

HARVEST ON THE HARBOR

Portland raises the ante with a three-day culinary festival

The city of Portland, Maine, is about the size of our Manchester, but this city on the Atlantic has become an epicenter for fine dining found on a national Richter scale. I asked Barbara Whitten, president of the Greater Portland Convention & Visitors Bureau, how it happened. Her thoughts: "Success breeds success. Our chefs just keep up raising the bar."

To celebrate fine food and let the world know that Portland is serious, the city is hosting its second annual Harvest on the Harbor, a premier food and wine experience on October 22 to 24. Whitten says, "We have fabulous chefs and restaurants in Portland and this festival is a way to showcase their skills and educate people on international wines, Maine specialty foods and local beers. It's part of a tradition; for years people touring in Maine have brought back our local fare to tell the story of their vacation."

The city boasts two James Beard award-winning chefs, and many unique food products from whoopie pies to brownies to barbeque sauces. The entrepreneurial spirit lives here with many cottage-industry owners doing what they love and getting noticed. Standard Baking Company in Portland, recently discovered by *Bon Appetit* magazine, will be offering samples of their ricotta/blueberry pound cake among a host of other vendors at the Saturday marketplace.

The three-day event will feature demonstrations and competitions by regional experts and tastings of local specialty food purveyors along with regional spirits and beer and wines from around the world. The event starts on Thursday evening with a grand tasting and ends on Saturday evening in Scarborough with Harvest Uncorked, a chance to meet growers and local oystermen while sampling their fare at cooking stations in a party atmosphere. A 12-piece band will provide music for dancing.

Separate admissions (\$35 to \$85) are charged for the various events, allowing you to enjoy your interests. Find more information at www.harvestontheharbor.com. — Susan Laughlin

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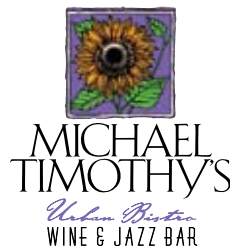
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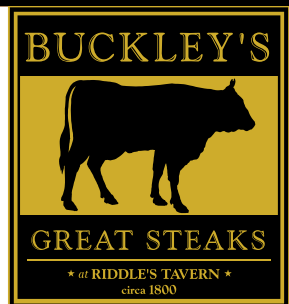
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