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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.

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.

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

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 Parmigian, 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.

O.Dans Restaurant, Sebago's newest friendly farm-to-table restaurant in the heart of Sebago. Great local beer & food selection. Open 6 days a week, Tues.-



Great Big Fun

Portland's **West End** lucks out with another **winner**.

BY CLAIRE Z. CRAMER

LITTLE GIANT, just weeks old, is already a bustling dining hot spot.

Andrew and Briana Volk—who brought the wildly successful Hunt + Alpine Club cocktail mecca to the Old Port—have now polished up a storefront cafe at the corner of Danforth and Clark streets.

Where Hunt + Alpine's look is austere Nordic, Little Giant casts a warm Scandinavian glow that welcomes newcomers with wide-plank floors, a mirror wall, and handsome furniture. We settle into a booth and look straight to the bar menu—a cute booklet that opens with a wry Edna St. Vincent Millay quotation about her “valuable mistakes” and concludes with the lyrics to Springsteen’s “Born to Run.” We select a glass of Poderi Cellario’s *E Bianco* (\$9), a Spanish white, and—since we’re among mixology mavens—*The Spirit In The Night* (\$13), made with rye whiskey, dry curaçao, and Fernet served with a twist of fresh orange peel. A dish of very good marinated

olives arrives with the drinks.

Little Giant (the name, like the shout-outs to Millay and Bruce, is apparently nothing more than a cheerful whim of the owners) has an appealing dinner menu for a neighborhood joint. Local bounty is showcased, and prices are reasonable. A ‘snack’ of *Little Biscuits* (\$6) comes on a wooden board. Spectacularly flaky biscuits frame a smear of maple-whipped lardo topped with neon hot pepper jelly. You won’t leave a single crumb.

A nightly special of blistered *shishito peppers* with a maple-sriracha-bacon drizzle (\$8) also charms as a starter. The peppers are expertly charred, and the maple sauce is so addictive we spread it on the last of our Little Biscuits.

Pasta Fra Diavolo (\$19), on special, showcases house-made squid-ink pasta. The dish arrives heaped full of calamari rings and tentacles and littleneck clams in the shell with a devilishly spicy red sauce accented with notes of lemon and lemon zest. This





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DINING GUIDE

Fri 4 p.m. to close; Sat.-Sun. 12 p.m. to close; closed on Mon. Happy Hour specials, Tues.-Sat. Live music from local talent, every Fri.- Sat. 46 Sebago Road, Sebago 787-5124 ODansSebago.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.

Portland Lobster Company Picture yourself choosing from our full menu including "Maine's Best Lobster Roll," lobster dinners, steamers, fried clams, chowder, and more before stopping by our outdoor bar for an ice-cold locally brewed beer or a glass of fine wine. Then take a seat on our deck overlooking the gorgeous Portland Harbor and relax while listening to daily live music. 180 Commercial Street, 775-2112 portlandlobstercompany.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

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deserves a permanent slot on the menu.

And since every neighborhood place has to have a signature burger, we try the **LG Burger with JoJos** (\$12), a classic grilled patty served up on a tender potato bun that tastes exactly like the good old days. American cheese, grilled onions, spicy mayo, and heavenly shredded iceberg lettuce are infused with flavorful grilled-burger juices. JoJos turn out to be hand-cut fries, daintier than steak fries but heftier than skinny *frites*.

Little Giant's friendly and skilled staff appears to approach service as a shared mission. Their names are even listed in the back of the bar menu. Andrew Volk steps away from the host station to offer tastes of the **Chateau du Trignan Roussanne** and hearty **Pecchinino Dolcetto** (each \$11 per glass) for our approval before pouring us a glass of each to enjoy with the entrees.

Next time, we'll try the **Mushroom Agnolotti** (\$18) or the seared **Rainbow Trout**

(\$22). We also vow to try the whole smoked chicken with potato salad, greens, and cornbread (\$35, intended for three or more diners), which we spot on a huge wooden board heading into the dining room, an enchanting barbecue aroma trailing in its wake.

The dessert menu makes an offer we can't refuse: **Sweet Corn Ice Cream** (\$9), served with house-made brioche toast points, a thick sauce of wild blueberries, and a garnish of hot, salted popcorn. It's a feast for the senses and absolutely not to be missed. As with the terrific biscuits, the dessert highlights the talents of pastry chef Darcy Poor. We'd bet her double chocolate cake with Maine raspberry jam is also divine. ■

Little Giant, 211 Danforth St., Portland.
Dinner: 3-11 p.m. daily, 747-5045.

ERIN LITTLE

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