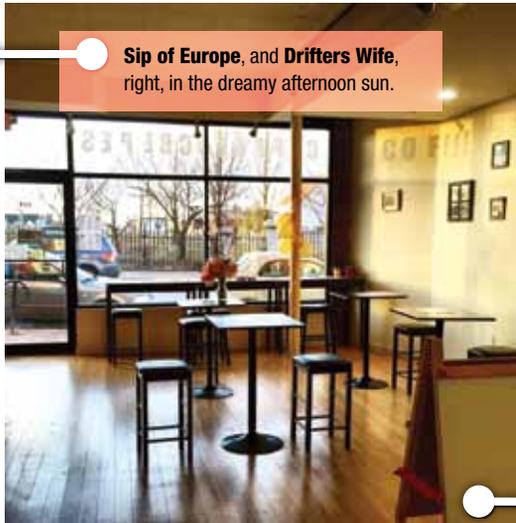


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# DOWNTOWN

the Old Port,” according to manager Tricia Kidwell. Even so, plan on \$65 for jeans.

Formerly occupied by J.L. Coombs, the store now sells what Kidwell categorizes as “casual women’s, men’s, and kids” clothing—colorful and diverse iterations of t-shirts and jeans. The store’s bright interior is balanced by exposed brick walls. Shelves and counters made of what look like distressed



● Sip of Europe, and Drifters Wife, right, in the dreamy afternoon sun.

clapboards cause the word “quaint” to flit through your subconscious.

Once you’re looking sleek in your new casual wear, you may want to pop into **Cara’s Matchmaking** at 53 Exchange. Yes, it’s a *brick-and-mortar* matchmaking service for those who’ve been scorned, bored, or otherwise unimpressed with the world of online dating. Owner Noreen Tierney has years of experience playing Cupid from her successful Biddeford office, and now she’s here in Portland with a full quiver of love-arrows and a dossier of glossy head shots, one of which may be the mug of your future soulmate.

A short walk seaward to Commercial Street you’ll find **Scales**, the new seafood venture owned by partners Dana Street and Victor Leon of Street & Company, and Sam Hayward of Fore Street. With high win-



dows, plenty of light, and a wide-open layout, it’s no wonder crowds flock here.

“It’s a fun space to be in—it gets rocking and very social. Often, guests know each other and mingle like they’re at home,” says general manager Michael Burke.

Burke describes the menu at Scales as “classic New England seafood with a land section capturing meats and produce.” The restaurant gets almost all of its seafood from

COURTESY PHOTOS

<b>MAINE STATE PIER</b> PORTLAND, MAINE 		 <b>Jackson Browne</b> THUR JUNE 9TH		 	
 <b>Rebellion</b> FALLING INTO PLACE SUN JUNE 12TH	 <b>TASTE OF CHAOS</b> DASHBOARD CONFESSIOANAL TAKING BACK SUNDAY WED JUNE 15TH	 <b>FAT JOE</b> <b>POST MALONE</b> <b>TY DOLLA SIGN</b> SAT JUNE 4TH	 <b>Last Summer on Earth</b> BARENAKED LADIES FRI JUNE 24TH	 <b>DAVE MATTHEWS BAND</b> SUMMER TOUR 2016 WED JUNE 8TH	 <b>SAN FRANCISCO FEST 2016</b> <b>JOURNEY</b> <b>Doobie Brothers</b> WED JUNE 22ND
 <b>MELISSA ETHERIDGE</b> <b>M.E. SOLO</b> SUN JUNE 26TH	 <b>the Temptations</b> <b>TEMPTATIONS</b> THUR JULY 7TH	 <b>MATISYAHU</b> SUN JULY 17TH	 <b>DAFYDD I</b> FRI JUNE 24TH	 <b>DARYL HALL</b> <b>JOHN OATES</b> THUR JULY 14TH	 <b>TELESCHI TRUCKS BAND</b> FRI JULY 15TH
 <b>Slightly Stoopid</b> <b>SOJA</b> THUR JULY 21ST	 <b>GEORGE THOROGOOD</b> <b>and the DESTROYERS</b> FRI AUG 5TH	 <b>PHILLIP PHILLIPS</b> <b>MATT NATHANSON</b> SUN AUG 7TH	 <b>HUNTER HAYES</b> FRI AUG 12TH	 <b>WHEELS OF SOUL</b> FRI JULY 15TH	 <b>COUNTING CROWS</b> <b>ROB THOMAS</b> WED AUG 3RD
<p>..... TICKETS AVAILABLE AT <a href="http://WATERFRONTCONCERTS.COM">WATERFRONTCONCERTS.COM</a> .....</p>					

small fishing boats and local purveyors. “We source everything we can locally,” says Burke. This is a kitchen that “makes everything in-house except the Heinz ketchup.”

