

Why you should eat your next meal in Seaside



R.J. MARX/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

Dining at fireside is one of the appeals of Maggie's on the Prom.



R.J. MARX/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

Jason Lancaster



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Dining with a view of Tillamook Head at Maggie's on the Prom. Salmon by chef Jason Lancaster.

Seaside isn't just taffy and antelope jerky these days. Take a seat at Maggie's on the Prom and gaze at Tillamook Head while dining on Cedar River Farms filet mignon or Columbia River Chinook salmon with yuzu sake butter sauce.

Maggie's new chef Jason Lancaster, 40, said he always wanted to live on the Oregon Coast. Upon arrival in Astoria five years ago, the Seattle native joined the Bridgewater Cafe as a sous chef and graduated to chef de cuisine. At the Cove at the Peninsula Golf Course in Long Beach, Washington, he enhanced his reputation with accolades that included an Iron Chef Goes Coastal award and a "Gerry Frank's Picks" selection.

When the Cove golf course property sold, Lancaster turned to his hobbies of surfing and traveling while casting a net for his next opportunity.

The timing was right as longtime acquaintances Andy and Sadie Mercer of Maggie's on the Prom were in the search for a leader in the kitchen.

"When the job opened they asked me if I was interested in doing it," Lancaster said. "I've always loved this place, so I jumped on it."

Lancaster said he plans to use fresh, local ingredients while offering "a nice eclectic menu."

"I like to take a lot of different ingredients and put them in a contemporary environment," he said.

Lancaster seeks to focus on fresh, local products, provided by connections among regional foragers and fishermen.

"I have a good network," he said. "I really want to showcase what we have here in Oregon and Washington in a contemporary environment like this restaurant. We have amazing products here — the freshest fish, mushrooms, fruit, huckleberries. You don't even need to search for it. It comes through your back door."

The uniqueness of the Oregon and Washington product "really sets us apart," Lancaster said. "That's one thing I really want to bring to the table here —

CANNON SHOTS

R.J. MARX



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emphasis on fresh, wild, the best possible products I can put on the plate."

Lancaster said he hopes his kitchen will be in "the realm of Bridgewater, Carruthers, all the really hot dining places in Astoria. I really want to achieve that."

Maggie's serves three meals seven days a week, providing breakfast, lunch and dinner for diners and hotel guests.

Breakfasts begin with eggs, toast, sausage, crab Benedict, "pretty much your standard breakfast fare with a little bit of a twist, a creative twist," Lancaster said. "It's not your typical breakfast, but it's very approachable."

A huckleberry cheesecake is a star for dessert, along with a stout brownie and blackberry cobbler. "Our desserts are very simple," Lancaster said. "They're made daily and we use good ingredients. I'm hoping in the new few months to get a pastry chef. That's in the works right now."

What's for dinner?
"Today I'm making the Columbia River Chinook salmon with yuzu sake butter sauce with bok choy risotto," he said. "That's a little bit of an Asian influence there. I'm using Asian ingredients in French techniques and local fish. That's what we try to achieve there. Ingredients outside of the box but still using proper techniques and cooking too."

Looking ahead, Lancaster said he plans to serve a Northwest bouillabaisse using an in-house fish stock. "It's pretty spectacular," he said. "It will contain all local fish from Oregon and Washington, Alaskan when we can — but emphasis on fish from here."

When he's not in the kitchen, inspiration comes from Lancaster's hobbies of surfing, hiking and traveling.

"I'm a pretty avid traveler," he said. "When I'm not working, between jobs, I go surfing. It actually provides inspiration in the kitchen because you're traveling and eating cool food and you think, 'Wow, I can do this!' It really adds depth to your menu when you're experiencing different cultures and eating different food."

As for Seaside, it's not just the fast-food stop between Cannon Beach and the North Coast anymore.

"I would love for us to be on the forefront of the culinary scene in Seaside," Lancaster said. "We already have a great reputation here. We have the reputation for being the best dining in Seaside. We have the view, the dining room, a great wait staff and very talented kitchen, so we've really busted out."

Chefs throughout the region are a close-knit group.

"Working in Astoria, in Long Beach, there was a nice community," Lancaster said. "In Seaside I'm sure I'll forge those relationships also. I feel there's a good bond between chefs from Cannon Beach all the way to Astoria. We know each other, what we're up to."

"I want people to come check us out," he added. "We're going to be doing some cool stuff, with emphasis on local ingredients and really cool food that's not really offered in Seaside. I encourage people to come check us out and see what they think. In the next six months, it's going to be very eclectic, pulling very different flavors from around the world into our little box here."

Maggie's is located at 581 S. Prom in Seaside; 503-738-6403. The restaurant is open seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.; maggiesontheprom.com.

Almost time for sunny wines!

It might be rainy and windy as I write these words, but my thoughts have already shifted ahead to the eventual return of sunshine and warmer temperatures to the Oregon Coast. Spring is here. Before long, my grill will come out of its slumbers to do its thing on a nightly basis.

Being a white wine lover, I get to put the arduous months of red wine behind me and embrace the joys of a good glass of vino that doesn't go overboard on alcohol or tannin.

