

Unparalleled view from Parker House

Favorite Band Probable Cause Packs Dance Floor

By Kurt "Swingcat" Johnson



Fine dining and entertainment on the river is at a location directly on the banks of the Columbia River, overlooking the Washougal, Wash. Marina. With an unparalleled view of the river and Mount Hood, the Parker House offers an outstanding opportunity for a romantic meal or a fun night of dancing to the best in live Top-40/classic rock bands.

Whether it's a full line Sunday brunch buffet or pulling in with your yacht for an afternoon sandwich, Parker House has it all; an unmatched setting and ambiance. With a completely renovated two-story building, there is an upstairs bar, along with a main dining room and roomy dance floor. Weekends host live music and Parker House has recently introduced an all-new family-friendly menu to welcome Washougal residents and visitors.

Thursday nights are "Biker's Nights." The 4th of July, they hosted firework displays on the river. They also have extended their operating hours for the summer.

General Manager Gina Mudarris explains how Parker House arrived at its current operation; "It was vacant for 13 years. Our owner Victor Espinoza rode in and won both the Preakness and Kentucky Derby Horse Races riding Emblem. He came to Washougal and saw the restaurant and fell in love with it and renovated it. New floors, new ceilings. It's a historical landmark on the Lewis and Clark Trail and was originally Parker's Landing." She continues about future plans; "We eventually want to build a deck and patio. We want to go from fine dining to casual dining especially for the boaters. We want them to come in and feel



Probable Cause Band & Fans

welcome."

The emphasis at Parker House is all about customer service. Bar Manager Tina Finnegan explains; "Customer service is always a focus. One of the most important things is making people feel comfortable and welcome, like they've been coming here forever and feel respected. Downstairs is louder with the band. Upstairs is quieter. We want people to come back. A lot of the people are here every week and many of them every night. It's nice to come somewhere that it's not corporate or cookie cutter. We can be who we are. I honestly believe they have a very enjoyable experience, kinda like *Cheers* with two floors."

On this visit, Portland's long-time favorite classic rock band Probable Cause was packing the dance floor. A fixture on Portland's dance band scene since 1987, you can find them at a gig on most weekends around Portland area.

The band's founder and bandleader Greg Dawson tells about the band's goals; "I think ultimately we want to be one of the bands that people here in Portland know when they come to see us, they will have a good time. One reason I see why some bands aren't as successful is that they don't play songs that people are familiar with. We like playing our originals too. But we don't ram them down people's throats because they are not familiar with them. We know people come out for a good time. They know they will be able to get up and dance because they are familiar with our material and when people are up and dancing, the club owners are happy...it's good business and the people aren't bored. We cover songs from the '50s to today, up to things like Three Doors Down. But, only the more familiar songs. The more familiar the songs, the happier the crowd seems to be. We have a few originals that we're working on and there's potential for two CDs, one with our full band and one with our duo. We're shooting to play some of

the festivals such as The Bite of Oregon and some of the smaller local events. We like playing the clubs but we're always looking for different venues to play. And like our trademark, 'Dance 'til ya Drop,' that's what we're all about."

Probable Cause is Dawson on rhythm guitar and lead vocals; Mark McDermott on lead guitar and vocals; Dana Watson on drums; and Marv Slifman on bass. You can see more of Probable Cause at their website: www.probablecause.com and see [Bandstand](#) this issue.

