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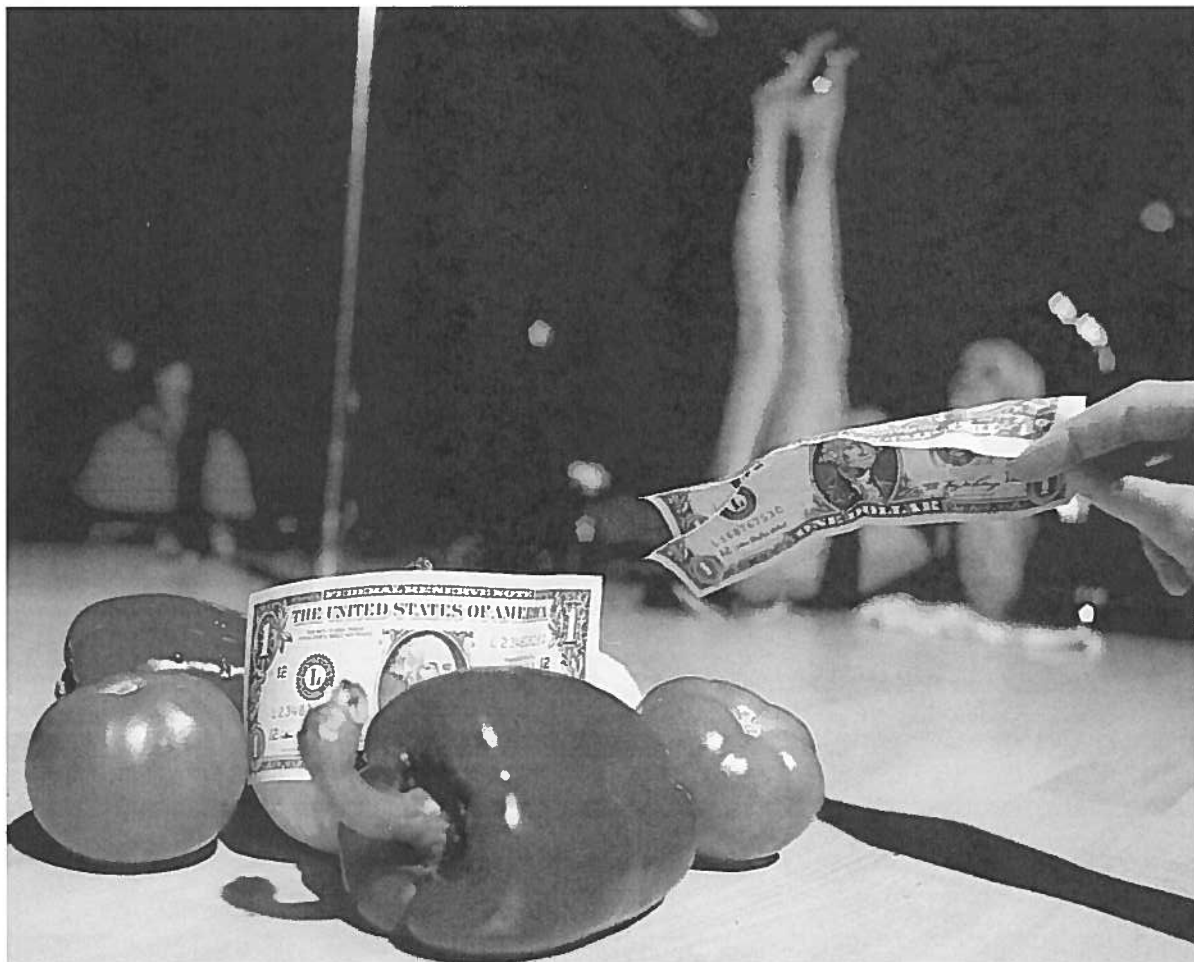
(/why-does-portland-have-so-many-strip-clubs/)Why Does Portland Have so Many Strip Clubs?

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In Portland, club patrons "make it rain" with veggies; Via Alicia J. Rose

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When it comes to self-imposed eccentricity, the city of Portland, Oregon has no equal.