#### EAST BAYSIDE

**U**p the hill from the wharfs, **Drifter’s Wife Wine Bar** gleams in a well-scrubbed brick-and-glass building on Washington Avenue. “What initially drew us to Washington Ave. was just that it felt more cosmopolitan,” says owner Peter Hale, who, with wife Orenda, opened their wine shop Maine & Loire last year and subsequently added the wine bar. Peter calls it “a neighborhood quietly doing its own thing.”

Inside, you’ll find smooth, spotless brick floors and high ceilings with gleaming duct work. Benches made of slatted wood and small, circular tables fill out the dining room. An array of deep green, broad-leaved plants add warmth to a space that is prettily lit by sunshine sifting in through the glass storefront. It’s uncluttered and artfully curated.

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The Lumineers, from left, Neyla Pekarek, Jeremiah Fraites and Wesley Schultz. See them at Thompson's Point on August 5.

COURTESY PHOTOS

**M**aine & Loire and Drifter's Wife offer all organic or biodynamically grown wine. Sitting at the bar feels like sitting at a friend's kitchen island. Chef Ben Jackson "does everything every day, from buying the produce to cooking the food, to serving it," Peter says. "The food he puts out is nuanced—it's full of soul and really clean and subtle at the same time." For \$10 you might find kale served with creamy garlic vinaigrette, gruyère, and shallots, or an

appetizer like coppa with lentils vinaigrette and egg served with sourdough bread. Drifter's Wife doesn't have happy hours. Instead they pull "rare bottles that ordinarily wouldn't be poured by the glass," letting customers try unique vintages at a value.

Nearby on Congress, tucked between Otto's pizza and Suzukiya's ramen, is the new **Sip of Europe**. Yulia Stolkner moved to Maine from St. Petersburg, Russia; formerly, she ran a coffee cart in Old Orchard

Beach. She loves her new-found community. "Here in Portland, as soon as I opened, there were lots of people coming in and saying welcome to the neighborhood."

Patrons sit at the counter and bask in the natural light filtering in over the Eastern Cemetery. Yulia sees it as a source of vitality. "I like that there's a cemetery right in front of me. When it's sunny, I have light from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m."

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Lake Street Dive leads off the State Theatre's outdoor concert season on Thompson's Point.



# LIVE

## On The Point

On May 29, Lake Street Dive will open the summer season at Thompson's Point with music from their latest record, *Side Pony*. Guitarist Michael "McDuck" Olson describes the band's sixth studio album as a blend of the familiar jazzy pop with neo-soul influences that audiences know and love, with "some '70s rock 'n' roll and touches of disco here and there."

The foursome, who met as students at the New England Conservatory in Boston, are Maine favorites, having played in Portland several times in the past few years, and it seems the feeling may be mutual. "Our Maine crowds hold a special place in our hearts. State Theatre in Portland was the very last show on our 2014 *Bad Self-Portraits Tour*, and it was the largest headlining show we'd ever booked. We were nervous that we wouldn't be able to fill it up with our sound—or with fans."

They needn't have worried. The show completely sold out. "We went on stage and could immediately feel the love from the crowd. It was a highly memorable show and the perfect way to end that momentous tour."

And it's not just the crowds that draw Lake Street Dive to Portland. The band members seem to have fallen under the city's spell. "We love Portland so much that several of us individually have gone there between tours just to vacation! There's the Speckled Ax coffee shop, the great record shops, vintage clothing stores, and knockout seafood. It all adds up to make Portland a magical place for Lake Street Dive."

[statetheatre.com/thompsons-point](http://statetheatre.com/thompsons-point)

accompany their coffee, in particular Yulia's crepes, which include a ham & cheese and a honey & walnut variety—"European-style crepes," she says.

