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DINING GUIDE

95 Ocean is open to the public and one of the best places to get lobster in Kennebunkport. Enjoy creative comfort foods and fresh Maine seafood with waterfront views and live entertainment at The Nonantum Resort. Our menu highlights freshly caught salmon, lobster, scallops and much more. The resort grows 100% organic gardens on property with herbs and vegetables. 95 Ocean Avenue Kennebunkport. 967-4050, nonantumresort.com.

Anthony's Italian Kitchen offers homemade Italian cooking using the freshest ingredients, featuring favorites such as pizza, pasta, and sandwiches. Voted "Best in Portland" for three years. Dine-in and catering services on offer. Beer and wine available. Open 11-8 Mon. through Sat. 151 Middle St #5, Portland; and new location Cumberland County Courthouse, 205 Newbury St. anthonysitaliankitchen.com, 774-8668.

Bayside American Café (formerly Bintliff's), owned and run by Joe & Diane Catoggio since 2003. The menu includes delicious items like house-made smoked salmon, corned beef hash, crab cakes, sandwiches, salads, Benedicts, and more. Come and discover why customers love Bayside American Café. Breakfast, brunch, and lunch are served daily starting at 7 a.m. 98 Portland St., Portland, 774-0005, baysideamericancafe.com.

Benkey sushi bar and Japanese restaurant is back! At our new location on 16 Middle Street, chef Ando has designed an authentic Japanese culinary experience close to Portland's waterfront. Full bar and menu including premium sushi, sashimi, and rolls. Monday-Friday: Lunch, 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.; Dinner: 5 p.m. - close. Saturday - Sunday: 11:30 a.m. - close. 773-5555, sushiman.com.

Bistro 233 has something great and affordable for everyone in the family! Come in for our Maine mussels, New York strip steak, baby back ribs, fish tacos, chicken piccata, fish & chips, jambalaya, and our Bistro Burger. No more arguing about food style when you come to Bistro 233—we have it all! Fun, laid-back environment. 233 U.S. 1 Yarmouth. 846-3633, bistro233.com.

BlueFin North Atlantic Seafood in the Old Port harnesses all that Maine is and positions it into a delicious dish. Executive Chef Tim Labonte creates new and unexpected meals using fresh, locally-caught seafood and seasonal ingredients. From breakfast through dinner and anything in-between, your next adventure may just be your next dish. 468 Fore Street. 775-9090, bluefinportland.com.

Bolster, Snow & Co. is located in the spectacularly reincarnated brick mansion, The Francis (formerly the Mellen E. Bolster House). With executive Chef Nicolas Verdisco at the helm, Bolster Snow provides guests with warm, genuine hospitality, gracious service, and fiercely seasonal food and drink that are representative of the Northeast Region. 747 Congress St. Portland. 772-7485, thefrancismaine.com

Boone's Fish House & Oyster Room menu teems with native seafood like fresh Maine lobster steamed over rockweed, a variety of oysters and wood-grilled fish, as well as steaks and chops. Then there's Boone's sig-

An Italian Dream

Let the rich flavors of this *cucina italiana* enchant you.

BY COLIN W. SARGENT

LET'S START WITH an insider tip. The best vantage point in **Ports of Italy** is from Table 57. Try not to enjoy yourself as you settle into the extreme back corner booth, encircled by the Kennebunk River. From this perch on the banquette, you can view the swirl of activity in the restaurant and everyone approaching you. At the same time, you're close enough to enjoy the dancing flames from the gas stove. Just as future President John F. Kennedy picked Table 40 at the Parker House in Boston the night he proposed to Jackie, so would he choose Table 57 for romance here.

The Prez wouldn't mind the valet parking, either, which is free with a tip. No circling of the block. You own this town.

To launch the evening, we start with a fun Sicilian Zest cocktail (Fabrizia blood orange, lime, tequila, and "a splash of soda," \$12) and a glass of Super Tuscan Monte Antico—earthy, spicy, and famous for its "dry finish" (\$9). The salt around the rim of the Sicilian Zest glass counterpoints its sweetness. The Monte Antico is so yummy we order more to sip through dinner.

The Caesar Salad (\$14) is sensuous, deep, and chewy with fresh-baked focaccia bread croutons and heavenly parmesan. The Burrata (\$15) is a chamber-music collabora-



In July, chef Germán Lucarelli opened The Lost Fire in Cape Porpoise. It's his second Maine venture.



tion of "soft-center artisanal mozzarella cheese, heirloom tomatoes, basil, and extra virgin olive oil." The tomatoes are perfect, the cheese fluffy as clouds. These two salads are so vivid they induce a kind of craziness; viz. we start talking about a timeshare in Naples, Italy, or buying a studio apartment with views of Vesuvius. Looking across at the other diners, we sense that many more here are 'traveling' as they dine. It's quite the bistro that transports you this far.

