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October 16, 2014 • 7:30 pm

Béla Fleck, Abigail Washburn & Del McCoury Band

November 1, 2014 • 8 pm

Preservation Hall Jazz Band February 11, 2015 • 7:30 pm

"The Nile Project" April 12, 2015 • 7 pm

Nordic Fiddlers Bloc April 25, 2015 • 8 pm



Savion Glover: "STePz" November 6, 2014 • 7:30 pm

Moscow City Ballet: "Swan Lake" March 18, 2015 • 7 pm

> Lucky Plush: "The Queue" May 6, 2015 • 7:30 pm

Alexandre Tharaud (piano)

Metropolis Ensemble: "Brownstone" October 3, 2014 • 5:30 pm, 6:30 pm & 7:30 pm Paul Dresher Ensemble: Double Duo

Minguet Quartett with Andreas Klein (piano)

January 22, 2015 • 7:30 pm

October 23, 2014 • 7:30 pm

October 29, 2014 • 7:30 pm

Ray Chen (violin)

ŏ

CLASSICAL

February 4, 2015 • 7:30 pm

Boston Camerata with Sharq Arabic Music Ensemble

March 28, 2015 • 4 pm



"Big Nate" November 8, 2014 • 11 am

> "Skippyjon Jones" March 29, 2015 • 11 am



Sam Green and Yo La Tengo "The Love Song of R. Buckminster Fuller" October 29, 2014 • 8 pm

"Reinventing Radio" An Evening with Ira Glass November 8, 2014 • 8 pm

"Basetrack"

March 26, 2015 • 7:30 pm

"Sister Act" January 17, 2015 • 3 pm & 8 pm

"Million Dollar Quartet" February 21, 2015 • 4 pm & 8 pm

"Memphis"

March 14, 2015 • 4 pm & 8 pm

"Mamma Mia!"

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BROADWAY



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ed earrings, necklaces, beaded bracelets. I zone in on the accessories, but there *is* art. A lot of beautiful art. In fact, Art Walk attracts artists of all ages: an artist who's been painting so long that his hands have become his greatest works, young artists who've put a creative use to Grandma's old tchotchkes, even art-school child prodigies testing the retail waters with their first masterpieces. I see one young entrepreneur among the finger paints—a good old-fashioned lemonade stand. Way to go—capitalizing on cuteness and a town full of Buy Locals. A man begrudgingly hands the young'un cash for a solo cup of what could very well be Min-



ute Maid, mumbling about Maine taxes and inflation. Farther down Congress Street, I come across a young man dressed as a zombie; a magician wowing a crowd of young families; street dancers; bikers; and then, of course, someone has to do it, a man with a giant boa constrictor. Ugh, why? I cross the street before having to get a closer look because I can't avert my eyes. First Friday Art Walk: the good, the bad, and the scaly!

he music echoes through Exchange Street, making it hard to find where it's actually coming from until I reach the Thirsty Pig, where Tigerman Woah, a band of gritty, self-proclaimed "...pinkocommie rednecks," is playing covers like I've never heard them played before—on banjo, drums, guitar, and a stand-up bass. I'm up for anything tonight, so I enter, passing two giant hotdogs who I come to find out are the bar owner, Allison, and a friend dancing in wiener costumes. I ask the bartender why. "We sell lots of sausages. Want one?"

I order the classic hotdog with slaw and a Shipyard. Past the bar is an open deck lit by a layer of string lights and a lot more people. With the door wide open, the deck is more a part of the bar than most. People move in and out freely, choosing seats at



the iron tables or inside at a booth. I wait for my meal and listen as a group of guys discusses Maine's beer. "This area has some of the greatest beers in the world." He clinks his glass with friends. Everyone should be proud of their local brews, even if it could possibly be a drunken overstatement.

My hotdog arrives and the band takes time before their second set. I notice I'm not the only loner at the bar. The Thirsty Pig seems like one of the few spots in town that gets a steady flow of newcomers, and tonight the anonymity of the crowd makes me feel welcome.