It is a place where a human can, in the course of 24 hours, visit a museum of velvet paintings, join in on a World Naked Bike Ride, be serenaded (<http://i.ytimg.com/vi/cnVjkE87FDY/maxresdefault.jpg>) by a unicycling bagpipe player, and get legally married at a doughnut shop. No surprise then, that Portland's idolization of all things strange does not let up when it comes to strip clubs.

Among the city's nighteries is Casa Diablo, the "world's first vegan gentleman's club." Here, customers can enjoy a hummus veggie wrap while watching performers shed their non-animal-based g-strings. In a fashion only befit for Portland, change is given solely in \$2 bills.

"You're not going to find any fur, feathers, wool, or silk, or any other animal products," owner Johnny Diablo Zukle has said. "We're all about love and compassion."

Casa Diablo is but one of a cornucopia of strip clubs that proliferate Portland. There are so many that the city's residents have, for at least 20 years, vehemently maintained (<http://www.wweek.com/portland/article-4194-1995.html>) that they have "more strip clubs per capita than any municipality in America."


This has caused quite the debate. Some, like *TIME Magazine*, have branded (http://content.time.com/time/travel/cityguide/article/0,31489,1975826_1975753_1975585,00.html) the claim as nothing more than an "old sexy wives tale;" others, like local blog Tits and Sass (<http://titsandsass.com/why-does-portland-have-so-many-strip-clubs/>), have championed it as an irrefutable truth. Neither side, as far as we can tell, has presented any quantifiable measurement to defend its stance.

As resolute number crunchers, we're always up for tackling life's most important questions. So, we sent our data crawling team on a thrilling quest to determine whether or not Portland really deserves the title of "strip club capital."

Is Portland Really America's Strip Club Capital?



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As Ellyn Bogdanoff of PolitiFact (<http://www.politifact.com/florida/statements/2012/jan/13/ellyn-bogdanoff/tampa-strip-club-capital-world/>) has written, "counting [strip] clubs is not an exact science." This is true: reliable strip club data doesn't just fall into one's lap.

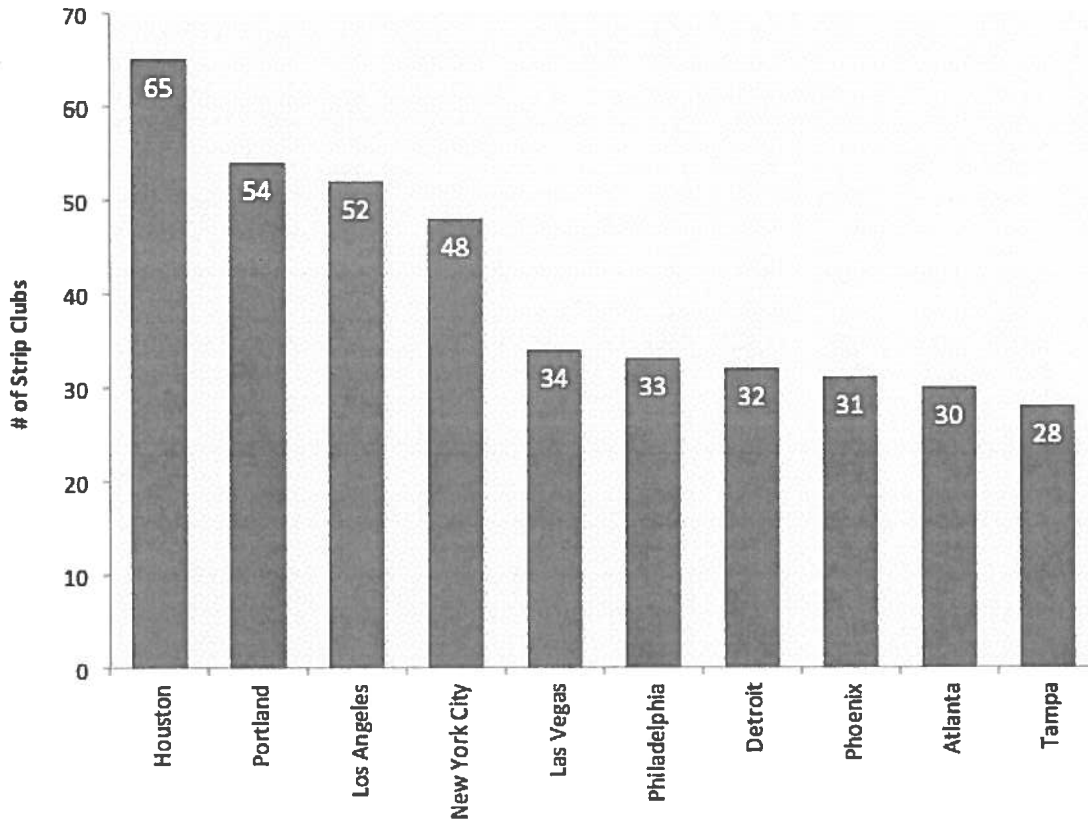
While club-counting sources exist online, most are deflatingly inaccurate, incomplete, and serve no other purpose than to advertise a handful of sad establishments. The best starting point we found was The Ultimate Strip Club List (<https://www.tuscl.net/tc.php>) (warning: probably NSFW), a site bent on doing exactly what its title insinuates: collecting a comprehensive list of America’s “nudie bars.”

