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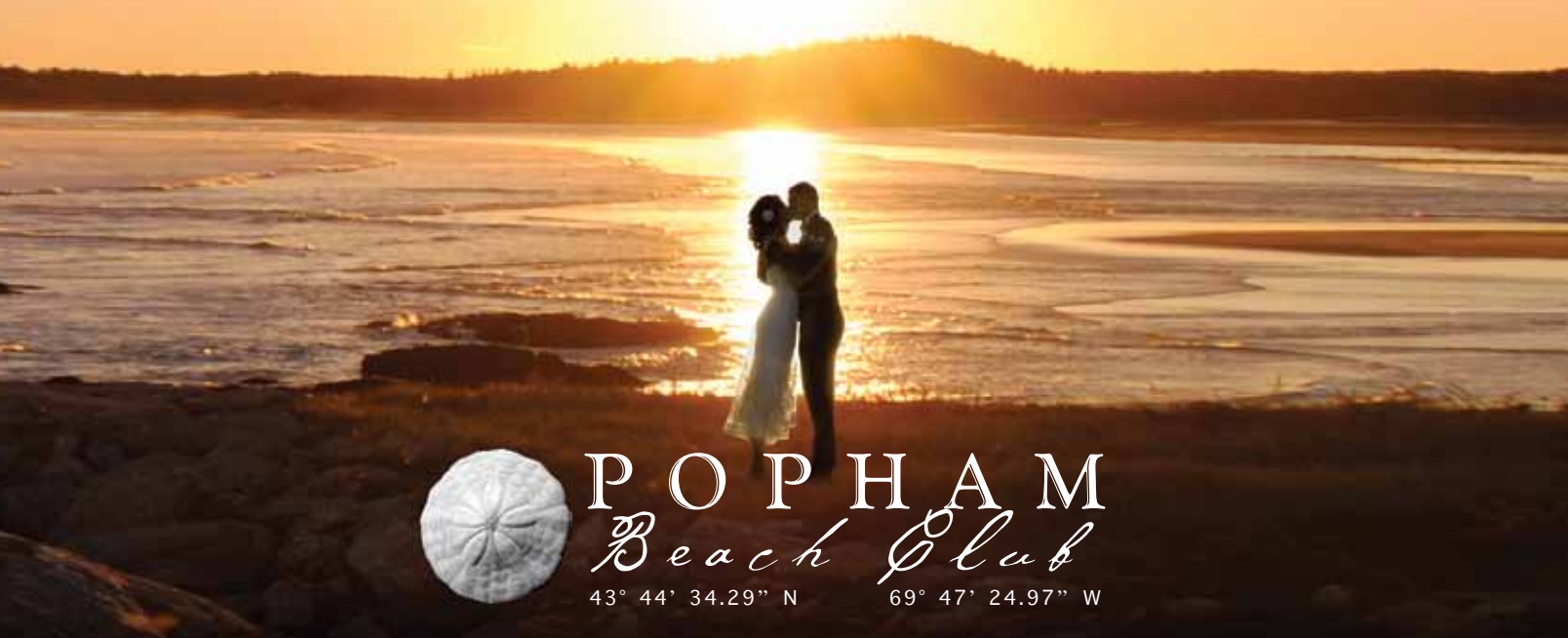


