

City of brews, views, church pews

PORTLAND: And we mustn't forget bikes, brilliant coffee shops and omelette stops

NEVILLE JUDD
SPECIAL TO THE PROVINCE

Décor isn't a priority at Tugboat Brewing.

Wood shingles cover half the stucco walls and the carpet has absorbed a few beers over the years.

A painting of a biblical scene looms over an old piano on a stage built for solo performances.

There are church pews for seats and a large book case offers hardbacks on greenhouse gardening, hunting, Doberman pinschers and *Times of My Life*, by Betty Ford.

There's a Kiss poster, too.

The lights are dim
The beer is like nectar.

"The Tugboat is the best, most overlooked brew pub in Portland," Scott, a bicycle tour guide, had told me.

He was right.

In between biking, book-store browsing, and drinking copious amounts of great coffee, I'd hit six pubs during my short stay here. I'd marvelled at the 100-plus beers on tap at Henry's Tavern while drinking a Walking Man Knuckle Dragger Pale Ale. At the Bridgeport Brew Pub I'd tried the four-ounce tasters

of Haymaker EPA, the Hop Czar and the Blue Heron Pale among others.

There was the fruity and festive Jubelale at Deschutes Brew Pub and Widmer's Drop Top Amber Ale at Kells Irish Pub.

Lovely beers amid pleasant surroundings, but only the Tugboat made me feel like I was in the living room of my favourite, if slightly mad aunt.

Such eccentricity reflects Portland, a city of contradictions that strike me soon after boarding the Metropolitan Area Express (MAX) light rail from the airport.



Immediate views of Portland were a bit drab in the rain, but do improve; and that bike pile is for use, not mere admiration. — SUBMITTED PHOTOS

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