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DINING GUIDE

Bruno's Voted Portland's Best Italian Restaurant by Market Surveys of America, Bruno's offers a delicious variety of classic Italian, American, and seafood dishes—and they make all of their pasta in-house. Great sandwiches, pizza, calzones, soups, chowders, and salads. Enjoy lunch or dinner in the dining room or the Tavern. Casual dining at its best. 33 Allen Ave., 878-9511.

Bull Feeney's Authentic Irish pub & restaurant, serving delicious from-scratch sandwiches, steaks, seafood & hearty Irish fare, pouring local craft & premium imported brews, as well as Maine's most extensive selection of single malt Scotch & Irish whiskeys. Live music five nights. Open 7 days, 11:30 a.m.-1 a.m. Kitchen closes at 10 p.m. 375 Fore St., Old Port, 773-7210, bullfeeneys.com.

The Corner Room features bright, wide-open space with towering ceilings complemented by handcrafted woodwork. Patrons can expect a warm, comfortable atmosphere, marked by the rich aromas of house-made pastas, pizzas, antipasti and artisanal breads. Come and enjoy the taste of Venice in the heart of Portland, ME! 879-4747, 110 Exchange Street. Visit thecornerroomkitchenandbar.com for more information.

DiMillo's Now through December, relax and enjoy Head Chef Melissa Bouchard's masterful creations. Every day, she offers something new and delicious. Try our Early Dinner Specials, Monday-Friday or our wonderful Port Side Lounge, Portland's getaway for grown-ups. Happy Hour includes special menu Monday-Friday, 4-7 p.m. Open daily at 11 a.m., Commercial St., Old Port. Always FREE PARKING while aboard. 772-2216.

J's Oyster is a premier seafood destination and locals' favorite with indoor and outdoor waterfront seating on one of Portland's scenic piers. Established in 1977, J's offers classic favorites and friendly service. Coastal Living claimed J's one of "America's Best Seafood Dives 2016." Find us on Facebook. 772-4828

Kon Asian Bistro Steakhouse & Sushi Bar serves Asian cuisine with modern flair. Japanese, Sushi, Thai, Chinese, or hibachi tables. Private party rooms accommodates groups from business meetings to birthday parties. Choose fresh, delicious items prepared before your table. Family friendly; open Mon.-Thurs. 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m., Fri. to 11 p.m., Sat. 1 p.m.-11 p.m., Sun. 11:30 a.m.-9:30 p.m. 874-0000, konasianbistrome.com.

Hurricane Restaurant New England cuisine with an international twist. Local produce and seafood, full bar, award-winning wine list, in-house dessert chef, lobster & blueberry pie! Sunday Brunch & Make-Your-Own Bloody Mary Bar. Good restaurants come and go; great restaurants get better and better. Lunch & dinner seven days a week. Bar menu always available. Reservations suggested. 29 Dock Square, Kennebunkport, Maine. 967-9111, hurricanerestaurant.com

A 'Restaurant with Rooms'

An exciting new restaurant sparkles in an historic, formerly derelict, **Congress Street mansion**.

BY CLAIRE Z. CRAMER

SO IS THIS WHAT it might have felt like in the 1880s, having dinner in your stately Queen-Anne Victorian brick mansion designed by Portland's then-superstar architect, Francis Fassett? We ponder the matter at our table in the dining room of **Bolster, Snow & Co.**

Not exactly. This is nicer, we decide over glasses of Esser Sauvignon Blanc from Monterey (\$11) and Sicilian Purato Pinot Grigio (\$9) as we munch delicate, crunchy golden Parsnip Chips (\$8). And the service is definitely better.

The fact this new restaurant is tucked into the former Mellen E. Bolster House on Congress Street—spectacularly reincar-

nated as the Francis Hotel after decades of abandonment—is part of the time-machine charm of dining here. The beauty of the restored building welcomes you the moment you enter the hotel foyer, with its soaring ceiling and steep staircase. Peek into adjacent drawing rooms resplendent with tiled fireplaces, stained-glass panels, parquet floors, and honey-golden acres of varnished oak moldings and trim. The hotel's interior furnishings offer strikingly contemporary contrasts, with modern sofas, chairs, and chandeliers.