SATURDAY

Connect Four, Beer Pong with soccer balls, and giant Jenga. This is an adult's playground. Tonight, Oasis has opened its veranda and nobody wants to be left out. The band, Sparks the Rescue, is treating the 20/30-something crowd to all of our favorites from the Gin Blossoms to Tom Petty. If these guys are feeling nervous at all, they should see the crowd gathering behind them on Wharf Street. Everyone is rather lax, standing against the wall with a drink and a smoke. That is, until a bachelorette party bursts through the door, bras, heels,



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July & August, Fridays, 8 pm: **JAZZ NIGHT**

July & August, Wednesdays, 7 pm: ACOUSTIC OPEN MIC

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July 12 & Aug. 9, 8 pm: **FERAL ACADEMY**

July 19, 8 pm SORCHA & FRIENDS

July 26 & Aug. 23, 8 pm: **NATHAN POL- HEMUS TRIO**

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and hair flying. "We wanna dance," screams a short brunette, drunkenly balancing on her stilts of heels. Oh, dear. You can only imagine the toys they've brought along, smacking one another's rears and nearly

taking over the stage. The girls are having a blast and causing no harm until one crashes down in front of me while trying to seduce the wooden post separating her from the stage. We help her up, keeping her steady. "More shots," another girl yells, and they all file in, the rest of us knowing what the outcome will be when they try to walk the cobblestones a little later. Oasis is in the perfect location for anyone wanting to hop the bars and clubs on Wharf Street. As we leave, we pass recent college grads performing an interpretive dance as a bouncer looks on; a daughter and her parents-the dad quite intrigued by the bachelorettes; and a couple named Barbara and Bob looking entirely out of place in evening wear. It's obvious the night is only growing stranger, so we leave while we're ahead and hope the soon-to-be-bride makes it home before the wedding bells ring.

SIX O'CLOCK'S spaghetti dinner has long been forgotten. It's midnight and I'm starving. Benkay on Congress? Eh, I don't think I can deal with Backstreet Boys throwbacks tonight, so Boda it is. In my excitement I walk right past the "Wait to be Seated" sign, only to walk back, embarrassed at my overzealous pad Thai craving. The server laughs and grants me the honor of picking our table-a spot beside the bar, in front of the window so we can watch Portland pass by. We agree on the Thai wings for a starter, two orders of pad Thai, and one Kee Mao (drunken noodles), which arrive before we even figure out our drinks.

Catching last call at Boda.

few patrons sit at the bar, discussing the weekend's events with the bartender as he pours the last of the rounds. The lights are low, inviting a spark between a pair at the bar. Longfellow Square is bustling with young couples huddled close, headed home for the night. "Last call," we're informed. Our guest can't finish his old fashioned, too strong. We decide to split it, and I, with my first sip, admit defeat. Soon the tables are cleared and we bid the drink farewell as it's

Central Provisions provides into the night. How about an absinthe frappe and a flight of fried oysters? 414 Fore St., 805-1085, central-provisions.com













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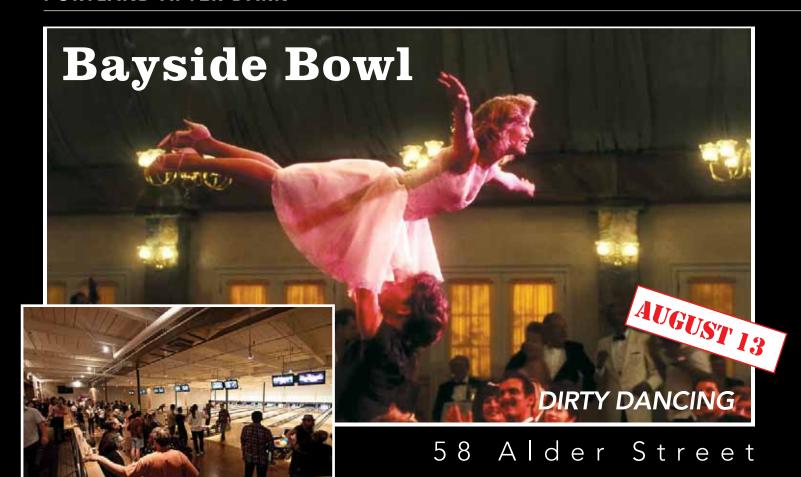
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July 5: COVERED IN BEES, BATTERY STEEL, ENGLISH MUFFINS

July 16: Patio Movie: THE HUDSUCKER PROXY 8 pm

July 19: **BOTTOM OF THE EAST**

July 25: **IYQ**

July 26: **FEATHER LUNGS & LEVERET**

July 30: Patio Movie: **RUSHMORE** 8 pm

August 8: DR. BOOGIE

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swept up and away with the rest. Our appetites addressed, it's time to walk home, take in air, and each secretly thank the bartender for calling it a night.

