



ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS Clockwise from left: St. John's Bridge spans the Willamette River, a beloved and popular leisure attraction; Bamboo Sushi, a sustainable sushi restaurant; the most eco-friendly convention center in the Pacific Northwest

UNCONVENTIONAL TRAVEL

Portland Sees Green

Business travelers fall for the City of Roses' quirky charms

By AEFA MULHOLLAND

YOU'VE PROBABLY BEEN READING A LOT ABOUT PORTLAND, ORE., in the news recently—thanks to Sam Adams, who became the city's first openly gay mayor in January (though not without some ensuing controversy). But this city has got a lot more to offer than scandalous politics. Portland has an irrepressible sense of fun and a whole lot of character. America's other P-Town exudes eclectic charm from every nook of its park-encircled urban landscape. A glance up from your BlackBerry yields some of Portland's famed quirks. Bumper stickers proclaim "Keep Portland Weird!" while miniature plastic horses are tied to old hitching rings on sidewalks. Meanwhile, the city's official doughnut comes in the shape of a voodoo doll that "bleeds," thanks to its jelly filling. If you're here for business and looking for a little after-hours fun, Portland comes up roses.

The city's outlook is as sustainable as it is offbeat. Despite its smaller stature compared to other major U.S. cities, Portland has the highest number of LEED (U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design rating) certified projects in the country. The Oregon Convention Center, the largest in the Pacific Northwest, is one such building. Originally opened in 1990, the state-of-the-art facility was expanded in 2003 to nearly 1 million square feet of convention space. Travel Portland, the municipal tourism authority, provides meeting planners with a Green Meetings Toolkit. Visiting the city saves some green as well, as Oregon has no sales tax (read: "guilt-free shopping").

EXTENDED STAY

Max, the city's convenient light rail, zips from downtown over the Willamette River to the Convention Center in just minutes, so don't relegate your stay to standard convention-adjacent hotels. Stay central and be poised to take advantage of time off. Perched on top of Macy's department store on the northeast corner of "Portland's living room," Pioneer Square, the stately **Nines** (525 S.W. Morrison St.; 877-229-9995; StarwoodHotels.com) is a masterpiece of contemporary decor. Rooms feature decadent eight-foot turquoise velvet chaise lounges, raindrop-effect chandeliers, 42-inch flat-screen televisions, and 350-thread-count linens. The 331-room, eco-conscious Starwood property betrays a love of art, including 400-plus pieces from local artists in its collection. Start your day with a hearty breakfast featuring fennel sausage or orange mascarpone mini-waffles at Urban Farmer in the luminous seven-story atrium, sweat in the unusually large fitness center, or browse some of the 3,000 books available for loan in the intimate library. In 2008 the once-dowdy **Hotel Modera** (515 S.W. Clay St.; 503-484-1084; HotelModera.com) was transformed with a multimillion-dollar →

ST. JOHN'S BRIDGE: JEFF STRICKLER/ISTOCKPHOTO; CONVENTION CENTER: BRUCE FORSTER/VIEWFINDERS

AD

2 1/4" x 10 1/8"



THE ART OF SLEEPING
Clockwise from top: the swanky hotel lobby at the Nines; the Hotel Modera's Zen-like courtyard; a cozily designed platform bed in room 415 at the Ace Hotel

renovation and a transfusion of mid-century retro-modern style. Modera sits at the quieter end of downtown near Portland State University. A fourth light-rail line, the Green Line, opens this month and runs from Union Station to the Modera, making the hotel a good choice if you need to catch Amtrak from Seattle or want to connect with other rail lines to the Japanese Gardens, the convention center, or the airport. Guest rooms are adorned with bold dramatic touches, such as dashing orange and red pillows and faux-fur throws. Outside in the hotel's courtyard, blazing fire pits take the chill out of cool Portland nights. The 174-room Modera offers free wireless, passes for a nearby gym, complimentary European breakfast, and late checkout.

Facing Stark Street's popular gay bars, the 79-room **Ace Hotel** (1022 S.W. Stark St.; 503-228-2277; AceHotel.com/Portland) is within walking distance of downtown's business district, fun shopping, and the Pearl neighborhood's restaurants, galleries, and bars. Rooms feature distinctive murals and

unusual flourishes, including vintage furnishings, claw-footed tubs or glass-walled showers, and, in larger rooms, turntables (the hotel has its own vintage vinyl collection for you to borrow from!). It's a good way to experience Portland's endearing quirks firsthand—and in comfort.

CONVENTION EXIT STRATEGY

Between downtown meetings, browse gargantuan **Powell's City of Books** (1005 W. Burnside St.; 800-878-7323; Powells.com), a vast independent bookstore that fills an entire city block with over a million new, used, and rare books. Another option for a quiet interlude is the **Portland Classical Chinese Garden** (Northwest Third Avenue and Everett Street; 503-228-8131; PortlandChineseGarden.org). Draw inspiration for your next career move in this exquisite re-creation of a Ming Dynasty garden, and celebrate a successful deal at the ornate, two-story Tao of Tea Teahouse.