There are decadent offerings like *affogato*—espresso poured over ice cream. There's drip coffee made from Seacoast Coffee Company's beans and a European brew made from the Italian Lavazza beans that are ubiquitous in Europe. "It's different from anything [in Maine before]."

### THE NEW FRONTIER

Northwest of the West End and parallel to I-295, a nubbin of land juts into the Fore River. Named after a 19th-century slaughterhouse, **Thompson's Point** was a prominent rail yard before being converted to a munitions factory during World War II.

These days, partners Chris Thompson and Jed Troubh are developing a multi-use space. Thompson says the project is "about adding a neighborhood to Portland that can feel seamless" with the rest of the city. At the moment, visitors will find two brick warehouses undergoing ren-



On Point: Brandi Carlile, right and Walk the Moon, pictured.



Coming this Summer:

<b>Lake Street Dive</b>	May 29
<b>Brandi Carlile</b>	June 4
<b>Michael Franti + Spearhead</b>	June 15
<b>Ray LaMontagne</b>	June 16
<b>moe.</b>	June 18
<b>The Avett Brothers</b>	July 4
<b>Bob Dylan &amp; Mavis Staples</b>	July 16
<b>M83</b>	July 20
<b>Walk The Moon</b>	August 2
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# DOWNTOWN

Did you know Thompson's Point was man-made? According to historian William David Barry, "It was a round lagoon called the Roundabout—an amazing area that was a transfer table for train."

Loren Coleman and Bigfoot, below, seem pleased about the **International Cryptozoology Museum's** imminent move to Thompson's Point. Above, the Point's Fore River setting is both in-town and a getaway.



ovation and a whole lot of heavy machinery. Construction began in April of 2014, and the current wave of work should be finished by the end of May.

At the end of the point, a massive steel gazebo (which is actually a restored piece of the old Union Station) presides over the water. This past winter, it housed **The Rink**, an ice-skating venue complete with Zamboni and warming stations.

A few businesses are already up and running. Last October, **Circus Maine** moved into the Brick North building, across the hall from **Color Me Mine**, the paint-your-own pottery and instructional studio. Circus Maine is a warehouse-style space with wall-to-wall gymnastic mats, trapeze swings hanging from the rafters, and gigantic Chinese balancing poles propped against the



back wall. General manager Blain Tully says they train kids and adults at all levels, from rank amateurs to "students looking to perform nationally and internationally."

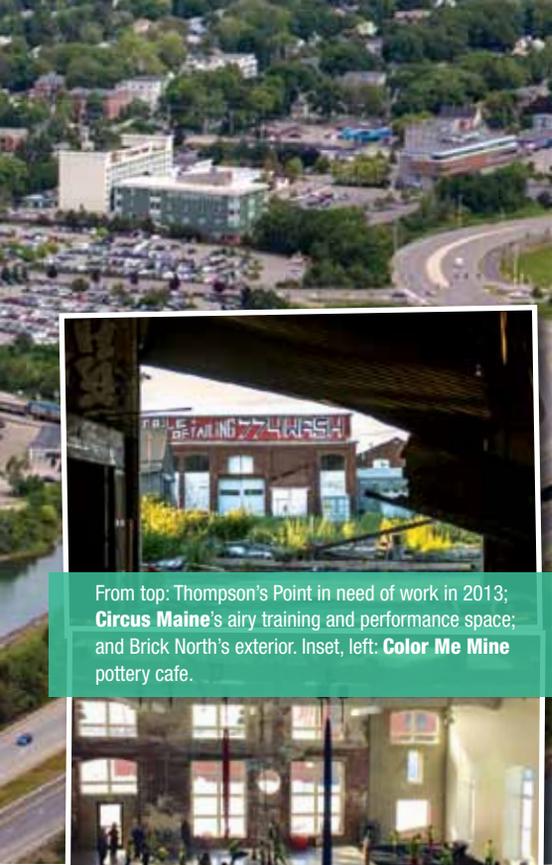
"Enrollment in our classes is ramping up, and attendance at cabarets has been great." Circus Maine is a performance center as well. "We can transform this room into a theater that houses 400 people. We do performances on a regular basis, both in-house and outside of the space."