The venues included on this list range from “bikini bars” to “live sex shows,” but most fall somewhere in between. It’s also important to note that TUSCL only compiles clubs with female dancers. Despite our sincerest efforts, we were not able to find an equivalent site for male strip clubs (which only constitute about 15% (<http://www.albany.edu/scj/jcipc/vol10is1/bernard.html>) of all strip clubs nationally).

After crawling TUSCL and compiling a club count for some 900 U.S. cities and towns, we cross-checked the top 100 on Yelp (by searching for “strip club,” limiting to the “Adult Entertainment” category, and counting manually), as well as on Google Maps (just for comparison’s sake). Admittedly, this method isn’t 100% comprehensive – but we’re confident that it’s damn near close.

Here’s the resulting tally of the cities with the **most** strip clubs:

U.S. Cities With the Most Strip Clubs



Source: Priceonomics Data Services, Strip Club Analytics Division; Data: TUSCL (https://www.tuscl.net/), Yelp, Google

But wait – Houston’s population, at 2.2 million, is nearly four times that of Portland! To cultivate a more accurate understanding of how much these cities value strip clubs, we narrowed our list to cities with more than 200,000 inhabitants, then calculated the number of clubs for every 100,000 residents.

Without further ado, we present to you the 50 U.S. cities with the highest number of strip clubs per capita:

America's Strippiest Cities

The 50 U.S. cities with the highest number of strip clubs per capita

Rank	City, State	Population	# of Strip Clubs	Per 100,000 Capita
1	Portland, Oregon	609,456	54	8.860
2	Tampa, Florida	352,957	28	7.932
3	Fayetteville, North Carolina	204,408	15	7.338
4	Miami, Florida	417,650	20	7.183
5	Atlanta, Georgia	447,841	30	6.699
6	New Orleans, Louisiana	378,715	23	6.073
7	Las Vegas, Nevada	603,488	34	5.634
8	Cleveland, Ohio	390,113	20	5.127
9	Detroit, Michigan	688,701	32	4.646
10	Newark, New Jersey	278,427	12	4.310
11	Baltimore, Maryland	622,104	26	4.179
12	Honolulu, Hawai'i	347,884	14	4.024
13	Greensboro, North Carolina	279,639	10	3.576
14	Toledo, Ohio	282,313	10	3.542
15	Orlando, Florida	255,483	9	3.523
16	Richmond, Virginia	214,114	7	3.269
17	Houston, Texas	2,195,914	65	2.960
18	Louisville, Kentucky	609,893	18	2.951
19	Rochester, New York	210,358	6	2.852
20	Corpus Christi, Texas	316,381	9	2.845
21	Minneapolis, Minnesota	400,070	11	2.750
22	Columbus, Ohio	822,553	22	2.675
23	Jacksonville, Florida	842,583	22	2.611
24	Anaheim, California	345,012	9	2.609
25	Lexington, Kentucky	308,428	8	2.594
26	Indianapolis, Indiana	843,393	20	2.371
27	Boise, Idaho	214,237	5	2.334
28	Fort Worth, Texas	792,727	17	2.144
29	Reno, Nevada	233,294	5	2.143
30	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	1,553,165	33	2.125
31	Dallas, Texas	1,257,676	26	2.067
32	Phoenix, Arizona	1,513,367	31	2.048
33	Oklahoma City, Oklahoma	610,613	12	1.965
34	Des Moines, Iowa	207,510	4	1.928
35	Birmingham, Alabama	212,113	4	1.886
36	Denver, Colorado	649,495	12	1.848
37	El Paso, Texas	674,433	12	1.779
38	Charlotte, North Carolina	792,862	14	1.766
39	Tulsa, Oklahoma	398,121	7	1.758
40	Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	305,841	5	1.635
41	Durham, North Carolina	245,475	4	1.629
42	St. Petersburg, Florida	249,688	4	1.602
43	Buffalo, New York	258,959	4	1.545
44	Seattle, Washington	652,405	10	1.533
45	Tucson, Arizona	526,116	8	1.521
46	Oxnard, California	203,007	3	1.478

