

The Migis Touch: A half century in hospitality



Jed, Tim, Joan and Landace Porta at the Migis Lodge.

We open the May issue with a spotlight on the Porta family, now entering their 50th season of innkeeping.

Three generations strong, the owners of the [Migis Lodge on Sebago Lake](#) consider their waterfront forest jewel of a property as key to their success. But embodying the essence of innkeeping is more than location.

Opening in World War I, the property, now known as Migis Lodge, was a beacon for travelers. It still is.

"It is exactly the same today as the day it opened in 1916," said Tim Porta, who purchased the South Casco hideaway from his father Gene in 1978. "The lodges are the same; we still have the American plan; fishing was a bigger activity, and they had weaving in the living room."

The American plan includes all meals and actives such as tennis and canoeing. If it sounds like a throwback to the "Dirty Dancing" era, it

is. (Gentlemen aged 13 and older are required to wear jackets in the dining room).

"When other resorts gave up on lunch, then modified breakfast and dinner or made it a choice," Migis doubled down on its old-style amenities for travelers said Tim. The strategy worked.

"People don't come here to be in Maine, they come because this particular place takes care of all their needs," said Tim. "From programs for kids, to leisurely cocktails ... families come, put keys in their drawers and are here to stay."

To live up to its name (the Abenaki word for "Place to Steal Away to Rest") Migis Lodge's food and beverage department requires the most attention of all, says Tim.

Good thing their chef, John Strain, who started in 1984 is still part of Migis's solid base of 15 year-round employees. The lodge has housing for many employees, which they know is a luxury that few seasonal operations have. It takes well over 110 employees to run this resort. Guiding it all is Tim's son Jed.

Running around the lodge as a kid, he was hired at age 13 to rake the beach and tend to boats. "I had a love for it all along, my parents did not pressure me at all. I have four older siblings who are not involved," said Jed, a graduate of the Cornell School of Hotel Administration.

"I decided to stay with it because there is nothing else I'd rather be doing."

And his enthusiasms extends beyond one property. The family manages five other resorts in Maine, including the The Black Point Inn in Scarborough.

Jed's wife, Landace, keeps the Prout's Neck grande dame in good trim. And they just had a son, Silas, who might stretch the family tradition to span a century.

Down in D.C. MeRA meets lawmakers



A strong contingent from MERA traveled to the nation's capitol last month to put pressure on Maine legislators on several hospitality fronts.

Pictured here from left, CEO Steve Hewins, MeRA board chair Michelle Corry, government affairs officer Greg Dugal, members John Kyle and Mike Carney attended the National Restaurant Association Political Action Summit and visited with several of our congressional officers.

The team urged senators Angus King, Susan Collins and Rep. Bruce Poliquin to increase the numbers of H-2B and J-1 visas to relieve the pressure on employee-strapped hotels and restaurants. "They are aware of our struggles and promised us they are working on moving the numbers," said Hewins. (**More on our workforce development plans below**).

Also discussed were health care and health insurance mandates, restaurant depreciation and ADA drive-by law suits.

Staffing solutions emerge in time for summer rush

This winter and spring a cadre of MERA and MEIA members volunteered to help train a new crop of hospitality workers. Our newly formed partnership with the

Maine Department of Corrections and Department of Labor will graduate approximately 21 men and women this May and June who are ready to work in hotels and restaurants.

Having completed ServSafe, WorkReady and participated in four workshops, these reentrants will receive a certificate and will be ready to help alleviate the staffing pressures many members are experiencing.

These highly motivated workers deserve a chance and can serve in a broad array of hotel and restaurant positions - from front and back of the house, to maintenance to office work.

Our thanks go out to ProStart emeritus chef Will Beriau, Nonantum Resort's Katie Clark, Maureen LaSalle of Southern Maine Community College and Layfayette Hotel's Ramsey Layfayette and Stephen Richards.

As an added bonus members can take advantage of state and federal incentives:

The WOTC, [Work Opportunity Tax Credit](#), reduces an employer's cost of doing business by offering a tax credit after hiring certain people. Some tax credits are up to \$9,000.

The [Federal Bonding Program](#) provides Fidelity Bonds that guarantee honesty for "at-risk," hard-to-place job seekers. The bonds cover the first six months of employment and there is no cost to the job applicant or the employer.

To learn how to connect with these individuals email Anna.Black@maine.gov

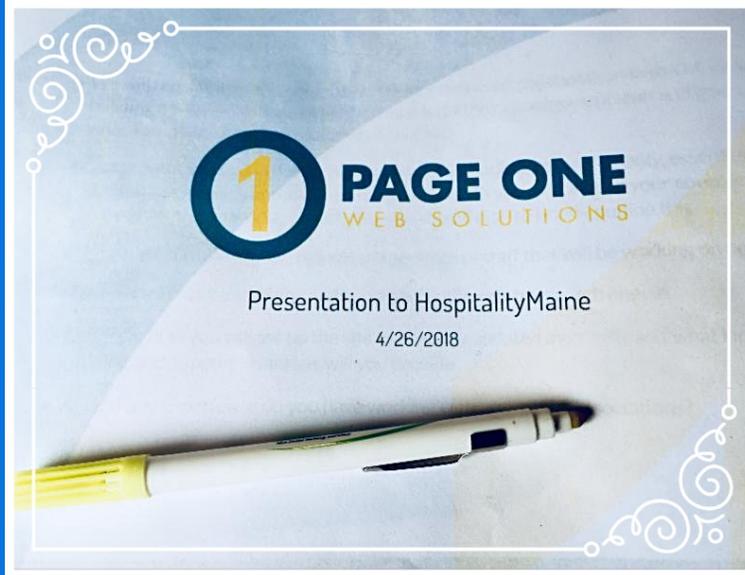
What else are we doing?

