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## Out Of This World

Jupiter Hotel GM Al Munguia puts  
PDX hospitality on the map

BY RYAN J. PRADO

It's hard to imagine Portland's hospitality industry without the Jupiter Hotel. For more than six years the former motor inn has attracted exceedingly diverse clientele to Southeast, trading in the baiting of corporate executives, so synonymous with big box hotel chains, to instead welcome—sometimes with a Bear hug—an inclusive guest list.

It's likewise difficult to think that any of it might have happened without Jupiter general manager Al Munguia.

Munguia, 49, relocated to the Rose City following a distinguished run working for corporate hotels along the West Coast. Originally a student of political science and international relations, Munguia had global ambitions—namely to work for the United Nations. But during college, he accepted a position as a telephone operator at a hotel—a decision that would change the trajectory of his career.

"It was a way of paying the rent, and it just sort of got in my blood," Munguia explains.

After climbing the corporate ladder at hotel chains like Marriott, Holiday Inn and Starwood, Munguia sought to further his resume—and creativity, and diversify the hotel experience for guests. For the former high school disco dancing champion—yes, really—the general manager position at the Jupiter couldn't have come at a better time.

"Most of my experience has been nothing like this," Munguia says of his time with the Jupiter. "That's one of the reasons why I enjoy this so much. With traditional corporate properties, it's all recipes that you follow with very little regard to thinking outside the box. Jupiter was just opening up, and speaking to the owners I realized that there was this mass

flexibility that was going to allow me to really challenge myself from a creative standpoint."

For Munguia, the variety has been there since the beginning. Just a few days after accepting the job, Munguia got a taste of this freedom with his first booking: Darklady's annual Masturbate-a-Thon charity event.

"That moment to me was really [one of], 'I entered a whole new dimension,'" Munguia says. "We would never touch this—excuse the pun—at Marriott."

As a gay man, Munguia set to ensuring that the Jupiter's marketing efforts would welcome the LG-BTQ traveler. One of the first phases of that approach was to connect with Community Marketing, Inc. to begin the company's Travel Alternatives Group (TAG) training.

For a hotel to become TAG certified, staff and management undergo diversity training, specifically as it applies to the LGBTQ community. The Jupiter Hotel became Port-



"We just don't care whether you're gay or straight, black or white, hipster or business suit-by-day. We want people to be able to come and feel accepted and free to be whoever it is that they may be and however it is they define themselves."

—AL MUNGUIA, JUPITER HOTEL

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