Our entrees are the Pesce Spada (\$33)—terrific fresh swordfish with spinach, tomatoes, artichokes, and salsa verde—and Pollo alla Diavola, the real surprise and a guilty pleasure. This grilled, spatchcocked chicken under a brick is so fantastic—crispy on the outside, tender and juicy on the inside,

marinated in citrus, succulent with Calabrese chili-aioli, and served with crispy potatoes that are fluffy on the inside—that we pass it back and forth, singing its praises. *Nota bene:* the Contorni of "Asparagi Parmigiana" (\$7) with "butter and parmesan cheese," proves a perfect diversion.

Two cappuccinos and a drive under the stars along the curving beaches complete a memorable evening. ■

Ports of Italy, open Mon. through Thurs. from 11:30 a.m.-9 p.m., Fri. through Sat. 11:30 a.m.-9:30 p.m., Sun. from 10:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m., 5:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. 4 Western Ave., Kennebunk, 204-0365.



DINING GUIDE

nature dish: the baked stuffed lobster. Alexander Boone invented the baked stuffed lobster when he opened Boone's right here on the Portland Waterfront in 1898. 774-5725 86 Commercial St., Portland www.boonesfishhouse.com

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, plus 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. 773-7210, bullfeeneys.com.

Congress Bar and Grill, serving Portlanders delicious food & beers for years! Fully embrace Portland's laid-back, no frills attitude. Try Thai chili wings and the best fries in the city while vintage game shows play on-screen. Happy hour everyday 4 p.m. - 6 p.m. & 10 p.m. - 12 a.m. Late night menu Fri & Sat. Open 7 days, 11:30 a.m. to 1 a.m., 617 Congress St., Portland. 828-9944.

The Corner Room features bright, wide-open space 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. Enjoy the taste of Venice in the heart of Portland, ME! 879-4747, 110 Exchange Street. Visit thecornerroomkitchenandbar.com.

El Corazon, Mexican food from the heart. Authentic family recipes passed down through generations, plus an "oversized tequila selection." Try Portland's own "Marisco"—a Mexican seafood cocktail of shrimp, bay scallops, clams, octopus, and, naturally, Maine lobster. Open lunch and dinner, Mon.-Thur. 11:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m.; Fri.-Sat. till 11:00 p.m.; Sun. 9 a.m.-9 p.m. 190 State St. Portland. elcorazon-portland.com, 536-1354.

Fish Bones American Grill offers creatively prepared American cuisine along the canal in the historic Bates Mill complex in the heart of downtown Lewiston. Open seven days, offering dinner Monday through Sunday, lunch Monday through Friday, and brunch on Sundays. Come get hooked at 70 Lincoln Street, Bates Mill No. 6! fishbonesmaine.com, 333-3663.

Flatbread Company Portland, Tucked between two wharves on Portland's waterfront, this family-friendly restaurant features signature pizzas plus weekly carne and veggie specials—all made with local ingredients, baked in a wood-fired, clay oven. Everything is homemade, organic, and nitrate-free. Twenty local drafts and cocktails featuring all-local

breweries and distilleries. Flatbread has a perfect waterside, relaxed atmosphere for any occasion. 72 Commercial St., 772-8777, flatbreadcompany.com/portland.

Homage Restaurant dazzles with scratch-made, hand-crafted food and cocktails. Tuck into our mushroom tarts, Mom's Fried Chicken, Steak "Wellington," Steak and Scallops, Squash and Beans, Gingersnap Creme Brulee, or Blondie Sundae. 9 Mechanic St. Freeport, ME. 869-5139 homagetherestaurant.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, www.hurricanerestaurant.com.

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.

Maria's Ristorante is Portland's original classic Italian Restaurant. Greg and Tony Napolitano prepare classics like Zuppa de Pesce, Eggplant Parmigiana, Grilled Veal Sausages, Veal Chop Milanese, homemade cavatelli pastas, Pistachio Gelato, and Maine's



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Pearl Kennebunk & Spat Oyster Cellar is Chef Rebecca Charles's (of Pearl Oyster Bar, New York) newest restaurant. Enjoy elevated beach food, including Charles's famous reinvention of Maine's lobster roll. Happy Hour on Wed., Thurs., and Sun. from 5 p.m. - 6 p.m. for \$1 oysters, \$5 wines, and well cocktails! 27 Western Ave., Kennebunk. pearloysterbar.com/pearl-maine/, 204-0860.

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, pedrosmaine.com. 967-5544.