- * Working with seven schools in the [Maine Community College System](#) to create a badging system. This new concept offers micro degrees for students working in the field while they study. Badges will be dispatched to students as they upgrade their hospitality skill sets.
- * Employing the National Restaurant Association apprentice program to provide on-the-job training with members across the state.
- * Continue to put pressure on legislators to free up more H-2B and J-1 visas

Extra! Extra! Web firm selected for HospitalityMaine

After shifting through a round of proposals issued to top web firms in Maine and New England, the marketing and events committee selected four firms to present their plans for HoME's new logo and website.

They presented to us in late



April and **Page One Web Solutions** along with creative design firm **Workshop** was selected to carry the association HoME.

The committee is meeting with the team in Portland this week. Plan is to launch a new site and logo this summer. Page One news indeed!

Prostart teams proves us proud in Providence

High schoolers from Lewiston and Lincoln traveled to Rhode Island last month to compete in the high-stakes, 2018 National ProStart Invitational - the nation's premier high school culinary arts and restaurant management competition hosted by the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation.

The results rocked. With 49 teams competing, the now-famous Green Ladle Team placed 14th, while Northern Penobscot Tech Region 3 came in 25th for their inventive music-themed restaurant concept.

Chefs David Turin and Will Beriau consulted and cheered on the teams. Check out our Facebook Live video from the floor.



After months of practice and state competitions, Herndon Career Center from Raytown, Missouri won first place in culinary arts and Wilbur Cross High School from New Haven, CT took first place in restaurant management.

Despite the huge turnout, Maine was one of few schools to have its own TV crew. **News Center Maine's 207 covered the program** in a well-produced detailed package capturing grace under fire.

Allied partner spotlight

Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine



Maine Wild Blueberries Provide Meaning and Sense of Place

When chefs create menus, it's easy to forgo the obvious. Tourists visiting Maine hanker for more than locally grown food, they want native delights. Maine has them in abundance.

Wild blueberries have been growing here for 10,000 years and they offer distinct culinary advantages: along with intense flavor they provide twice the antioxidants of regular cultivated blueberries. Well worth highlighting in your menu.

An oyster is one thing, but a Damariscotta oyster is much better. A blueberry sounds great, but a Maine Wild Blueberry is divine.

Find out what chefs say about Maine's Wild Blueberries in [this video](#) or watch these blue beauties star on [the TODAY show](#).

Legislative Lowdown

Greg Dugal's bi-weekly e-report puts you in the know.



The May edition has a special report on the Portland paid sick leave hearing in April.

Look for the Maine Legislative Report in your inbox Thursday!

MEMBERSHIP Meter, see who joined us in the past month



Stuart and Sarah DeVan, new owners of The 1774 Inn in Phippsburg are planning a culinary oasis on the banks of the Kennebec River.

The 1774 Inn

MediaWatch

What's a brewtel? If Shipyard's plans sail through Portland permitting it will be the latest hospitality craze - a craft beer hotel. The Portland Press Herald [taps into the trend](#).

The new owners of the Montsweag Roadhouse are bringing a farm-to-table approach to everyone's favorite bend in the road. The [Montsweag Farm Restaurant re-opened in late April](#) helmed by former restaurateur and lobsterman Wayne Wescott. "This is a passion project," he said.

The Red Barn in Augusta demonstrates how giving back to the community creates good karma and [great press in the BostonGlobe Magazine](#).

New member [Black Elephant Hostel opens this summer in Portland](#). A bunk will cost \$40 a night and a double room, with locking door, will cost only \$90, the Press Herald reports.

IndustryTrends

Bring on the fries, but hold the straws! Straws are not recyclable and [McDonald's sent a ripple through the plastics industry](#) this month by announcing they have banned them in the UK.

Marriott [doubles down on mobile check-ins](#) with an advanced app feature. Is this the key to a robust rewards program?

Just in time for ice cream season, there is a global vanilla bean shortage. What are local purveyors going to do? [Here's the scoop](#).

Calorie counting is back. Starting this week federal law requires restaurants with 20 or more locations to [post calories on their menus](#). Dressing on the side please.

EVENTS

MERA and MEIA Scholarship dinner

What: Celebration of 2018 scholars

When: June 11, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Where: 16 Bay View, Camden

Keynote speaker is [Sean Riley, president of Maine Course Hospitality Group](#)

Tickets: \$65, proceeds go towards the Maine Innkeepers Association Education Foundation. Contact Jennifer Sevon at 207-213-2060

or jennifer@maineinns.com

Annual Golf Classic

When: September 5

Where: Spring Meadows in Gray.

For more info or to sponsor email events@mainerestaurant.com

ServSafe Classes

May 21, York

May 22, Augusta

June 12 - Westbrook

June 21 - Augusta



| send feedback, tips, and suggestions to kathleen@mainerestaurant.com |

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