SUNDAY

"WITH YA in a minute, hon." We're seated in the back corner, as all of the J's Oyster loyalists are in their reserved spots at the bar. It's packed, and most appear to have been here since lunch, trying to leave for the past five hours but stopped at the door by a friend again and again. We bypass the specials and go straight for the baker's dozen, plus crabmeat-stuffed mushrooms and two Shipyards, naturally. My boyfriend, Fil, has his camera and snaps some candids. The





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GHOST OF PAUL REVERE

waitress spots him and proceeds to tell us Steve Harvey's film crew stopped by earlier that day as part of a lobster-roll competition. "We're gonna be on TV."

from visitors and folks who've seen it via Anthony Bourdain's *No Reservations*, I came expecting burly lobstermen treating their hardened sea wives to date night, but instead see families, friends, and a snazzy couple, he in a sport coat and fedora, she in a beautiful sun hat circa the days of *Dynasty* and *Dallas*. "We just wanted to dress up," he informs Fil,

who asks to take their portraits. We introduce ourselves, and the woman takes my hand after I comment on how openly loving they are. "We've been together 28 years," she says, and bats her lashes. The man looks to Fil: "Twenty-eight years of love and tolerance." On that advice, we leave hand-in-hand, hoping we'd just seen our own aged reflection.

You probably won't find the "real" Maine at J's Oyster. It isn't a tangible thing you can see, eat, or touch. It's a feeling. Just as you would have at any bar in any city that's seen



74 **PORTLAND** MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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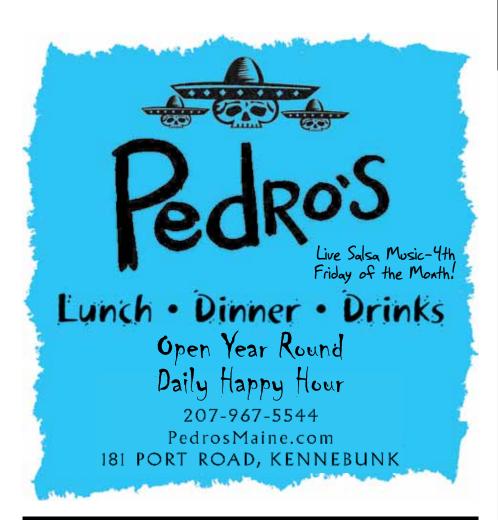


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PORTLAND AFTER DARK



one couple through 28 years.

MONDAY

he readings start at 9 p.m., so I arrive at LFK for Word Portland around 8:30, hoping to get a seat at the bar. Word Portland–selected writers reading from their work–takes place once a month at LFK. The place is busy with what seems like friends and fans of tonight's readers.

"Does that taste good?" a guy asks, referring to the chewing of my wallet as I decide on a drink. Gross, nervous habit, I know.

"Uh, not particularly." His girlfriend laughs and we discuss Jonathan Woodman, local craftsman of said wallet. Eventually, it gets awkward as any discussion inspired by a leather wallet will and they slip away as I take a seat. The drink special is the Wrong Way: Maine Mead Works, rum ration, and a sprig of rosemary. One bartender in particular catches my attention with his booming, at times startling, voice. "You taken care of?" I nod, hoping his shift ends before I order again. A young woman approaches the counter and announces, "I'm on painkillers." He nods. "I'm on painkillers, so could you make it look like a cocktail so nobody harasses me for not drinking?" It seems as if he's ignored this request, but I watch as he concocts a faux-tail and hands it over. Another girl asks if I'll watch her purse if she leaves, and I agree. She returns and I figure she owes me a quote.



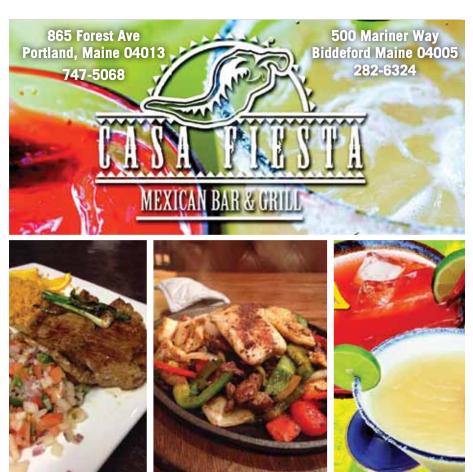
"Have you been here before?"

"Yeah. Last time, though, I was too drunk to notice, so this time I decided to sober up and pay attention. They're usually really good." Her name is Catharine. At first she is hesitant, in case her folks read this in print. We spur off a few alias options: Barb, Vicki, Tina, before deciding she can't be the only Catharine in the Portland area.

