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East Brown Cow and Malone Commercial arrange 2,126 s/f seven-year lease

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Portland, ME East Brown Cow and Malone Commercial Brokers have arranged for Rough & Tumble to sign a seven-year lease at 178 Middle St., bringing a popular local retailer to the heart Old Port following their decision to again locate a “flagship store”. The 2,126 s/f space is located on the ground floor of the brick building at the corner of Market and Middle Sts. originally constructed in 1867 and overlooking Tommy’s Park.

Rough & Tumble, established in 2008, is best known for a core collection of understated, utilitarian leather and waxed canvas handbags. Their products are sold nationally in partnership with Garnet Hill and Sundance Catalog and they have grown an international following of handbag collectors. The team has maintained a steadfast commitment to its Maine origins, ensuring the handmade quality the brand is known for.

The store is scheduled to open its doors this fall, seven days a week with a retail address of 176 Middle St.

The lease was brokered by Pete Harrington of Malone Commercial Brokers. East Brown Cow

acquired 178 Middle St., known as the Boyd Block, in 2021. The first floor includes two retail spaces currently undergoing renovations with scheduled delivery of those spaces to Rough & Tumble and Bangor Savings Bank this fall.

The upper floors were previously underutilized office space and will soon feature brand-new one- and two- bedroom 'Urban Homes' as part East Brown Cow's hospitality offering, The Docent's Collection. Reservations for this location will open in Winter of 2024. Other Urban Homes featured within The Docent's Collection are located at 115 Middle St., 121 Middle St., and 184 Middle St. (opening Winter 2024).

"This is a unique space that has more recently been occupied by national tenants. Rough & Tumble is an exciting addition to the retail corridor that we have been working to develop along Middle Street," says Tim Soley, president and CEO of East Brown Cow. "They are an authentic Maine-based retailer who has seen incredible success nationally and internationally. Now customers seeking to experience their flagship location will be able to do so right here in Portland."

The new Flagship Store will take the space vacated by Starbucks last year and augment a growing number of local and national brands who have opened doors in the Old Port in recent years including Bella Funk, Madewell, Anthropologie, Athleta, Urban Outfitters, West Elm and others. Rough & Tumble will benefit from high levels of foot traffic due to the property's location. The brand plans to use the new location as a base from which to launch partnerships with other Maine makers, designers, and artists to present a curated vision of special works.

"The Rough & Tumble Flagship Store will offer the handbag designs we are most known for. The 1903, 1904 pack, Boho, Original City Safari, and Hobo Pack. This extraordinary location will perform as the perfect platform for one-of-a-kind limited editions; a testing ground for new designs and new materials," said Natasha Durham, company founder. "For a decade, collectors have been enjoying the online 'Be The Designer' custom process, by which one has access to thousands of design and material combinations to customize a one-of-a-kind R&T handbag. This 'Be The Designer' playground will now be available in the store for a unique shopping experience, with a high level of personalized support from our design team."

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