



The luscious bar and waterfront dining room create romantic shore dining at Pier 77. At their attached sister restaurant, The Ramp (inset), the atmosphere is pure waterfront fun, with yachting pennants and signature drinks like Painkiller (Malibu rum, orange & pineapple juice, nutmeg).

The lobster fleet shimmers at its moorings as *Fidelity V*, propelled by three black 300-hp Mercury outboards, takes a conspicuous turn at the bell buoy and heads with boyhood familiarity into Cape Porpoise Harbor.

Weaving deftly through the channel buoys, it's obvious the very inconspicuous Neil Bush, who's borrowed his dad's (President George Bush 41) boat with two young Texas-t-shirt-clad passengers along for the ride, knows his way around here.

Gliding past Town Pier ahead of the sun, Bush (a rare sighting—did you know there was also a Marvin Bush?) ties up momentarily beyond The Ramp restaurant to score some classic Maine crustacean takeout.

Nice work if you can get it. Especially since Pier 77 and The Ramp don't list "access by sea" as one of their five-star advantages.



Greetings from Cocktail Cove

Yes, it's possible to tie up and dine at a shorefront restaurant if you know the ropes.

FROM STAFF & WIRE REPORTS

JULY/AUGUST 2011 33



More than just great meals ▪ More than just waterfront dining
 More than just friendly faces ▪ More than just fresh local seafoods
 More than just sea breezes and cocktails... on the deck

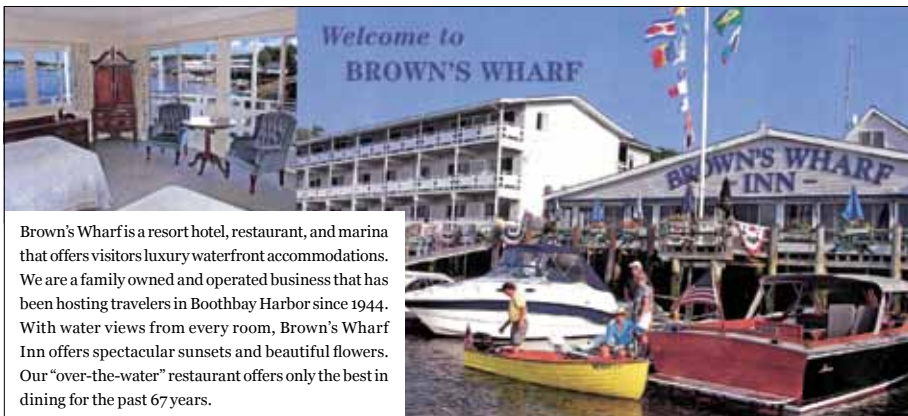
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Cook's Lobster House at the tip of Bailey Island is the place to dock and enjoy a lobster roll and Blue Lobster cocktail (vodka, blueberry-infused liqueur). "I've seen 145-foot yachts docked, but it's a working dock," says GM Matthew Hillery.



Still, if the restaurants are on pilings hugging Kennebunkport Pier, it doesn't hurt to ask around, does it?

When we did exactly that, one diner confided to us he's slid in and carefully tied up his 16-foot motorboat among the little rowboats along the floats of the pier for 40 years, with no one ever asking him why. What happens in Cape Porpoise stays in Cape Porpoise.

Still, it's best to check in with the harbor-master, who can be reached at 967-5040.

Any way you look at it, it's worth the effort, because many of Maine's finest shore restaurants are even more delicious for "two if by sea."

Here are some reef points to help you learn the ropes, too.

DENNETT'S WHARF OYSTER BAR

You're entering Castine Harbor in a bobbing sailboat at twilight. What's up ahead? The canary-yellow awning of Dennett's Wharf Oyster Bar is visible from half mile away.

Making fast to the restaurant dock, you walk up the ramp to the wooden gate with a sign: "For those arriving by boat, please see the hostess..."

Don't let the casual vibe fool you—this dockside shack is a coy culinary wolf in sheep's clothing and rivals the most urban of bistros.

The onion rings are crispy and sweet, the peekytoe crab salad rich and buttery, and the house-made corned beef smothered with crunchy sauerkraut and nutty Gruyère. But The Reuben's even more of a lucky strike (the

Hit this hotspot before 11:30 a.m. to snag a slip (\$20/hour) near Barnacle Billy's. Enjoy the broiled lobster and Rum Punch. No reservations required.