At nine, the readings start and I'm reminded of the Greenwich Village bar scenes I've seen so often on album covers and old posters. With a rubbing of F. Scott Fitzgerald's gravestone mounted high overhead, the writers stand before a room of peers and bare their hearts. What I thought could be uncomfortable proves inspiring, making me feel a slight cowardice as I hide behind glossy covers and a byline. The readings end at 10 and the crowd thins. I'm left alone, staring at a vintage typewriter. When contemplation has done its worst, I'm comforted by the looming Longfellow monument just outside, guardian of Portland writers.

TUESDAY

The two-story bar is empty and feels more like a corporate office than a "Chinese bistro" with black leather cushions and dark hardwood everything else. I climb up to Zen's bar and order Harpoon's new UFO Big Squeeze Shandy. "This is very new. It has very good flavor," says the bartender in a thick Eastern European accent. I order the wonton soup just to keep busy.





DON'T MISS July 2, 6-9 pm: **HONKY TONK GYPSIES**

July 3 & 5, 2-5 pm: **STOLEN MOJO**

July 6 & Aug. 3, 2-5 pm: **HELLO NEWMAN**

July 11, 2-5 pm: **SUNSET BOOZE CRUISE**

July 13 & Aug. 10, 2-5 pm: **NORTHERN GROOVE**

July 20 & Aug. 17, 2-5 pm: **NORTH OF NASHVILLE** Aug. 23, 2-5 pm: **THE COVER TONES**

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A family upstairs laughs and carries on, making me wonder if the upstairs is part of the same place.

"You're from Portland?"

"Yeah. Well, no. I moved here from New York."

"Ah, I love New York. But only to visit."

"Yeah, so does everyone else." Being the only guest downstairs, I'm treated almost too well and when the napkin I'm given reveals a blob of chewed gum hidden in the folds, I'm too embarrassed to complain. The soup arrives, and the server is happier to see me than my mom ever is. It must get boring in that kitchen. The bartender and I begin a conversation about Portland, work, and family. Most of his is still in Tur-





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key. He asks if I have any family near there. I smile, having thought my Norwegian heritage was more obvious. "No, but my boyfriend is Azerbaijani, but from Russia." This makes him smile, so I go on, "and I love the food." He laughs and tells me of his favorite dishes. Ah, Portland. Here I am, sitting in a Chinese bistro talking Russian cuisine with a Turkish man. Maybe we're both a little homesick, but before I leave it's agreed that Portland is where it's at.

WEDNESDAY

Sangria, you say? I'm there. I've passed The North Point several times heading to work,

shopping, and exploring, and each time I've said, "Look, they have little chairs outside. Look, it reminds me of a café in Europe. Look, it's so cute." Well, I finally stop looking and step inside, this time because a giant sign promises *Sangria*. It's the middle of happy hour, around six, and I feel like I'm starring in a Godard film-beautiful lighting, beautiful cast, beautiful location. The tables outside are taken, so I take a corner seat at the bar. I'm greeted by Zach and asked if it's my first time.

"Yes, it is," I say in my best Brigitte Bardot. The lone woman beside me has caught on and snatches Zach's attention. "These aren't wasabi peas," she says of the courtesy snacks. "Shake these up, Zach. They're *not* wasabi." Does she own the place, I wonder. No, but she certainly owns that spot at the bar. "You're hiding in the corner," she points out. "Just observing." And with that she orders another fancy wine in French from my co-star, Zach. The sangria arrives, piled with fruit, ice, and whatever feel-good juice. Jazz is playing softly, and the regulars watch as I get lost in the paintings hung on the walls.

"Some of these people look like they're fourteen." I smile politely at the woman, who has by this point succeeded in stealing my spotlight. Regardless, The North Point is one of those rare bars that takes you from your troubles rather than drowning them. You're transported to Paris or Lisbon or Rome with one sip and a smile from Zach. Finishing my sangria, I realize the lone woman was simply playing Ingrid Bergman and I've trespassed into her *Casablanca*.

hew. My nostrils burn walking through the haze of buffalo sauce. Here's one way to cure congestion this season–Trivia/Wing Night at Brian Boru. Thankfully, the door leading to the deck is wide open, allowing for some circulation of the tear gas. My friend Shannen and I lean against the back bar, having arrived too late to play trivia. A giant screen hangs over the banister, presenting each question. "Name all of the characters of the popular show Gossip Girl."

Shannen starts, "Blair, Serena, Jenny-"





"I don't think you're supposed to shout them out."

