

Home / Shopping / Tax-free shopping in Portland / The Portland sneakerhead scene

The Portland sneakerhead scene

Whether you're new to the game or a seasoned pro, it's easy to experience sneakerhead culture in Portland.

By Joseph Manuel | April 11, 2017

Tags: shoes/boots, shopping



Browse a broad array of stylish sneakers at Compound.

Ashley Anderson

Within Portland's Old Town Chinatown neighborhood, a sneakerhead oasis awaits. Boutiques stock endless kicks, a sneaker-themed coffee shop serves up espresso and a shoe-design academy teaches aspiring designers the ropes. Casual collectors and seasoned sneakerheads can dive into the Portland sneakerhead scene at these local businesses.

1

Compound Gallery

Compound Gallery, the granddaddy sneaker boutique of the scene, has been around for over a decade. The shop continues to spotlight the kicks, apparel, toys and random ephemera that make up the culture. For your feet, they offer a curated selection of Nike Swooshes and rare sneakers from cult streetwear outfitters. Looking for new threads? Compound stashes the trendiest brands to complete your look. Don't forget to check out the eccentric art gallery upstairs.

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503.796.2733

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2

Deadstock Coffee & Gallery PARTNER

Ever wondered where to get your caffeine fix while sprucing up your prized kicks and enjoying retro basketball décor? Deadstock Coffee is the answer to your oddly specific query. This modest space across the street from Compound Gallery oozes with personality. Owner Ian Williams worked his way up from janitor to designer at Nike before opening Deadstock. The friendly staff makes drink suggestions as they chat with anyone and everyone about, you guessed it, sneakers. (They have rare, not-for-sale kicks on display and a small selection of custom apparel and vintage sports mugs for purchase.) As far as what to sip, try the "LeBronald Palmer," which enhances the classic iced tea and lemonade combination with local coffee. In a city known for bacon-maple bars and fusion restaurants, this unorthodox concoction is everything you'd expect from a sneaker-themed coffee shop in Portland.

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3

Index PDX

With your thirst quenched, make the short walk to IndexPDX. Prepare for a sensory overload of rare, plastic-wrapped kicks. The consignment shop is basically a large room lined with new and gently used sneakers, most of the hard-to-find variety. It's a sneakerhead's dream — but don't be intimidated if you're new to the game. The staff is helpful and informative, helping locals and tourists alike find the perfect high-tops, low-tops, Jumpmans or Flyknits. So coveted are their gems that some can't be tried on for fear of creasing. IndexPDX does not mess around.

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4

PENSOLE Footwear Design Academy

A few blocks away, you'll find PENSOLE Footwear Design Academy, tucked inside a discreet building with minimal branding. The ultra-competitive design school opened in 2010 and has educated pupils from over 35 different countries. Many attendees ultimately gain employment at the biggest names in the footwear industry, many of which are headquartered in Portland. The academy grows each year, and alumni have gone on to design sneakers, high heels and other footwear.

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5

BAIT

After exploring Old Town Chinatown, BAIT is an excellent conclusion to your Portland sneakerhead tour. Eight blocks from PENSOLE in the heart of downtown, BAIT spins '90s hip-hop and offers a heaping helping of kicks. Don't miss their clothes and other collectibles, including figurines and a unique selection of jewelry. In the predominantly male sneakerhead culture, BAIT offers a refreshing assortment of goods for women, too.

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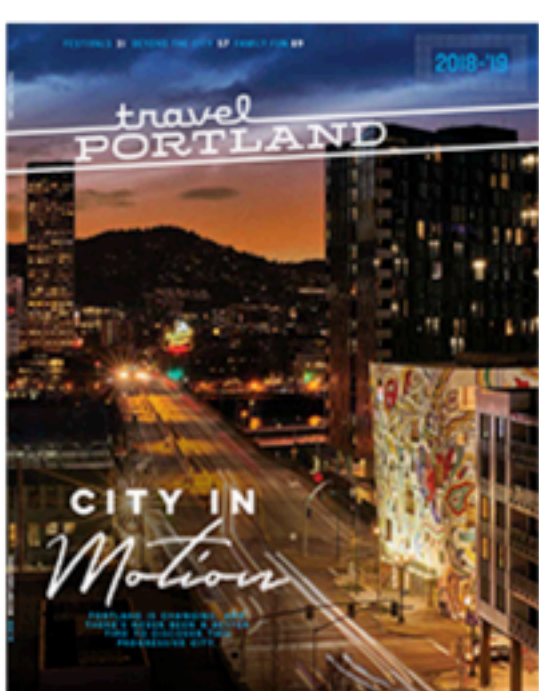
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