Portland Lobster Company Experience "Maine's Best Lobster Roll," lobster dinners, steamers, fried clams, chowder, and more before visiting our outdoor bar for an ice-cold local beer or a glass of fine wine. Then relax on our deck overlooking the gorgeous Portland Harbor while listening to daily live music. 180 Commercial Street, 775-2112, portlandlobstercompany.com.

Ricetta's Brick Oven Ristorante, a Maine Italian favorite since 1989. Experience a modern, family-friendly atmosphere with a versatile menu filled with award-winning brick oven pizzas,

pasta, grill, and Italian entrees, using as many locally sourced ingredients as possible, plus gluten-free options. Sunday - Thursday 11:30 a.m. - 9 p.m.; Friday & Saturday: 11:30 a.m. - 10 p.m. 240 U.S Route 1, Falmouth. 781-3100.

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 10 Cotton Street in Portland. (774-6044). And 2 Hat Trick Drive, just off I-295 in Falmouth (747-4020), rivalriesmaine.com.

Tally's Kitchen at Bayside, located on 84 Marginal Way in Portland, is a unique breakfast and lunch boutique. Life-long Portlander Julie Taliento Walsh builds on her reputation for quality and affordable classic fare with vegetarian & gluten-free options served in a friendly setting that feels like home. House made baked goods, artisan sandwiches, soups, salads, freshly brewed coffee, and blackboard specials that change daily. Breakfast and lunch: Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. until 3 p.m. 207-400-2533, tallyskitchen.com.

Twenty Milk Street welcomes diners with warm, intimate décor and a lovely brick fireplace. Located in the Historic Portland Regency Hotel, we offer Sunday brunch, breakfast, lunch, and dinner, specializing in modern American dishes with a New England flourish. We're proud to serve local produce, seafood and beef, pork, chicken, and turkey from our own farm! 774-4200.

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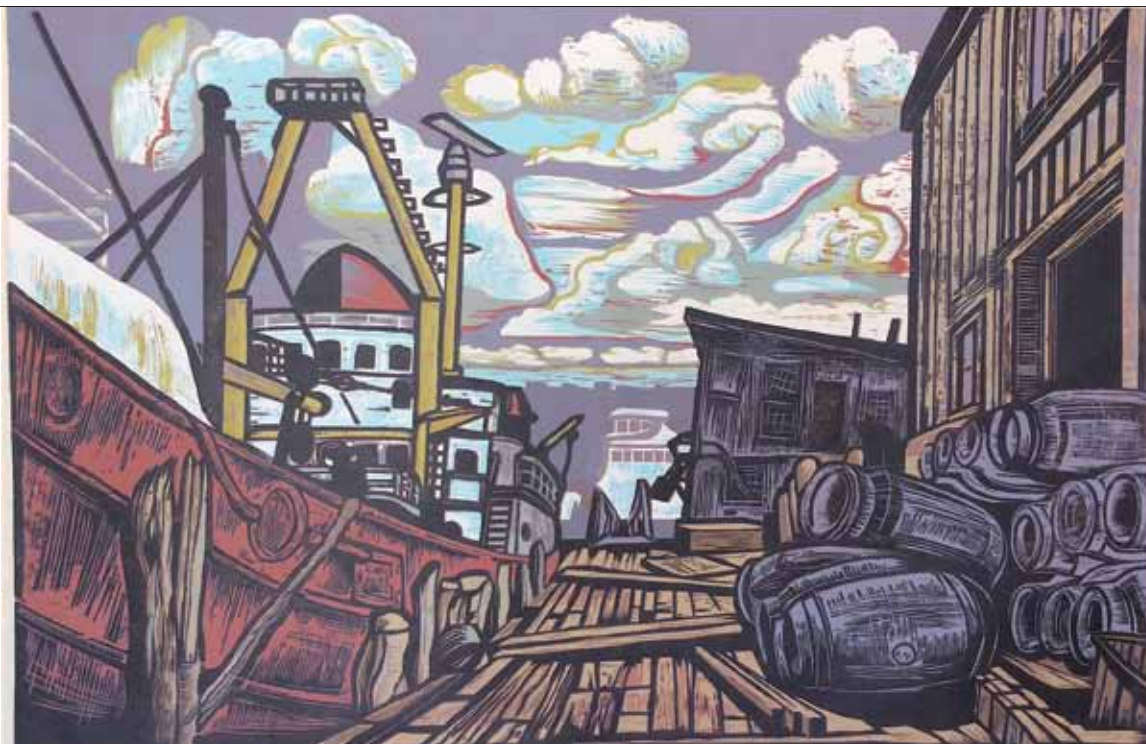
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