If Oregon's famed "liquid sunshine" (as locals refer to the state's 155 days →

THE NINES: AEFU MULHOLLAND; HOTEL MODERA: RANDY BOVERMAN/COURTESY HOTEL MODERA; ACE HOTEL: JEREMY PELLEY



IRRESISTIBLE TREATS
Clockwise from above: magical temptations cast a spell at Voodoo Doughnut; delighted shoppers in Nob Hill; curators Caren Anderson and Carl Baldwin at the Velvetería, home to 350 kitschy velvet artworks

of rainfall per year) lets up, explore the Northwest neighborhood—upscale boutiques and restaurants line leafy Northwest 23rd Avenue. Once you're entirely off the clock, schedule a Historic Hoods ride through the Ladd's Addition and Hawthorne neighborhoods or a Coffee Crawl tour from a roasting facility to Stumptown Coffee's cupping room (where coffee buyers determine quality of batches) with **Pedal Bike Tours** (503-916-9704; PedalBikeTours.com). To up the kooky content of your trip, visit the **Velvetería** (2448 E. Burnside St.; 503-233-5100; Velveteria.com), a bizarre yet enjoyable museum that is home to 350 kitschy velvet artworks.

Shake off work woes on the dance floor at the up-tempo complex **Red Cap Garage and Boxxes** (1035 S.W. Stark St.; 503-226-4171; Boxxes.com), a two-for-one drink emporium popular with a down-to-earth crowd, or at gay cocktail lounge **Scandals** (1125 S.W. Stark St.; 503-227-5887; ScandalsPDX.com), a video cruise bar that originally opened in 1979.

MEAL PLAN

Portland's locavore (locally grown) dining scene—and dedication to everything fair trade, organic, and environmentally conscious—might be viewed by some as overly earnest if the food didn't taste so good and come at such

appealing prices. The city is truly one of the most appetizing foodie destinations in the country.

Flavors are outstanding at **Bamboo Sushi** (310 S.E. 28th Ave.; 503-232-5255; BambooSushiPDX.com), the first restaurant certified "sustainable" by the Marine Stewardship Council for its use of only healthy, plentiful, ethically caught fish. If you want to spice things up after a day of papers and presentations, sample seasonal and farm-fresh takes on Indian classics at superchic **Vindalho** (2083 S.E. Clinton St.; 503-467-4550; Vindalho.com). Renowned lesbian mixologist Lucy Brennan's restaurant and bar combo, **Mint** and **820** (816 N. Russell St.; 503-284-5518; Mintand820.com), is the perfect place for a creative after-work cocktail and excellent fusion fare that merges Asian, Caribbean, and European influences. Brennan's use of inventive ingredients and unusual takes on classic and modern drinks have won her acclaim from local and national publications.

For a truly distinctive local eating experience, head to **Voodoo Doughnut** (22 S.W. Third Ave.; 503-241-4704; VoodooDoughnut.com) for its famous signature voodoo doll-shaped doughnut, complete with stake and tasty dribble of jam blood. If meetings run late, you can still stock up on carbs here: Voodoo's downtown location is open 24 hours.

Portland's liquid specialties

Local libations to toast your stay in the Rose City

MICROBREWS

One of Portland's healthy crop of 38 microbreweries, Upright Brewing is a recent addition to "Beervana" (Portlanders' term for the city's beer craft), but the company has already produced some of the most interesting brews. Try its distinctive Number 4 at Saraveza Bottle Shop and Pasty Tavern. Saraveza.com

SPIRITS

Hot on the heels of the microbrewery trend, an artisan distillery movement has created a vibrant Distillery Row. Call for a tour and tasting of the small-batch distillers' Aviator Gin, Medoyeff Vodka, and limited-run liquors, or sample their aquavit, served as a Viking Quest cocktail at the Ace Hotel's slick Clyde Common restaurant bar. Medoyeff.com, ClydeCommon.com

PINOT NOIR

The lush Willamette Valley has been producing wine grapes since 1847, winning Oregon a reputation as the Burgundy of America. The state now boasts 395 wineries. Try a flight of sultry Pinot Noirs at Thirst Wine Bar, Riverplace, or savor an inky glass at hip bistro Ned Ludd, home of what its owners call "Portland Euro" cuisine. ThirstBistro.com, NedLuddPDX.com

ESPRESSO

Stumptown Coffee Roasters wins every city accolade for its roasted, small-batch beans. Get Portland's favorite flavors at the bike-through window at lesbian-owned Black Sheep Bakery. StumptownCoffee.com, BlackSheepBakery.com



VOODOO DOUGHNUT: POLARA STUDIOS; NOB HILL: TRAVEL PORTLAND/BASIL CHILDERS; VELVETERIA: MATT D'ANNUNZIO