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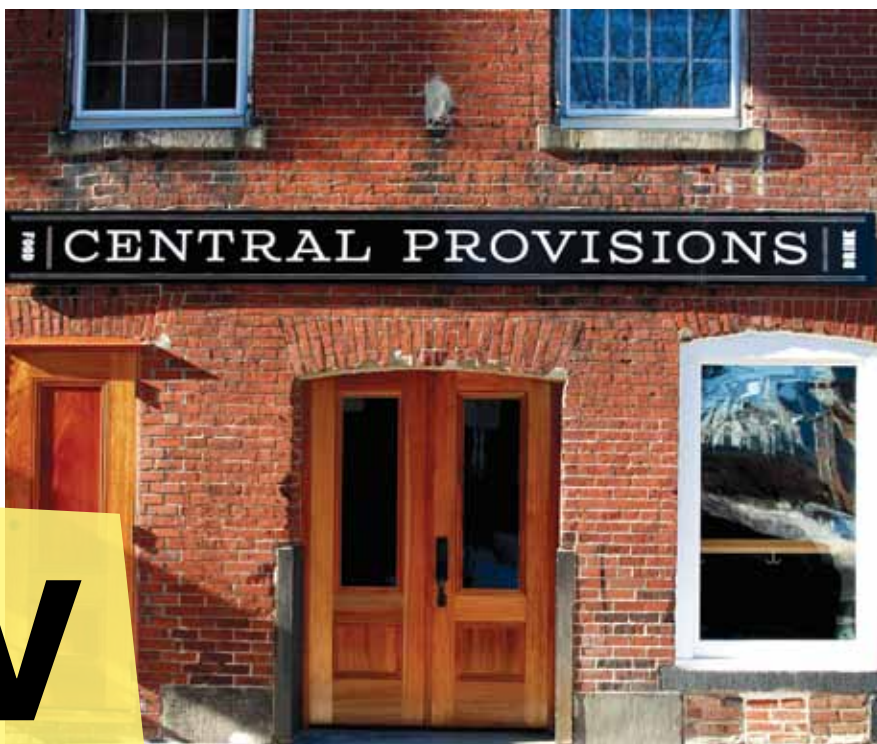
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New

Old PORT

Take a tour through 2014's new summer attractions.

BY CLAIRE Z. CRAMER



Clockwise from above: Espresso at Lolita; Holly Hamilton's peridot earrings. At the crossroads of Fore, Dana, and Wharf streets, Central Provisions presents a handsome brick facade and cozy interior.

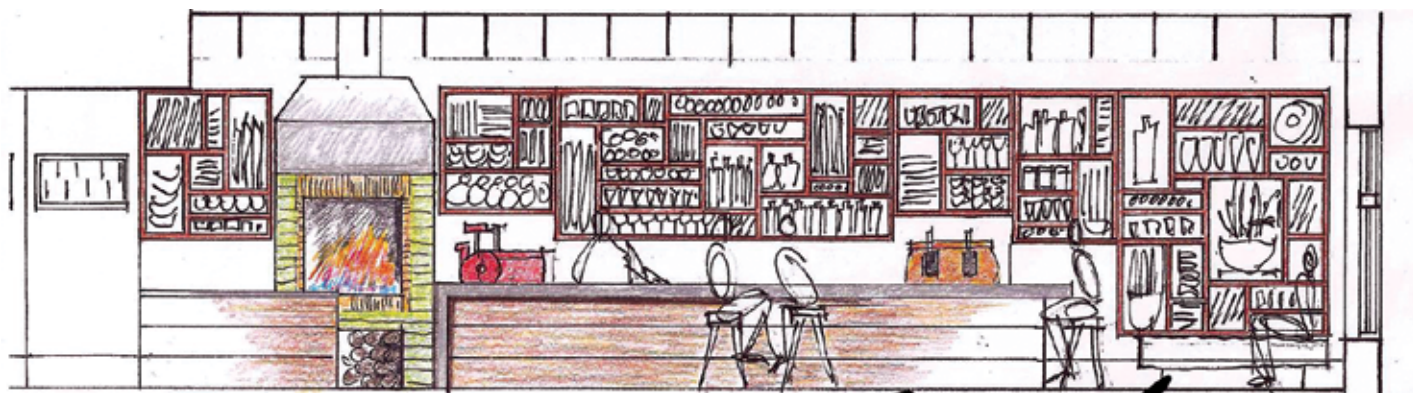
Have you hit the bricks lately in Portland's most densely packed retail and dining nexus? Here's a look at a few recent developments on the peninsula.

WE'RE HUNGRY

Chris and Paige Gould opened Central Provisions in February after renovating two floors of the historic brick warehouse building they bought at 414 Fore Street at the primo intersection of Dana and Wharf

streets. Bethel native Chris has devised a menu around native seafood and his skill with it (scallop carpaccio, fluke ceviche, clams orecchiette, lobster stew with miso and piquillo pepper) and with other small-plate temptations (ham and cheese croquette, porchetta board). He calls it "food from around the world with a newly evolving style." The spot's ultra-rustic Old Port brick-wall, wood-

DOWNTOWN



floor charm is showcased beautifully down to the barstools upholstered by Paige in burlap from coffee-bean sacks.