47	San Francisco, California	857,442	12	1.433
48	Los Angeles, California	3,928,864	52	1.325
49	Chesapeake, Virginia	230,571	3	1.301
50	Hialeah, Florida	233,394	3	1.285

Source: Priceonomics Data Services; Data: TUSCL (<https://www.tuscl.net/>), Yelp, Google

Indeed, Portland boasts the highest number per capita in the U.S. — one for every 11,286 residents. This handily outranks the nudity-liberal likes of Las Vegas, New Orleans, and San Francisco, and even edges out Tampa, Florida, a city that often claims (<http://www.politifact.com/florida/statements/2012/jan/13/ellyn-bogdanoff/tampa-strip-club-capital-world/>) to be the country's strip club mecca. New York City, which has 48 clubs but a population of 8.5 million, doesn't even rank on this list.

Just for comparison's sake, Portland has more than twice as many strip clubs as it has public restrooms (<http://www.phlush.org/public-restroom-planning/portland-public-restroom/portland-toilet-locato/>). In contrast, San Francisco, which is only a third of the size of Portland, has four times (<http://sfdpw.org/?page=372>) more public restrooms than strip clubs.

But this priority isn't solely confined to Portland: Oregon, in general, enjoys the highest number of strip clubs per capita of any U.S. state:

America's Strippiest States

U.S. states ranked by number of strip clubs per capita

Rank	State	Population	# of Strip Clubs	Per 100,000 Capita
1	Oregon	3,899,353	85	2.180
2	West Virginia	1,855,413	40	2.156
3	Nevada	2,758,931	43	1.559
4	South Dakota	833,354	12	1.440
5	Wyoming	576,412	8	1.388
6	New Jersey	8,864,590	117	1.320
7	Hawaii	1,392,313	17	1.221
8	Wisconsin	5,726,398	67	1.170
9	Ohio	11,544,225	134	1.161
10	Oklahoma	3,814,820	41	1.075
11	Louisiana	4,601,893	48	1.043
12	Iowa	3,074,186	32	1.041
13	Florida	19,317,568	200	1.035
14	Indiana	6,537,334	64	0.979
15	Alaska	731,449	7	0.957
16	Rhode Island	1,050,292	10	0.952
17	South Carolina	4,723,723	44	0.931
18	Pennsylvania	12,763,536	114	0.893
19	Kentucky	4,380,415	38	0.867
20	Connecticut	3,590,347	31	0.863
21	Michigan	9,883,360	85	0.860
22	North Carolina	9,752,073	80	0.820
23	Texas	26,059,203	213	0.817
24	Montana	1,005,141	8	0.796
25	Arizona	6,553,255	52	0.793
26	Kansas	2,885,905	22	0.762
27	Maryland	5,884,563	42	0.714
28	New York	19,570,261	124	0.634
29	Idaho	1,595,728	10	0.627
30	Georgia	9,919,945	57	0.575
31	North Dakota	699,628	4	0.572
32	Delaware	917,092	5	0.545
33	Nebraska	1,855,525	9	0.485
34	Illinois	12,875,255	62	0.482
35	New Mexico	2,085,538	10	0.479
36	Alabama	4,822,023	22	0.456
37	California	38,041,430	172	0.452
38	Missouri	6,021,988	26	0.432
39	Virginia	8,185,867	35	0.428
40	Minnesota	5,379,139	22	0.409
41	Massachusetts	6,646,144	27	0.406
42	Colorado	5,187,582	21	0.405
43	Tennessee	6,456,243	26	0.403
44	Mississippi	2,984,926	10	0.335
45	Utah	2,855,287	9	0.315
46	Arkansas	2,949,131	9	0.305
47	Maine	1,328,187	4	0.301