"Georgina, Lily-" The team in front of us glares back, but Shannen continues, catching the attention of a lone player. He approaches.

"I think I pretty much won this game." "Okav."

"I win every time."

"You win every trivia at Brian Boru?"
"Yeah. Pretty much."

Shannen makes a face. We try to block the guy out, but he proceeds, boldly stating what no man has stated before because it simply isn't true: "You look like Jodie Foster. Not now. When she was young."

Though Shannen is umm...flattered, we head downstairs where she orders a whiskey and I a Coke, which at Boru is always on the house. Trivia ends, and some of the upstairs crowd move to the deck overlooking Rivalries. It's spacious and has bench seating that wraps around. When local bands play upstairs, it's the perfect spot to get away from the crowd and noise while still taking part or even dancing.

"He's watching us," says Shannen as we're seated downstairs. Lo and behold, our admirer lurks behind one of the columns. Code Red creeper, my friends, but in a bar like Boru, if I truly felt uncomfortable or threatened it would be taken care of fairly quickly as neither the bartenders nor bouncers have much patience for it. Shannen finishes her first, and what was supposed to be a quick drink after dinner turns into a round or two as more and more regulars pass through. I wrap up my evening

with a glass of red wine, which, yes, they carry. It's not the best, but no one claimed it would be. A man, as far from a creeper as one could be, asks if I mind if he sits beside me. I pull the stool out for him, and we review the weather. He is French, pronounces my name with flair, and tells me after his drink he will need a cab home. The bartender makes the call. Just then my own ride arrives, and I wish the gentleman home safely with a hug.

THURSDAY

"We're supposed to be networking."

"We are?" Looking around the giant warehouse, I'm doubting anyone else got that memo. This month's Green Drinks event is at Portland Yacht Services for Sail-Maine. Apparently, I'm here due to my vigorous interest in the environment and "sustainability issues," though I just sent a text that read, "Hey, come to this beer thing." Several local breweries are set up, and for \$5 you can drink until the beer is gone. By the looks of it, everyone is planning exactly that. I run into several friends, none of whom are business owners or environmentalists. In fact, one of my girlfriends has just described using half a can of hair spray for a sleeker look. "The beer over there has ten percent."

I look to see the longest line stretching across the garage. The crowd is a real mix; a lot of people have substituted their usual happy hour for a different scene, even if it is in this empty garage across town. I like that about Portlanders–always up for something new and local, so long as it involves beer.

Groups of friends stand in line for the Rising Tide IPA, fill their mason jars, and move to the next line, hoping to reach the tap before their glass is empty. I get in line for the bathroom, which after an hour of drinking beer is now longer than any line for beer. A woman climbs the steps above us and pulls out a megaphone. She informs everyone that the beer is gone and thanks us for coming to support SailMaine. Just like that the place is empty and the food truck waiting outside is bombarded with tipsy customers, no one really caring whether the truck is serving tacos, hotdogs, or taco-dogs.

FRIDAY

t's the warmest night we've had, and there's absolutely no excuse to be eat-■ ing inside. Unless the smell of ocean and port life sicken you? Yeah, I didn't think so. I'm in the mood for a burger, and there's no better spot than the Porthole Restaurant & Pub. We take a seat on the back deck, though the old-school-diner look inside is tempting. We ask if there's smoking even while sitting next to a sign clearly forbidding it. You never know; sometimes you get lucky. "We don't, it's against the law, but if you wanna smoke I'd go to Amigos." Our server brings our drinks, and my boyfriend and I order loaded Porthole Burgers. Bacon, cheese, avocado, the works. This is our date night. Forget the candles, wine, and silver. Bring on the beer, beef, and fries. We ask for more napkins as the ketchup and mustard smears are getting us nowhere on the romance spectrum, but it's really just one of those nights and when you're eating on the water, anything can be dreamy. Seagulls, whose call is often mistaken for one of agony, tonight recall "Kiss the Girl" from The Little Mermaid, and I'm charmed by their swoops and subtle plots to steal my meal. Other couples giggle around us, and even some of the seasoned couples are playing "first date." The Porthole is a spot that may not grab a tourist's attention immediately, nestled on Custom House Wharf with no flashy lights or catchy motto, but it's got personality, and nothing gets a girl like a great personality. This burger has just won me over, and my oxytocin levels must be a little high because I'm ready to sit here and cuddle the Porthole all night.

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SATURDAY

We've walked all the way from State Street, and seeing Silly's in the distance on Washington Avenue, I pray it isn't a mirage. There's no server outside, so we take a seat at the bar for food. "How big is the burrito?"

