

THE FIFTH ANNUAL

SCANDINAVIAN NORTHERN LIGHTS

12.15.17

PORTLAND OCEAN GATEWAY
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PORTLAND, MAINE

CHRISTMAS CHARITY EVENT

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Party of One

LFK is a welcoming watering hole, whether you're in company or flying solo.

What ever happened to the lost pleasure of **drinking alone?**

OLIVIA KOSTISHEVSKAYA GUNN

THOUGH A GOOGLE search reaps alarming WebMD articles on the matter, should there really be any shame in drinking alone? It's 2017, people. If Humphrey Bogart pulled it off in 1942, we must be capable of handling the lone nightcap with some level of class. I'm not talking stumbling out of Matthews at midnight on a Tuesday. There are a number of bars in town where one can go to think over a drink and not be pitied, or worse, chatted up repeatedly. In a time when it's hard to say any of us is ever truly alone, a drink or two without company, or even Siri, could be more therapeutic than you think.

MEAGHAN MAURICE

SOLO ARTIST

Push open the door to **LFK** at 5 p.m. on any given day and you'll find many at the bar seated one-by-one. Located at the corner of State and Pine Streets, this literary haven welcomes those needing a moment alone with their drink. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow looms above as guardian to those quiet thinkers. Come early evening, regulars fill their long-chosen bar stools to nurse a beer and mull over the day's events.

Even with a packed bar, LFK offers a welcoming local hub for newcomers or those needing a night away from the typical Old Port crowd. While you may not catch a name, you're sure to catch a conversation.

Monday Nights

Wine & Bites

at Lolita



Indulge in some alone time at Bramhall.



“That’s one of the few comforts of going out alone in Portland. You’ll often find another who needs little conversation and simply craves presence.”

The bartenders are friendly and go about their business behind the bar with a care-free, steady pace, tinkering with new cocktail concoctions and singing along to the playlist. At LFK, even on a busy evening, you and your \$3 Miller High Life will never feel like a burden.

RUST AND STARDUST

Monday nights are often reserved for nursing what’s left of those weekend hangovers, but sometimes Monday brings ailments all its own. Time for a liquid remedy. Take a trip up Munjoy Hill to **Lolita** for Tapas Monday and enjoy a small plate paired with a glass of wine—all for only \$5. Tapas are served until 10:30 p.m., so you can luxuriate in your alone time. No matter the hour or the size of your party, there’s always a family feeling to the tiny, scarlet eatery.

Sitting at the bar on a recent evening, I

notice two others enjoying dinner for one. Of the four wines available for \$5 a glass, I choose the most easily pronounced red. I may be drinking alone, but it’s no reason to give the bartender any clues as to why. For my tapas, I’m served a sweet little dish of lentils sautéed with mushrooms—just enough to settle the pre-dinner stomach growl.

Tapas Mondays are enough to make Lolita a worthy lone wolf destination, and with the bonus of bartenders who are happy to answer questions or talk wine, one doesn’t feel quite so, well, alone.

TABLE FOR ONE

After a last-minute change of plans, I decide a night at home with two cats and a bowl of leftover spaghetti is probably not what the doctor ordered. I make the rainy trek across the bridge into Portland, knowing exactly where this party of one can find a meal without having to worry about small talk.

The Little Tap House on the corner of High and Spring Streets offers a warmly lit atmosphere with enough space to slip in and find a cozy seat in the corner. This evening, I make my way to the bar and peruse the drink and dinner menus. With 14 beers on tap, 13 of which are brewed in Maine,

I take my time running down the list, pretending to look for my favorite IPA. Rising Tide’s “Pisces” (\$7) jumps out as a little homage to my husband. In an effort to romanticize this evening sans hubby, I order a draft. An order of fish and chips (\$17) tops off the evening, and a special plate of honey-drizzled goat cheese, compliments of the chef, makes me feel especially noticed. There’s nothing worse than going to a bar alone and feeling ignored or a nuisance as couples and groups rake in the rounds. It’s the strange paradox of drinking alone: while you may crave being left to your own devices, those little moments of recognition in your solitude can feel like a ray of warmth.

Soon enough, a gentleman takes the seat beside me. We sit in companionable silence. We’re eventually joined by a man who looks to be another soloist. These two must run into one another often—their small talk flows easily. Whether they know each other’s name or not doesn’t seem to matter. That’s one of the few comforts of going out alone in Portland. You’ll often find another who needs little conversation and simply craves presence. Plus, you never need to worry about splitting the check. ■



JOAQUIN MALMANN

The window won't need to be rolled down like before. No blast of cold air rushes into the car to wake the children sleeping in the back.

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