

MAINE MADE

BELTED IN

If you are unearthing your Nantucket reds for summer sailing, consider adding a belt from **The Belted Cow** (305 Rte. 1, Yarmouth, 207-846-3364), a Yarmouth company started by Jim and Elizabeth Taylor in 2004. The belts come in every Maine pattern imaginable, from lobsters, crabs, and fish, to golfers, seashells, and sailboats — all designed by local artists. Try the Eric Hopkins Islands design (pictured below) and 10 percent of the proceeds will be donated to the Island Institute. Stop in at the Yarmouth factory store, go online at beltedcow.com, or search out the products at the Holms Store in Northeast Harbor, the Admiral's Buttons in Camden, the House of Logan in Boothbay, or Archipelago in Rockland. Other products include totes, key chains, flip-flops, and even a matching leash and collar for your pooch!



COURTESY OF THE BELTED COW



PHOTOGRAPH BY RUSSELL WATKINS

In Good Hands

Eat, drink, and be merry at a Rockland wine bar that specializes in late-night fare.

On any given summer evening, Maine's midcoast region offers an enviable range of fine dining options — up until a certain strike of the clock. The witching hour for most restaurants in the area tends to be a strict 9 P.M. Then the ovens turn off, patrons drive home, and the late dinner diner is oft disappointed.

Happily, In Good Company, located on Main Street in Rockland, is ready to serve you late into the night, as late as eleven during the high-summer season. But you won't find bar food or burgers at this chic eatery. Rather, this is the place to go to enjoy the fun tapas-style plates and the unsurpassed wine offerings over good conversation.

Owner and chef Melody Wolfertz, a Culinary Institute of America graduate — and Rockland native — values the company as much as the food. "I have a great base

and we have a lot of fun," says Wolfertz. The local patronage imparts a familial quality to the atmosphere. "I think I succeed in that I don't have an average customer," explains Wolfertz. "My favorite is when I look out and I see all ages out here. It's a comfortable place to come, but I would say that my customer base is mostly female. Even if you're by yourself you can come sit at the bar and talk to somebody." (Sitting at the bar with the friendly staff really does alleviate any loneliness the solo diner might feel). But In Good Company is not just a local watering hole. It exudes a cosmopolitan feel, the result of the late hours, the small plates, and the gorgeous interior design — enhanced by remnants of past inhabitants like the bank vault turned wine cellar. It is truly an oasis of urbanity and sophistication in Rockland, without the pretension.

DINING



Owner Melody Wolfertz (left) serves up an array of international wines and tasty food — from cheese plates to beef tenderloin — until nearly 11 P.M. at her cosmopolitan Rockland wine bar In Good Company.



And any city would be lucky to have the wine list of In Good Company. A wine enthusiast and part owner of the Wine Seller a few blocks away, Wolfertz admits she has a "problem with buying wine." The problem being that she buys a lot of it. "I try to cover all the countries and all the styles," says Wolfertz. "It's hard because now there are so many little grapes." There are over two hundred wines on her list, plus more than thirty bottled beers. Don't be afraid to ask for

help when making a selection, as the staff is eager to lead you to a trusted favorite or something new. For a more in-depth experience of the wine offerings, attend one of Wolfertz's frequent wine dinners that pair cuisine and libations from regions around the world.

Such dinners, and the attention to the wine list, are possible because of the advantageously small size of the restaurant. This applies to the kitchen as well. Only one person can fit into this tiny

inlet, so every plate passes through Wolfertz's own hands. She takes a personal approach to gathering her ingredients, too, traveling to farm stands before work, collecting the freshest food possible. "We need to support small farmers," emphasizes Wolfertz. Indeed, the bounty of local farms constitutes her entire menu. You might have a pig product from Terra Optima in Appleton, greens from Dandelion Spring Farm in Damariscotta, honey from Beth's Farm Stand in Warren, goat cheese from Seal Cove Farm in Lamoine, or crab from "a really great provider" (so great she didn't want to give him or her away).

With well-chosen ingredients and personal attention to each plate, Wolfertz achieves the perfection of simple, good cooking. Sampling is the way to go here. For a snack, an order of crusty bread with Italian butter and Parmesan cheese pairs well with a glass of Waterbrook Chardonnay from Washington. Or have a casual, crispy pizzetta — the fig and prosciutto version is a customer favorite. For a more hearty meal, indulge in one of the entrees: beef and fish are almost always on the menu, taking various forms such as braised short ribs or Basque-style cod. Just make sure to save room for the chocolate fudge cake.

According to Wolfertz, the key to enjoyable dining is simple preparation of individual plates with lots of variety among the dishes. "I think it's boring to get one plate of something," she says. "It's a lot more fun to try new things and sit and chat." Wolfertz believes that good food and good company together have a way of suspending time. Thus the Italian adage adorning each menu: "A tavola non si invecchia mai." At the table one never grows old." Here's to never growing old, at the tables of In Good Company.

KATHLEEN FLEURY

In Good Company is located at 415 Main Street in Rockland. Open Tuesday through Sunday 4:30 P.M. to close. Small plates \$3-\$12; entrees \$14-\$20; desserts \$7-\$10. Wheelchair accessible. 207-593-9110.