"Big."

"How big?"

"It's pretty big."

"I'm pretty hungry."

The waitress steps back, eyeing me up and down. "It'll fill ya up."

I finally have a minute to look around and realize what a strange little world we've just entered. Silly's is colorful, eccentric, and goofy. (Writing this, I vow not to describe Silly's as silly.) It reminds me very much of my Great-Grandma Dot's house. All that's missing is a stair lift and a baby grand, but I wouldn't put it past them now that I've mentioned it. Trinkets and beaded lamps crowd the shelves and counters, and as we wait for our meals, we're busied by worn Trivial Pursuit cards. "Which Little Pig of *The Three Little Pigs* played the flute in the 1932 Dis-

ney animation?"

"The one that used straw."

"How did you know that?" The burrito doesn't quite satisfy, but why go to Silly's for Mexican in the first place? You don't. What I know now is that you go to Silly's for the liveliness and The Elvis Shake, a peanut butter and banana milkshake that will make you weep at the last slurp. We finish up and take our drinks out to the deck that gets the perfect amount of sun and overlooks a yard that will be packed shortly. Though we're technically only a few miles from our West End

apartment, it feels like we joined Pee Wee on his big adventure and wound up here. All we need now is "Tequila" to start playing and we'll all be on the bar.

There it sits. Nestled under the neighboring building's abandoned deck. "It has outside seating?"

"Uh, no. I don't know what that is."

SINCE I started my after-dark exploits, Sangillo's has been something of a Narnia. A mystic fortress where beast and man are one, happy hour is eternal, and Jell-O shots are a buck-fifty. My friend Meaghan and I approach slowly from across the street, she snapping epic shots of the Sangillo's sign, an emblazoned insignia offering us, weary photog and writer, a refuge from reality. Meaghan snaps a photo of the vintage cigarette dispenser as a man buys another pack of Reds. "You dropped a dollar," we inform him. He turns, revealing a haggard grin. "I'll

be droppin' plenty more if you stick around."

Wow. We mosey on up to the bar, ignoring the minor detail of us sticking out like sore thumbs.

"He really wasn't joking," Mishell, the bartender, tells us. She rocks a beautiful mohawk, and it's very clear she takes no crap from these boys. We tell her our reason for vis-



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PORTLAND AFTER DARK

iting, that we hear the Jell-O shots have inspired many a Mainah. They say just one has the power of 10 from the opposing kingdom, Pearl, on Fore Street.

"What'll it be? Red, green, orange?"

"Oh, uh, what's in them?"

"Red is rum. Green is tequila-"

"Tequila." Meaghan hands over the bounty, and we make the trade. Mishell offers the emerald shots ceremoniously as the onlookers (the entire bar of six) watch. I thank the gods before swiping my finger around the cup and slurping down the—

"Holy smokes. That's a Jell-O shot."

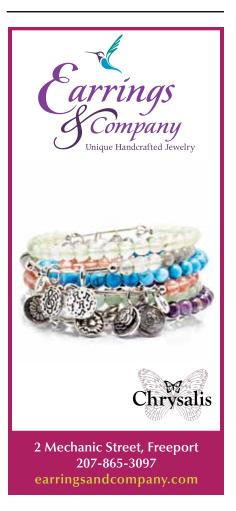
Mishell and the others laugh as my eyes cross and nose twitches. Meaghan finishes hers, and I must say, the bar is rather impressed by the two of us. "Where are you from?" I ask one of the women sitting close.

"Kansas City."

"Wow, what are you here for?"

"The Jell-O shots."

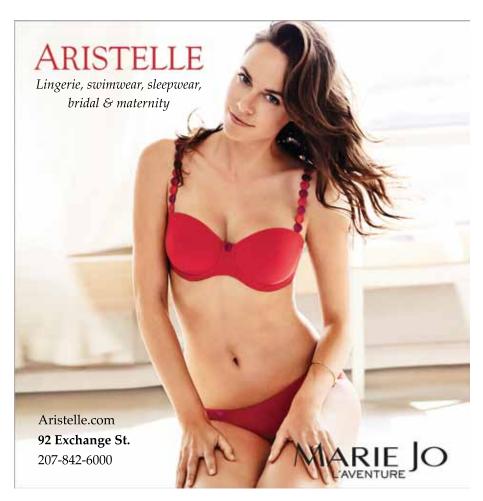
We say our goodbyes and are off. Out of the magic wardrobe, back to the Old Port. ■





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