47	Idaho	1,523,134	4	0.261
48	Washington	6,897,012	15	0.217
49	Vermont	626,011	1	0.160
50	New Hampshire	1,320,718	2	0.151

Source: *Priceonomics Data Services*; Data: TUSCL (<https://www.tuscl.net/>), Yelp, Google



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Joanna Explains The Real Reason She Left "Fixer Upper"

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It seems strange that Oregon would outrank such raunchy jurisdictions as Nevada and New Jersey. How can this be explained?

For our first attempt to answer this question, we turned to an expert in the field. As the Associate Publisher of E.D. (Exotic Dancer) Publications (<http://www.edpublications.com/>), Dave Manack has spent more than 17 years locating, tracking, and mailing his magazine to strip clubs across the nation. Yet, even he is uncertain about the reasons behind Portland's (and Oregon's) apparent dominance on our list.

"We don't have data that ranks cities and their strip clubs per capita," he tells us, "so I can't really comment on why Portland ranks that high in strip clubs per capita."

So, we hit the strip club history books.

Why the Hell Does Portland Have so Many Strip Clubs?



(https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/o/viewer?mid=zqHBWjgqv_zk.kwwqeWW1RJoA&hl=en_US)

When Oregon adopted its constitution in 1859, it included a very vague, open-to-interpretation statute (Article 1, Section 8

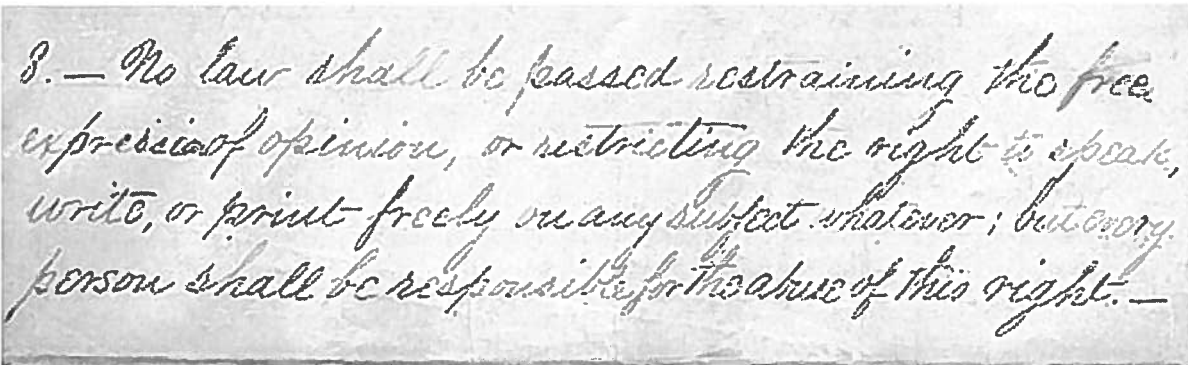
(https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/bills_laws/Pages/OrConst.aspx): “No law shall be passed restraining the **free expression of opinion**, or restricting the right to speak, write or print freely on any subject whatever.” Since then, Oregon’s Supreme Court has vigorously defended this “free expression” in all forms, resulting in something of a garden of eden for strip clubs.

The city’s first such venue can be traced back more than 50 years. In 1954, a colorful entrepreneur named Roy Keller purchased Mary’s Club (<http://marysclub.com/history.php>), an ailing Portland piano bar, and began featuring exotic dancers during musical intermissions. Before long, “there was a line of people waiting for the dancers,” and the disgruntled piano player called it quits. Rebranded and opened in 1965, Mary’s became Portland’s first official topless bar. Over the next 20 years, a small handful of similar “topless only” establishments opened in the city (one of which featured Kurt Cobain’s future muse, Courtney Love (<http://marysclub.com/history.php>)).