In spring, I'm looking for refreshing wines, with racy acidity and fruit (not sweetness) as these complement spring's spirit of renewal.

If you haven't tried a glass of Grüner-Veltliner before, you're in for a treat. "Grüner," as it's commonly referred to, is a crisp white wine packed with flavors of orange blossoms, peaches and honey. The signature white wine of Austria, Grüner Veltliner is finding a home in Oregon. Amazingly, Reustle Prayer Rock Vineyards, located in Roseburg, specializes in Grüner Veltliner. Stephen Reustle's Estate Grüner Veltliner delivers classic aromas of citrus, honeysuckle and white pepper that satisfy the taste buds. This fresh, thirst-quenching wine is a perfect food friendly companion to a spinach or kale salad, seafood or a dinner with asparagus or artichokes.

For those of you who are looking for a full-bodied white wine but are in the ABC (Anything But Chardonnay) club, I recommend Pudding River Viognier. Made in Salem by winemaker Sean Driggers, Pudding River Viognier is a Wine Shack favorite because this expressive wine delivers enticing aromas of apricots, pineapple and peaches with a well-balanced acidity. This wine goes well with chicken, scallops and crab, cheese plates and spicy Asian entrées.

Of course, it's impossible for me to write about spring wines without mentioning rosé! If you've been following my column, you know rosé is quite possibly my favorite wine. I can drink rosé when it's warm and sunny outside, or when it's cold and rainy. In fact, I might prefer rosé when it's nasty outside, as it brings a touch of sunshine into my day whenever it's in my glass. It seems like every winery in Oregon has finally caught on that wine drinkers want rosé. No longer the sweet, syrupy wine of bygone days, most locally produced rosé is crisp, dry and packed with aromas of strawberries. Delish! If I had to pick a favorite (other than Puffin Rosé, which I'll be writing about in my next column), I would choose Sokol Blosser Rosé of Pinot Noir, which in my opinion is the flagship of Oregon rosé. Made from 100 percent estate pinot noir, this salmon-colored wine offers classic rosé flavors of strawberry and rhubarb. What sets Sokol Blosser Rosé apart from the others is the wine's intense and pleasing aromatics which reach out and invite you to the party. Personally, I prefer this expressive style of rosé over one which is subtle or delicate.

Although spring is the perfect time to get reacquainted with white wine, I can't forget about my many red wine drinking friends. Let's put the big cabs and merlots behind us for now and instead, try a medium-bodied red wine. J Scott's Grenache offers delicious red fruit flavors of raspberry and strawberry, with a hint of white pepper. If you haven't had grenache before, it's a lighter red wine, similar to pinot noir. Grenache is typically focused on red fruit flavors and doesn't develop the black fruit and mushroom flavors like pinot noir. J Scott Grenache would be perfect with burgers, grilled veggies and salmon.

Spring is the perfect season for trying something new and these wines will not disappoint. Sunny and warm days are heading our way, really.

Please remember to drink responsibly. Never drink and drive.

LETTERS

A tragedy in the making

The proposed sale of the Elliott State Forest is a tragedy in the making. Public lands are to be held in the public trust. They are islands of biodiversity. If this sale proceeds, the decision to privatize surely will be felt in the way in which the Oregon Department of Forestry manages our remaining public forests.

It is difficult to ignore what the sale of the Elliott might mean for harvest levels in the Clatsop State Forest or the Tillamook State Forest, if we expect to maintain current levels of revenue dedicated to the Common School Fund. On a related subject, the Linn County lawsuit to intensify harvest levels in our state forests is proof that for the profit seekers, more can never be enough.

The phrase "sustainable timber harvest" ought to be stricken from the lexicon whenever or wherever harvest levels are debated. The expression is so time-worn it has lost all meaning. We may have sustainable harvests, or we may have sustainable timber, but in the whole, the two ideals are a contradiction and a misconception.

The photo on page one March 7 of Astoria District Forester Dan Goody and the first growth Douglas Fir stump illustrates perfectly how far we have come in the past 75 years ("Forestry to reassess some fire fees," *The Daily Astorian*). The stump itself stands as a monument to the folly we know as sustainable timber harvests.

We cannot continue to cut trees faster than they grow, particularly the trees we have stocking public lands. The very idea that the Elliot State Forest could be privatized confirms that the relatively modest and conservative stewardship practiced by the Oregon Department of Forestry can be seen as a value-added and sustainable manner of forestry.

Gary Durheim
Cannon Beach

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Friday, March 24
Cannon Beach Planning Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

Wednesday, March 29
Cannon Beach Tourism and Arts Commission, 1 p.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

Friday, March 31
Cannon Beach Emergency Preparedness Committee, 10 a.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

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Tuesday, April 4
Cannon Beach City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

Tuesday, April 11
Cannon Beach City Council, 5:30 p.m., work session, City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

Tuesday, April 18
Cannon Beach Public Works Committee, 9 a.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

Thursday, April 20
Cannon Beach Parks and Community Services Committee, 9 a.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

Cannon Beach Design Review Board, 6 p.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

Thursday, April 27
Cannon Beach Planning Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St. Friday, April 28

Friday, April 28
Cannon Beach Emergency Preparedness Committee, 10 a.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.