

# Portland, Oregon

## 36 Hours In the City of Roses

Story By Bernard Bass | Photos by H.R. LoBue

**Portland, Oregon has created a city that stands out from many others throughout the country with its unique mindset seeming to define it for generations**

Oregon's most populated region. Located 70 miles east of the Pacific Ocean and just short of 10 miles from downtown to the Columbia River, there is never a long jaunt to what the surrounding landscape has to offer. Mt. Tabor, Mt. Hood and Mt. St. Helens loom about Portland's horizon while a multitude of natural lakes flank the city from all sides. There are at least 279 parks and natural areas within the city limits including Forest Park, the largest city park in the United States and Mill Ends Park, the smallest (24 inches in diameter). Located in downtown Portland, along the west bank of the Willamette, is the famed and serene Waterfront Park where festivals and occasions of all kinds are held and, in the spring, the cherry blossoms bloom surreal. The natural beauty carved into and out of Portland, Oregon has created a city that stands out from many others throughout the country but it is its unique mindset and way of life that seem to have been defining it for generations.

To say the least, Portland has a dark and seedy history. From the late 1800's to the early 1900's there was the bawdy Erikson Saloon where sailors and seamen sat over troths while women danced behind electrified chicken wire. Its bottom floor consisted of 700 feet of bar space and, at this period in history, the ratio of men to women in Portland was one woman to 14 men (a picture from 1903 of Erikson Saloon shows the staff of Erikson's, some sort of dog or monkey and a sign that reads, "Whistling Not Allowed" - troths okay but watch the whistling). As was the case in almost every port town in the U.S., Shanghaiing or crimping was rampant. Generally, people would either get knocked out or drugged or you'd find them wasted and drag them onto a ship. If crimping seems like kidnapping people and then selling them onto ships as unsuspecting crewmembers it's because that's exactly what it was. People would make between \$30 and \$50 a person.



Things - sentiments, occasions, styles, credos, ways of life and the like - just seem to get weirder the further west you get. For generations Americans not finding success, satisfaction or understanding have moved west to start a new life; to piece together a fresh and unique foundation for a sort of introspective rebirth; an all-or-nothing stab at a new chance after slamming a hand down on the reset button.

Once making it to the Pacific Ocean the cheapest city in which to settle is Portland, Oregon. As Chuck Palahniuk puts it in, "Fugitives and Refugees," his loosely identified travel guide of the city, "This gives us the most cracked of the crackpots. The misfits among misfits."

Straddling the banks of the Willamette River, or the Lamette as the locals call it, and situated between the

Coast and Cascade regions of the Northwest, Portland is the old Industrial Northwest had been renamed the Alphabet District, like some kind of baby crackers or cheap soup. When did people get so delicate?"



Shanghaiing, a fairly recent term that was coined on the west coast in the 1940s, signified the point at which those who were sold would wake up on a strange ship to hear, "Next stop, Shanghai."

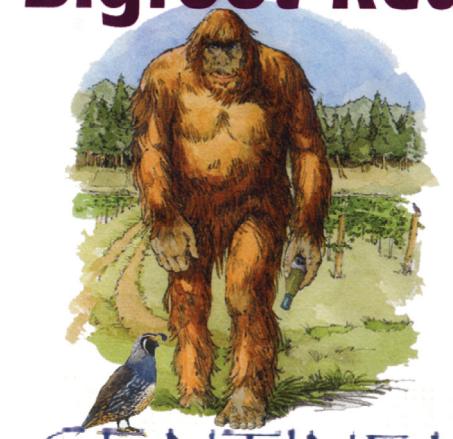
People were bought and sold and the general taste for lawlessness would continue for generations. To this day, with the majority of its population young and eclectic, Portland has a certain feel of successfully controlled anarchy. But as with any city in America, for good or ill, it continues to be susceptible to evolution and change.

Monica Drake, author of the widely popular novels, *Clown Girl* and *The Stud Book*, is one of many life-long Portlanders who notice the changing tides of her city. In *The Stud Book*, an opinion toward the evolution of the city is perfectly portrayed with the following excerpt: "His history was written in dive bars, laced with malt winds off the old Weinhard's brewery...Beer foam runoff filled the streets back then. Nobody would put up with that sh\*t now...The brewery shut down. The 'Brewery Blocks' had been converted to a stretch of condos and art galleries. The old Industrial Northwest had been renamed the Alphabet District, like some kind of baby crackers or cheap soup. When did people get so delicate?"

When asked of what Drake herself views as an underlying reason for this change she says, "It used to be more of an adventure. I think - guess - it's money coming in from other places. People are dissatisfied with or unable to afford living in NYC or LA, and they're migrating here. We've always had a strong youth culture, in the 80's at least as much, maybe more, than now. But there was so rarely any money floating around...the DIY ethic and Goodwill style grew out of necessity and ingenuity, an active creative class that wasn't valuing wealth and consumerism but rather individuality, creativity and expression."

With the ever-encroaching power of the dreaded chain slowly stripping the country of its personality and thus bringing about inevitable change to the aura and countenance of our cities, Portland, more than any other place in the country, continues its fight to stay strange. So don't count Portland out just yet. With its unofficial slogan, "Keep Portland Weird," they still have the annual Naked Bike Ride, Adult Soapbox Derby, the Fire Department ride-along, Kinkfest, Santa Rampage, The Vegan Strip Club, Monk-For-A-Month and the world's largest hairball. And then there's Third Thursdays, where areas all over the city fill the streets with the odd and ubiquitously strange; so strange that many Portlanders question why people would travel down to Burning Man when they don't

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have to go anywhere to find an artfully frenzied taste for the weird.