The old-school Oriental Table restaurant at 106 Exchange Street closed last year, and a new restaurant is due to take its place within weeks.

"I can't really say too much," says Dan Talmatch who, with brother Noah, owns The North Point on Silver Street, "but you can say it's going to be the premier steakhouse in Portland."

No small claim, when you're just steps from the Grill Room at 84 Exchange, which, last time we checked, was a premier steakhouse—and a popular one. The Talmatches are optimists. "We don't believe in pretension. That's why we wanted to get out of New York," says Dan. "Our quality of life has improved drastically. Everyone's fantastic here." The North Point [see this issue's front-cover photo] is a cozy favorite with locals, and visitors love to discover it as they explore the side streets. He promises that Timber—the steakhouse—will have the same "warm, friendly, and cozy" atmosphere.

Fans of bygone Bar Lola eagerly await the imminent debut of Lolita, the newest from Munjoy Hill restaurateurs Stella and Guy Hernandez. The Hernandezes' surprising de-



"We've always called our food distinctly American with a Mediterranean influence," says Stella Hernandez of Lolita, soon to open in this storefront atop Munjoy Hill. "If you want a beer and a plate of olives after work? Sure. And then if a friend spontaneously decides to grab dinner, you can segue into that."

cision to swap their hotspot Hilltop Coffee shop into Bar Lola's sunny and larger storefront and then to renovate the former Hilltop Coffee space (in the building it shared with Rosemont Market) into a sleek "vinoteca and asador" named Lolita has created no end of anticipation. Meanwhile, at 100 Congress Street, the roomier new Hilltop attracts throngs for coffee and homemade scones, eclairs, cookies, and brownies.

NEW OLD FRIENDS

"We've always sold capes, shawls, and blankets," says Dory Waxman at her sunny new Old Port Wool and Textile factory and showroom at 52 Danforth Street on the western edge of the Old Port.

Has she ever. Waxman founded Casco Bay Woolworks in 1992, which in its heyday on Moulton Street stopped pedestrians in their tracks with glamorous mannequins swathed in bright, hooded capes posed outside on the cobblestones like Cathy awaiting Heathcliff on the moor. Back then, her tiny ads in the *New Yorker*—also featuring woollen capes—created a mail-order market for the mood-evoking garments. Martha Stewart and Lily Tomlin were customers. Waxman, a former Portland city councilor, sold the business more than 10 years ago as Maine's woollen mills were closing. One day, she realized she missed working with wool, so she started all over again with Old Port Wool and Textile. "I've found a



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Woolen capes and shawls are Dory Waxman's specialty at Old Port Wool and Textile on Danforth Street. Below: A few of Holly Hamilton's dazzly rings.

source for 100-percent merino—it's the best—spun from U.S. fleece. My hope is to bring back the wool industry."

She reflects on the constant renewal of the Old Port: "It's funny, my neighbor here on Danforth is Rory Strunk [Global Studios, a media content producer], and years ago he was my neighbor on Moulton Street [Strunk's Resort Sports Network created sports content for distribution to resorts; RSN was sold to Outside TV in 2010].

"I'm so happy to be in this neighborhood," says jeweller Holly Hamilton in her new shop at 97 Exchange Street. Though she's new to this location, she's not new to the Old Port, either. The MECA grad has been fashioning jewelry in the area for 29 years. "This space is really ideal," she says of her light-filled store with windows facing on Exchange and on Market Street, where she's situated her work

space. "I hand-pick the stones and build the settings based on what the stones ask for."

Sherman's Books & Stationery opened at 49 Exchange Street on April Fool's Day. "We support Maine publishers and authors as much as we can, and we have a Maine writers section," says proprietor Tori Curtis. The store also sells "stationery, gifts, notebooks—a little bit of everything."

This summer, after you pick up a copy

underneath Sherman's Books. "It'll be a European-style cafe, a place people can stop by in the afternoon for a coffee or beer, open a book, and relax. We'll also bake cakes," says co-proprietor Vikki Walker.

Walker and her husband Kyle Tzarinski found Portland when traveling. "I'm from England, and my husband's from Vermont. We came here and spent two nights at the Inn at St. John, and we just loved it." They decid-



"I hand-pick the stones and build the settings based on what the stones ask for."

