



Portland, Maine  
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## FOOD NETWORK NAMES CITY OF PORTLAND, MAINE FINALIST FOR "MOST DELICIOUS DESTINATION"

*Winners to be Announced During Premiere of "Food Network Awards," Airing April 15<sup>th</sup>*

**Portland, ME** – Food Network has named Portland, Maine as a finalist for "Most Delicious Destination, highlighting a rising locale not to be missed." Portland, Maine will be competing against two other finalists – Minneapolis, Minnesota and Portland, Oregon – for the coveted award. The first annual Food Network Awards, which will premiere on **April 15<sup>th</sup> at 9 PM (EST)** on **Food Network**, also will announce numerous other winners such as "hottest chocolatier in the country" and "Favorite Coolest Cocktail".

The coastal city has steadily gained a national reputation for its innovative restaurants, award-winning chefs and the region's increasingly influential Farm-to-Table movement. A growing number of Portland restaurants today are consistently serving dishes that use only fish that comes straight from Portland's working waterfront; organic produce from a wide variety of local farmers and suppliers; and, naturally grown fruit such as Maine's classic blueberries.

Portland chefs such as Lee Skawinski, Co-owner/Executive Chef of the city's acclaimed Cinque Terre and Vignola restaurants, have been praised by such esteemed culinary organizations as The James Beard Foundation, as well as in a growing list of national publications such as *The Washington Post* and *Gourmet Magazine*. Other established Portland restaurants, such as Chef James Tranchemontagne's Uffa! Restaurant and Chef Steve Corry's popular 555, continue to earn enthusiastic press accolades, as well.

Relative newcomers to Portland's dining scene have also quickly earned raves. Chef Harding Lee Smith's The Front Room Restaurant and Bar, located in the city's scenic Eastern Promenade neighborhood, continues to serve literally capacity crowds each night with his innovative comfort food fare. Since its launch, Front Room has earned multiple food awards, and a variety of regional press reviews that have labeled Smith's food "perfectly cooked," "incredible," and "very simple, honest and satisfying."

Likewise, Chef Dave Mallari's recent launch of "Francisco's Blue House Café" and veteran restaurateur Paul Russell's new "Portland's Restaurant & Bar" have quickly captured the attention of locals, visitors to Portland, and food press.

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“In recent years, the food and dining scene in Portland has undergone a tremendous transformation,” Russell noted. “People have always known that they could get a wonderful lobster roll or great clam chowder in Portland, but now they’re being presented with sophisticated, truly innovative dishes from local suppliers. More and more, we’re finding that visitors to Maine are coming up for the great food and restaurant scene, and no longer just for the beautiful scenery and relaxed pace of life.”

Maine restaurants situated in towns close to Portland no doubt also contribute to the area’s allure as a premium food destination. The dining room of Chef John Hughes, owner of Kennebunk’s longtime favorite Windows on the Water restaurant, is routinely filled with guests – many from neighboring states, and many of whom travel to Kennebunk when their cruise ships dock at the Portland waterfront. And Chef Rick Hirsch, owner of the Damariscotta River Grill and the seasonal Anchor Inn Restaurant in Round Pond, Maine, (situated roughly an hour northeast of Portland), also finds that an increasing number of visitors to Maine are making the trip primarily due to its first-rate regional cuisine.

“We’re fortunate to have such a wide selection of top-rate restaurants and culinary offerings in and around Portland,” noted Dick Grotton, President and CEO of the Maine Restaurant Association. “Whether folks are first-time visitors to Portland, or they’ve been coming to Maine for years, you’ll constantly hear raves about the food that they’re enjoying. Our Maine lobster dishes are wonderful, to be sure, but the Portland dining scene in Maine is so much broader. People are realizing that more and more.”

For further information about these Portland area restaurants, visit:

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| Cinque Terre Restaurant       | <a href="http://www.cinqueterremaine.com">www.cinqueterremaine.com</a>             |
| Vignola Restaurant            | <a href="http://www.vignolamaine.com">www.vignolamaine.com</a>                     |
| Uffa! Restaurant              | <a href="http://www.uffarestaurant.com">www.uffarestaurant.com</a>                 |
| Front Room Restaurant and Bar | <a href="http://www.thefrontroomrestaurant.com">www.thefrontroomrestaurant.com</a> |
| 555                           | <a href="http://www.fivefifty-five.com">www.fivefifty-five.com</a>                 |
| Francisco’s Blue House Café   | <a href="http://www.franciscosportland.com">www.franciscosportland.com</a>         |
| Portland’s Restaurant & Bar   | <a href="http://www.topchops.com">www.topchops.com</a>                             |
| Windows on the Water          | <a href="http://www.windowsonthewater.com">www.windowsonthewater.com</a>           |

**About Front Burner:**

Front Burner PR combines proven national PR and marketing experience with its extensive list of media contacts to effectively publicize chef, restaurant, food and wine clients. The boutique firm consistently delivers cost-effective publicity for clients in the northeast and southeast regions. Clients enjoy coverage in outlets as far-ranging as *The Washington Post*, *TIME*, StarChefs.com and *Food Arts* to *Yankee Magazine*, the Food and Drink Radio Show and *Car & Travel*. Front Burner PR specializes in identifying and building customer bases, spreading the word on start-up businesses, and event publicity. [www.frontburnerpr.com](http://www.frontburnerpr.com)

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