FROM TOP: PHOTO BY PETE WORG; PRESS.COM; DENNETT'S WHARF; BARNACLE BILLY'S; MATT PEDERSEN

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old salts here love to talk about the Civil-War-era bowling alley once located beneath), best paired with a Bloody Valentine (Sin Cider, framboise lambic, and just as loved as a Sailor's valentine)—a wink at “the Dennett family’s rum-running operation at this wharf during Prohibition,” says manager Zander Parker. As for your rum-runner, “We’ll take boats up to 80 feet—over 30 feet, please call ahead. There’s no fee for lunch/ dinner day-trippers and cruising yachts. Additional space is available next door at the public dock.”

DIMILLO'S FLOATING RESTAURANT

Enjoy deep-fried lobster tails and a Salty Dog (vodka, grapefruit juice, salted rim) literally on the water. And getting to this iconic Portland restaurant is easy as a sea breeze. “Call our marina on Channel 9. An attendant will help tie up your vessel,” says Steve DiMillo, Sr. “It’s \$20 up front, but with a dinner receipt, you’ll get a refund. Size allowance determined by availability.”

READING ROOM, BAR HARBOR INN

“Right across from us is Bar Island, then the Porcupine Islands and Winter Harbor. It’s the most beautiful view in town,” says dining room manager Cathy Walton. Don’t miss the lobster pie and Oasis Club Cosmopolitan (Absolut Citron, Cointreau, cranberry). “Kayaks can come up on the town beach for no fee.” But for bigger fish, harbormaster Charlie Phippen says, “\$3 per foot per day.”

DIAMOND'S EDGE

“Pulling into Diamond Cove, you’ll see our 40-foot marina on the pier. We have about 20 slips. Someone will help you tie up,” says

Incredible views, crab-stuffed avocados, and a “Fountain of Youth” (Absolut Berri Açai, soda, pomegranate syrup) await you at Kennebunkport’s Arundel Wharf Restaurant. Their dock is private, so get permission before tying off to tie one on.



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marketing vice-president Caitlin Prentice. "Walk 100 yards to the first building on the left. See the hostess first. Choose the laid-back lawn seating (10-feet from a cliff that drops to the water) or our awning-covered back-porch." Try the lobster fritters with chipotle aioli, and the menu of retro cocktails includes the Dark 'n' Stormy (dark rum, ginger beer).

RISING TIDE

"We're on the Scarborough River. At high tide, it looks like the water comes right up to the windows," says manager Lydia Holt. "At low tide, you can watch clam diggers." Rising Tide offers "fresh lobster, right off the boat." Super-size your meal, but downsize your transportation. "Thirty-foot fishing boats are fine, but not big yachts. No charge to tie up and eat."

SALTWATER GRILLE

See the Portland skyline while you enjoy Cracklin' Calamari and a Saltwater Grille Sunset (mango vodka, orange juice). Manager Deborah Broderson says "We're expanding the dock to accommodate sailboats and yachts. No fee if you have dinner."

KENNEBEC TAVERN AND MARINA

"From here you can see the Kennebec River and two bridges—the Sagadahoc and the old Carlton bridge," says owner Kristi Nigaard of her Bath restaurant. After docking, try a Surfer Martini (vodka, rum, banana liqueur) and fried parsnips appetizer. "Our dock is on chains and moorings, best for boats under 40 feet. The city dock can take larger boats," says Nigaard.

BROWN'S WHARF INN

"We have views of both the inner and outer harbors," says manager Michelle Wilson of this Boothbay Harbor favorite. Try the prime rib paired with Brown's House Punch. ("We could call it 'Seguin Lighthouse Punch,'" Wilson laughs.) "No boat size limits, and no charge if you have dinner." ■

▶▶ For more photos and listings visit Online Extras at portlandmonthly.com. Send us stories about your favorite cocktail coves and tie-up experiences to staff@portlandmonthly.com.



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"Things couldn't have worked out better," says Marianne. The Garners started out sharing a beautiful assisted living apartment together, and later, when necessary, John received extra physical and emotional support in the Rose Garden, Scarborough's memory care center.

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