We share an elaborate appetizer of Duck Confit (\$15). Tender, boneless meat is shaped into a cylinder that's sliced and ar-



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Spice Levels

- ★ 1 Star: Coward
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- ★★★ 3 Stars: Adventurous
- ★★★★ 4 Stars: Native
- ★★★★★ 5 Stars: Showoff



491 US Route One, Freeport, Maine
1/2 mile south of Exit 20 (Across from Comfort Suite)

DINING GUIDE

Maria's Ristorante is Portland's original classic Italian Restaurant. Greg and Tony Napolitano are always in house preparing classics like Zuppa de Pesce, Eggplant Parmigiana, Grilled Veal Sausages, Veal Chop Milanese, home-made cavatelli pastas, Pistachio Gelato, Limoncello Cake, and Maine's Best Meatballs. Prices \$11.95 - \$22.95. Tue.-Sat. starting at 5 p.m. Catering always available. 337 Cumberland Ave. 772-9232, mariasrestaurant.com.

Pedro's focuses on simple yet full-flavored Mexican and Latino food. Offering tacos, burritos and an impressive array of margaritas, sangria, beer, and wine. *Especiales de la semana* (specials of the week) keep the menu varied and fresh and showcase different Latino cultures. Seasonal outdoor dining available. Open daily, 12 p.m. - 10 p.m. 181 Port Rd., Kennebunk, 967-5544, pedrosmaine.com.

Restaurante El Corazon Mexican food from the heart. Authentic family recipes passed down through generations. We serve large and small plates and an "oversized tequila selection." Try Portland's own "Marisco" - a Mexican seafood cocktail of shrimp, bay scallops, clams, octopus, and, of course, Maine lobster. Open lunch and dinner, Tues.-Sat. 11:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m., 190 State St. Portland. elcorazonportland.com, 536-1354

Rivalries Sports Pub & Grill Now with two fun and comfortable upscale sports bar locations. Known for great casual pub food, Rivalries' menu has something for everyone. And, with 30+ HD TVs and every major pro and college sports package, you won't miss a game! Located at 11 Cotton Street in Portland's Old Port (774-6044) and 2 Hat Trick Drive, Falmouth (747-4020), rivalriesmaine.com

Sea Salt Lobster Restaurant delivers an authentic Maine dining experience using fresh, locally harvested seafood to create delicious dishes that will leave you wanting more. Visit us on Route 1 in Saco and try our fresh Maine lobster rolls, renowned Angus beefburgers, clams, had-dock, or fish tacos. Open from 11 a.m.-10 p.m., 365 days a year. 660 Main St, Saco, seasaltlobsterrestaurant.com, 494-1178.

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ranged on wafer-thin slices of watermelon radish. These are set over silken roasted winter squash and crumbs of ripe blue cheese. An orange-accented sauce of pureed squash and walnut milk is swooshed prettily alongside. Tiny nests of frisée garnish this delicious creation.

Chef Nicholas Verdisco comes to Bolster, Snow & Co. (named for Mellen Bolster's local dry goods empire) from the Inn at Pound Ridge by Jean Georges Vongerichten. He knows how to layer up a succession of flavors without blurring them.



You'll spot this from the first whisper of togarashi (Japanese chili powder perfumed with ginger, herbs, and spices) on your parsnip chips.

We're even more wowed by the day's catch—sea bass on our visit—served as a whole, pan-seared filet in a sauce containing earthy chanterelles, pickled raisins, and subtle curry oil (\$30). The fish is tender and sweet, and the skin crackles. Accompanying florets of cauliflower will convert even the

RESTAURANT REVIEW

staunchest non-believer.

Wide ribbons of house-made pappardelle sing in combination with luxurious Creamy Corn Boar (\$27), an unctuous, imaginative sauce rich with creamed fresh corn and ground boar meat. It's accented brightly with a scattering of black garlic and snipped chives.

Apple Tart (\$11) for dessert is a sassy coda to the rich meal, with tart, thin, glazed slices of fruit set on a divinely buttery, crumbly almond crust. A sweet smear of apple butter and tiny cubes of pickled apple offer glorious contrasts.

Bolster, Snow & Co. captures the special-occasion "getaway" magic of a hotel restaurant, with beautifully set tableware, delicate stemware, and professional service. A delicious new chapter has opened in the history of this gracious landmark. ■

Bolster, Snow & Co., 747 Congress St., Portland.
Dinner Mon.-Thurs. 5 - 9 p.m.; Fri. & Sat. till 10:30;
Sun. till 8:30. 772-7496.

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