Throughout the 1970s, Star Theatre ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Star_Theater_\(Portland,_Oregon\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Star_Theater_(Portland,_Oregon))), another Portland establishment, became known for featuring erotic films and bringing strippers on stage for “live sex shows.” Here, Portland drew the line: after obtaining a copy of a film

(http://www.leagle.com/decision/19771234568P2d666_11227.xml/STATE%20v.%

20TIDYMAN) titled "Pumpin' The Poop Chute," and catching onto the Star's controversial shows in 1976, the city sued the club's owner, John Tidyman, for violating its "obscenity" statute. However, the resulting case (https://scholar.google.com/scholar_case?case=1335122300854981901&hl=en&as_sdt=6&as_vis=1&oi=scholar), which took nearly ten years to resolve, and made it to Oregon's Supreme Court, determined that these shows fell under the state's "free expression" clause, and Tidyman was cleared of all charges.



(<http://bluebook.state.or.us/state/constitution/orig/const.htm>)

More than 150 years after being signed into law, Article 1, Section 8 of the Oregon Constitution has allowed for the growth of strip clubs in Portland

Oregon v. Tidyman, and a spate of similar cases

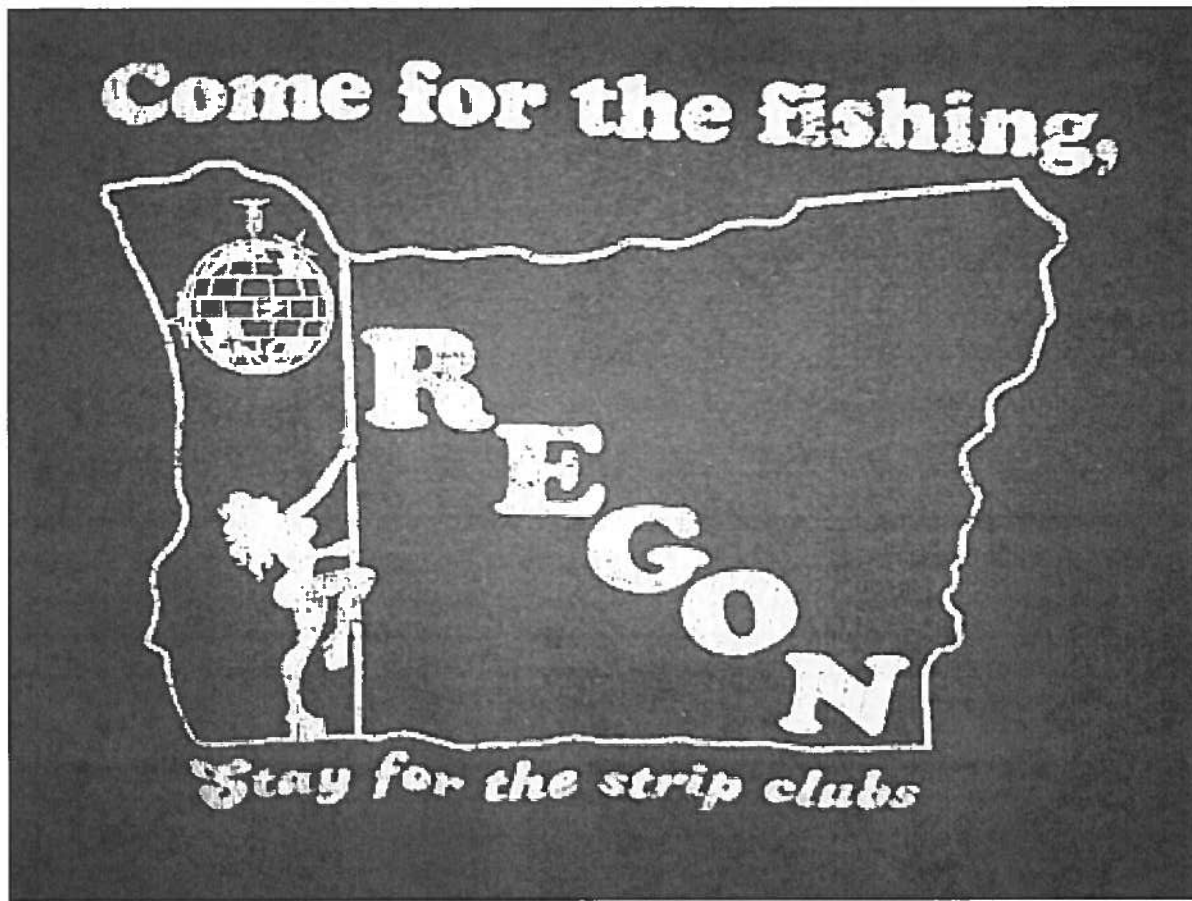
(http://www.leagle.com/decision/1987741732P2d9_1741.xml/STATE%20v.%20HENRY) that followed, resulted in a re-fortification of Oregon's free speech protections:

