



Alternative reality

Rubbing shoulders with residents who aim to “keep Portland weird”, **Brian Johnston** explores one of America’s most laid-back cities.



BOLLYWOOD THEATER

STAY

The Benson
In contrast to the 1,700-odd new beds slated to appear by the end of 2017 in a raft of on-trend city hotels, this 1912 fantasy project built by a timber titan retains its uniformed bellmen, a wood-panelled steakhouse and a super-sized lobby lined with walnut and marble. The ambience is delightful, the blueberry pancakes at breakfast are memorable and the downtown location convenient. The Benson’s concierges are savant-like in their knowledge of Portland. 309 SW Broadway, coasthotels.com

Hotel Eastlund

Opened in June last year, the first luxe hotel in the newly fashionable Central Eastside features huge windows, original artworks, deep bathtubs and designer furnishings. The hotel’s Altaira City Tavern has clever food-and-beer pairings with rooftop river views; Citizen Baker has artisan bread and single-origin coffee. 1021 NE Grand Ave, hoteleastlund.com

SEE

Central Eastside
Though it’s hard to single out one neighbourhood in booming Portland, Central Eastside’s edginess and

burgeoning food scene demand attention. On its fringe, hip **Bollywood Theater** serves Indian street food below a movie screen (bollywoodtheaterpdx.com). Among the current hotspots are gyoza and ramen shop **Noraneke** (noranekoramen.com), Italian restaurant **Renata** (renatapdx.com), and **Kachka** (kachkapdx.com) for updated Russian cuisine. **The Loyal Legion** pub has a record 99 Oregon beers on tap (loyallegionpdx.com). **Pittock Mansion**
As a break from the studied stylishness of the inner city, head to this Renaissance-

style chateau-folly built by Henry Pittock, an early 20th-century newspaper and railroad tycoon. Its opulent décor and clashing Turkish and French themes are unfashionably OTT, and a glimpse of the taste of the time. 3229 NW Pittock Dr, pittockmansion.org

SHOP

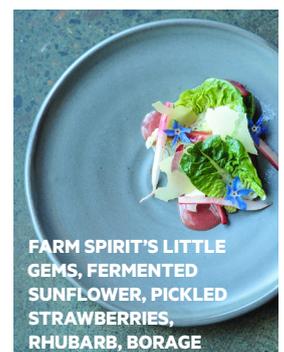
MadeHere PDX
PDX is Portland airport’s code – and this shop best exemplifies the city’s abundant creativity. Everything is made in Portland: clothing, jewellery, kitchenware, stationery, art, even tools (we like the axe collection). And locally made chocolates, jams, sauces and spirits. Each product comes with a bio of its maker. 40 NW 10th Ave, madeherepdx.com
Kiriko
Browsing here is a tactile experience – it’s hard to resist fingering the recycled Japanese and American textiles. Hand-dyed shibori cloth, old kimono fabric and pre-loved denim are fashioned into striking patchwork clothing, blankets and accessories, and new clothes are made with old techniques, such as ai-zome indigo dyeing. 107 SW 5th Ave, kirikomade.com

Cup & Bar
This café in a former Eastside warehouse is a collaboration between Trailhead Coffee Roasters and Ranger Chocolate Company. Expect medium-roast coffee, tastings of single-origin, Peruvian chocolate and cold-brewed coffee mocktails. 118 NE Martin Luther King Blvd, cupandbar.com

Farm Spirit
This vegan restaurant in a tiny 14-seat designer space places guests in close proximity to chef Aaron Adams in action. He prepares refined evening tasting menus featuring mostly local produce, such as carrot jerky and forged mushrooms with Oregon truffles. 1414 SE Morrison St, farmspiritpdx.com
Taylor Railworks

In an industrial-chic 1908 railway building, local chef Erik Van Kley reinterprets classic American dishes with curve-ball surprises: fried chicken with mint and curry spices, say, or peanut butter cookies with grape sorbet. 117 SE Taylor St, trapdx.com

Bing Mi!
Set among the downtown food-cart fraternity, this stall serves just one item: jian bing, the northern Chinese street-snack crêpe filled with scrambled egg, pickles, wonton crackers, chilli and black bean paste. SW Ninth and Alder Sts, bingmiportland.com



FARM SPIRIT’S LITTLE GEMS, FERMENTED SUNFLOWER, PICKLED STRAWBERRIES, RHUBARB, BORAGE

PHOTOGRAPHY TRAVELPORTLAND.COM (BOLLYWOOD THEATER) & NIKKI UNGER-FINK (FARM SPIRIT)

INSIDER TIPS

HOP ON

Set out on a guided cycle tour of a few of Portland’s 60-plus breweries. Pucker up for a Flemish Kiss at The Commons, a flight of beers at recently opened Baerlie, or a Base Camp stout accompanied by toasted marshmallow. pedalbiketours.com

CIDER HOUSES RULE

The global interest in Portland’s craft brewing has spread to cider. Craft doors Bull Run Cider and Coopers Hall offer tastings and cider on tap; eateries such as St Honoré Boulangerie pair cider with food. Bushwhacker Cider is one of America’s first dedicated cider bars. ●

GETTING THERE United Airlines, Qantas, Virgin Australia, Delta and American Airlines fly direct from select Australian cities to Los Angeles, with connections to Portland.