—Holly Hamilton

there of Jillian and Malcolm Bedell's *Eating In Maine* (Tilbury House, \$22.95), you can take it around the corner to Maps Euro Cafe, soon to open at 64 Market Street, which is actually

ed to stay and create Maps Cafe. "We said, 'Just give us a basement.' We're striving for a living-room feel."

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DOWNTOWN



Fine lingerie fills the picture window at Aristelle on upper Exchange Street and beckons you inside.

LUXURY LACE

Aristelle, the fine lingerie and bra-fitting shop at 92 Exchange, opened just in time for Christmas in the space formerly occupied by Wyler's gifts, homewares, and garments. (Find Wyler's on Maine Street in Brunswick these days.) "It's all about fitting," says owner Andrea King. "We have 150 bra sizes." The store is full of them, as well as other lovely intimate apparel and luxury loungewear. "We do special orders, and maternity. Bra-size swimwear has been really big," which permits mixing tops and bottoms to fit individual body types. There's an Aristelle in Burlington, Vermont, too. "Diana Krall came in and bought a nice set of pajamas."

Fascinatingly, up at 646 Congress Street, another pretty lingerie shop has just come into bloom. Étaín Boutique promises "lovely underpinnings for every lady." Is Portland leading a new trend, like cupcakes or gelato?

"I don't know. Maybe!" says proprietor Mackenzie Morris. "People tell me they love having the selection. Proper fitting is really catching on. People aren't satisfied with Victoria's Secret anymore." Étaín—named for a mythological Irish "goddess of passion"—is bedecked with colorful, frilly little things on dainty wall racks. Toile wallpaper adorns the

**"Diana Krall came in
and bought a nice set
of pajamas."**

—Andrea King, Aristelle

spacious fitting room area, which is furnished with an antique mirror and Victorian fainting couch. Like Aristelle, Étaín manages to project a very sweet naughtiness.



GATHERING NO MOSS

The Old Port's always in motion. Blink and you might miss something—remember when Sebago Brewing scooted from the corner of Middle and Market to cushier digs a few blocks away in the Hampton Inn, making space for White Cap Grille? Sadly, the Pepperclub and Good Egg Cafe, beloved for local, healthy, and exuberantly international food for 25 years, will vacate the Old Port this fall to escape the rising rent in their now-very-hot corner of the Old Port. The city's loss may become Kennebunk's gain. We expect a feeding frenzy for Pepperclub's choice location at 78 Middle Street.

Muse Paint Bar—a retail chain concept



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Rumors swirl around who may become the new tenant for the Paper Patch's former spot on Exchange Street next to b. good burgers.



From the top: Sleek, minimalist-Victorian decor sets the tone at Etain, a pretty new intimate apparel shop on Congress Street; Etain's Mackenzie Morris among her wares. Bottom right: The Paper Patch's former spot on Exchange Street next to b. good burgers.

Opposite from top: Creating fine art and enjoying drinks is the plan at Muse Paint Bar, coming to Commercial Street; Maps Euro Cafe will open this summer on Market St. underneath the new Sherman's Books on Exchange.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: LINDSEY GRIMES, COURTESY MUSE PAINTBAR, LINDSEY GRIMES(2)



for fine-art painting-class parties—is taking over the Commercial Street spot recently vacated by Color Me Mine, a similar chain venture for pottery painting (that will soon reappear at Thompson’s Point). Fancy women’s clothier Carla’s left Fore Street—clearing the way for the arrival of Central Provisions there—and turned up where Emerson’s Books and Maps used to be on Exchange. A branch of Vincenza’s Italian Bakery in Saco’s Pepperell Square is said to be going in a few doors down from Carla’s.

Directly across Exchange, the Paper Patch moved up to more spacious quarters on the corner of Milk Street, where Club 21 used to be. The guys behind the counter at b. good—the friendly, all-natural, totally ethical burger shop on that same block of Exchange—recently shared unsubstantiated rumors about their neighbor storefronts. Such as, that the Paper Patch’s former spot may become a ladies’ boutique, and the now-empty Mornings in Paris coffee shop might soon be a retailer of gourmet jerky. Hey, why not, when Gour-mutt Beastro is selling all-natural dog treats right across the street? ■

Deana Lorenzo and Lindsey Grimes contributed to this story.




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