As Tully speaks, a man in a black shirt and wind pants does effortless double backflips on a trampoline that Tully and recre-

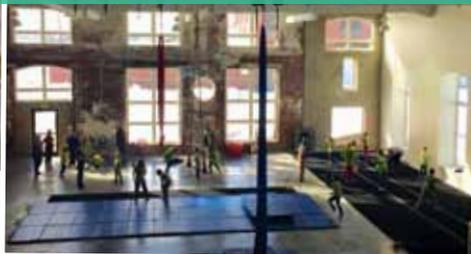
Bissell Brothers Brewing Company, Cellardoor Winery, and Stroudwater Distilling all bring local spirits to Thompson's Point.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY THOMPSON'S POINT; COREY TEMPLETON; CIRCUS MAINE; CIRCUS CONSERVATORY (2); STROUDWATER DISTILLING; CELLAR DOOR; BISSELL BROTHERS; MIKE SCHOCH



From top: Thompson's Point in need of work in 2013; **Circus Maine**'s airy training and performance space; and Brick North's exterior. Inset, left: **Color Me Mine** pottery cafe.



ational program manager Kerry Kaye built themselves a few feet away at the **Open Bench Project**. This is a “maker space” that allows anybody to come in and work on original wood, welding, electronic, or screen-printing projects.

Tully and Kaye also hope to team up with **Cellar Door Winery** as well as Jason Loring's new chicken-and-waffle joint, **Big J's** (which will not, after all, be called Yeti as previously rumored), for catered performances. As for the menu, Loring says, “We're concentrating on doing really, really banging fried chicken. We'll also make our own waffles.” Big J's will offer Japanese egg waffles, a vegan version of fried chicken, and “a lot of fried chicken sandwiches that speak to the way I do things at Nosh, with big, delicious flavors.” Loring hopes to source his chicken from Maine farms.

Loring is excited about forming new



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## DOWNTOWN

partnerships. “We’re going to put a window from our space into **Bissell Brothers** so that you can walk up from the brewery and order from us. We’ll be Bissell Brothers’ built-in restaurant. They’ll become our dining room, and we’ll become their kitchen.”

Speaking of yetis, Big J’s will also share space with the **International Cryptozoology Museum**, which is relocating from Avon Street. Owner Loren Coleman thinks the museum’s new location, with its proximity to Big J’s and Bissell Brothers, “will be a nice kind of partnership—we’ll help each other.” Coleman says he’s “been looking at Thomp-



## Empire of Otto?

Speaking of new, what’s going in the former **Frame Shop** along the restaurant gold coast in Longfellow Square? We overheard a whisper that pizza powerhouse **Otto** might be looking to join **Ocho**, which is soon to open in the former Petite Jacqueline spot nearby. Realtor John Hatcher heard the rumor, too. His take? “It’s got to be a restaurant—it’s a great location.” An exec at the Dunham Group places the rent at \$2,400 a month. Stay tuned.

son’s Point for years.” He anticipates extending the museum’s hours to as late as 10 p.m. to coincide with the schedules of the surrounding food purveyors.

A longtime fan of architecture as well as the supernatural, Coleman says the new building’s design “has that sleek kind of prairie style” he appreciates. The new layout will allow the museum to unveil previously unseen exhibits such as taxidermic heads. “We’re gonna go up as well as lengthwise in a way that we never really could do before,” Coleman says, explaining his plans to suspend replicas of a pterodactyl and giant squid from the rafters.

Coleman is also looking forward to

showcasing some rare and “absolutely priceless” pieces. The museum’s most iconic items, like the life-sized replica of Bigfoot, “will be up on a mezzanine. It’s become the photo-op everybody loves.”

For Coleman, moving to Thompson’s Point is more than business—it’s a chance to showcase his life’s work in a new and innovative space. Sitting at a small table, amid a collection of cryptozoological artifacts 56 years in the gathering, Coleman muses, “I know I’m gonna die, everybody does. And this is going to become my legacy—the only cryptozoology museum in the world, right here in little Portland, Maine.” ■

Outdoor concerts with room to dance are the plan all summer long on Thompson’s Point.



FROM TOP: MEAGHAN MAURICE; COURTESY THE CIRCUS CONSERVATORY



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