Burnside Street divides Portland up between North and South and the Willamette divides Portland up between East and West. From there, the city itself is divided into five quadrants - North, North East, South East, North West and South West. This division results in a smaller and more intimate neighborhood feel, a familiarity to lay grounds to a foundation, to raise a family, to walk a dog; a setting in which a patron has more of a chance at becoming a regular and being treated as such.

#### Morning - Petite Provence

Located in the heart of the Alberta Arts District in North East, Portland is Petite Provence. Opening in 2008, it has quickly and easily been able to be identified as one of the top breakfast joints in the city. After experiencing and recognizing the seriousness in which each of their morning delicacies are created, there is an instantaneous credence given to the term, Breakfast Chef.

From their Wild Northwest Salmon Hash, Roasted Oatmeal Brulee, and Risotto Cakes with sautéed bacon and asparagus, all items on the breakfast menu are homemade and made to order, most of which are finished and drizzled with a

lemon-dill sauce or a horseradish-shallot crème.

There is a definite line culture in Portland and, given the laid-back persona of the city itself, people don't seem to mind. With lines at times stretching around full city blocks, locals take the time to converse and catch up. Unlike most of the other lines in this part of the city, the line for Petite Provence staggers around the sidewalk.

Someone wearing a large chicken head hoots and rides by on a Penny-farthing cycle and a young woman, tattooed and pierced and dressed in all black, stands under the awning of the slick, yellow and charcoal façade and says, "Coppock, party of five." Leaning on the hood of a Prius, a young, mustachioed hipster takes a sip from his latte and motions across the street to his friend who's quietly juicing up a Tesla Model X at the electric car recharging station.

On an outdoor table, Didier Blanc-Gonnet, one of Petite Provence's three French owners, places a large and sweaty Bloody Mary infused with jalapeno vodka and says, "I love Portland. My friends who come to the states always want me to meet them in San Francisco or Seattle. They've never heard of Portland or at least what it is all about. Everything is crazy here and I never really saw that besides Portland. If you really want 'wow' it's the place to be. Portland is home to me. It's a huge

playground." At Petite Provence, love is always the secret ingredient.

#### Afternoon

There is plenty to fill your time with in Portland, certainly too much for one afternoon's worth. So, if pressed for time, hit the staples like Powell's and Voodoo Doughnut. Rent a bike and ride the esplanade.

Take the Sinful Underground Portland Tour. Portland has a large and booming food-cart culture from which you can peruse and choose your lunch during a walk through one of the most beautiful and unique cities in America. Keep your eyes open because there is always some variation of weird around every corner - Sometimes the corner itself is weird.

Even if forced to take in as much as one can in a single day, one does not feel rushed in this city.

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Standing in the middle of downtown, with its tall buildings and metropolitan streets, one might think it would be loud, bustling and well, city-like. But Portland, unlike any other large city in the country, somehow has a calm and quiet feel to it. In Portland, time just seems to slow down.

Mad Hanna

Portland is formed by and made up of the odd, artsy and mad and Mad Hanna is all of that and more. Located on 6129 NE Fremont Street, Mad Hanna is a small and reputable neighborhood bar that could be easily and fondly described as a respectable dive.

Recently established by co-owners and operators, Liz Hanna and Crystal Maddix, Mad Hanna is a perfect fit for a city such as Portland. With nine beers on tap, a full bar and a beautifully strange array of cocktails created with infused liquor, muddled herbs and freshly squeezed juices, there is something for everyone who seeks a comfort and warmth inclusively riddled with acerbic wit and charm. There's the Thom Kah-lins with Garlic-Chipotle-Lime infused vodka and muddled basil and The Best Damn Bloody I've Ever Had with Garlic-Habanero-Ginger-Lime infused vodka and homemade bloody mix. Kick back with a Lavender Gin Twist with lavender infused gin, sweetened fresh squeezed lemon juice and tonic or flirt with the insane with an assortment of Fancy Pants Jell-O Shots.



The bartenders of Mad Hanna are skillful and, much as its patrons, they are excitable, genuine and loose-lipped. A majority of those who come to Mad Hanna live and work in the neighborhood so one who visits the establishment has no choice but to feel and experience the personalities that make up this particular area of the city.

Artfully crafted by a local metal worker and one of the bar's regulars, the signage and individual flair inside of the building and out help to create an attitude that slaps the Portland right into you.

Mad Hanna's menu offers tuna, turkey, Chicken Caesar wraps, soups and salads and an always-attractive late-night breakfast. There's trivia night, game night, movie night, darts, pool, Happy Hour and a jukebox filled with edgy favorites, both local and otherwise. The yard out back is fenced in and offers the cozy and crazed comfort of a patio, ping-pong table and a horseshoe pit.

As is the same with each and every person that walks through the doors, Mad Hanna is one of a kind. The only thing that doesn't feel right about the place is leaving.

Portland is and always will be evolving, adapting and changing but its heart will forever beat on the fringe. It's much like the oddballs on the Island of Misfit Toys, only Portlanders don't need whisking away or saving. With its warm to dry summers and cool to chilly winters, Portland has the perfect climate to grow roses - lots of roses. They also have more strip clubs per capita than any other city in the United States. The combination of these polar extremes, and everything else in between, is and forever will be the real and proud Portland, Oregon.

Visit Petite Provence at [www.provence-portland.com](http://www.provence-portland.com) and like them on Facebook along with Mad Hanna at [www.facebook.com/madhannapdx](http://www.facebook.com/madhannapdx). Special thanks to Gary at Portland Walking Tours and to Melanie, the best tour guide we've ever had the pleasure to walk with during Portland's Sinful Underground Tour. For more information visit them at [www.portlandwalkingtours.com](http://www.portlandwalkingtours.com) and call them at (503) 774-4522

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