"In this state, any person can write, print, read, say, show or sell anything to a consenting adult even though that expression may be generally or universally considered 'obscene'...Appearing nude or exposing one's genitals in public, can constitute symbolic conduct and be a form of expression under Article 1, section 8."

"These protections extend to the kinds of expression that a majority of citizens in many communities would dislike," an one judge concluded (<http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/oregon-supreme-court-overturms-laws-on-sex-shows-dancers/>), "even physical acts, such as nude dancing or other explicit sexual conduct." Such protections allowed for an explosion of strip clubs and live nude entertainment in Portland throughout the 80s and 90s, many of which remain open today.

Unable to quell Portland's burgeoning strip club industry with the "obscenity" argument, the city has increasingly turned to zoning laws — but even those are slanted in favor of club owners. "Oregon cities cannot zone adult businesses differently than other businesses," writes The League of Oregon Cities

(<http://www.orcities.org/Portals/17/A-Z/LOCAdultBusinesses.pdf>), and a club cannot be denied access to a location solely by the nature of its sexual content.



(<http://aquadoc.typepad.com/.a/6a00d8341bf80a53ef0153905a2b6e970b-pi>)

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Elsewhere in the U.S., club owners aren't so lucky: most cities relegate their clubs to "industrial zones" far from the ballyhoo of downtown, and require that they be at least 1,000 feet from "sensitive use areas" like churches and schools.

"Typically, zoning laws make it almost impossible for new clubs to open in most cities," says E.D. Publications Publisher, Dave Manack. "When someone wants to open a strip club, it usually means they have to buy an existing club that is already zoned and licensed to allow for topless or nude entertainment with alcohol."

But in an effort to “stay weird,” Oregon has defended its freedom of expression to the highest degree. And, as a result, vegan strip clubs are a thing.



This post was written by **Zachary Crockett** (<https://twitter.com/zcrockett>) (you can follow him on **Twitter here** (<https://twitter.com/zcrockett>)), utilizing the data crawling wizardry of **Elad Yarom**.

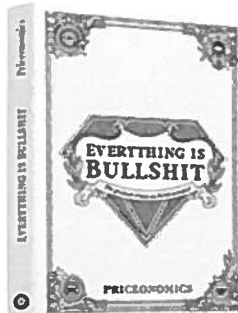
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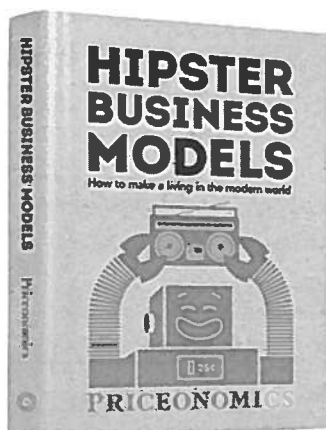
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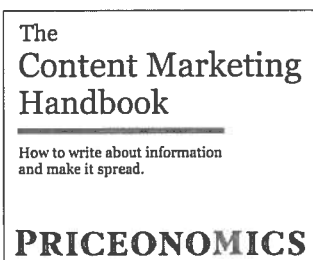
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