

Worth the Trip: Pizza Garden and Wanda's Cafe in Nehalem

By Scott Laird

If you plan to spend any time on the north coast of Oregon this summer and need a place to eat, look no further than the tiny town of Nehalem.

Located on Highway 101 just south of Manzanita, Nehalem reminds me of Vernonia in a number of ways: one flashing traffic light, a couple of downtown blocks packed with small stores for shopping and the needs of the local community, situated right beside the Nehalem River, with a couple very unique and special restaurants. Nehalem and Vernonia could practically be sisters.

Both Pizza Garden (35815 Hwy 101 North) and Wanda's Cafe (12870 H Street) were recommended to us by friends on two different trips to the coast. Both turned out to be great - everything our friends said they would be. We have returned to both establishments on subsequent trips.

Pizza Garden offers artisan handmade pizza with loads of toppings, sauces and cheeses to choose from. Located right on the banks of the slow

thing in mind-pizza!

The pizza section on the menu at Pizza Garden is one of the most diverse you will find anywhere. The toppings, sauces and cheeses are all fresh and of the highest quality. If you go to Pizza

bar which serves several beers on tap and a nice wine selection. They also have takeout, of course, and delivery to the nearby towns of Manzanita and Wheeler.

The prices are somewhat high (like almost everywhere on the coast) so don't be too surprised when you open the menu. They do offer a small or large option for their salads, pastas and lasagnas, and small, medium and large for the pizzas. Their hours fluctuate depending on the season, so call ahead to make sure they will be open if you are in the

area-you don't want to miss this place.

Wanda's Cafe is a cute and funky breakfast and lunch spot on the north side of Nehalem that will take you back in time. Decorated with all kinds



of knick-knacks from the 50's and 60's, the atmosphere itself is almost worth the trip, but it's the food that really makes Wanda's stand out. Delicious tasting large servings of beautifully prepared cafe meals makes a stop here a real treat.

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moving Nehalem River, Pizza Garden has deck seating during the summer, and big windows so you can enjoy the view from inside, even during a nasty winter rain storm.

But Pizza Garden is not your regular pizza joint. They serve a full menu that includes Italian appetizers, several salads and soups, hoagie sandwiches, several pasta choices with numerous sauces, and lasagnas. The last time we were there they had several lasagna specials. But we had only one

Garden expecting a greasy and overloaded slice you might be disappointed; at Pizza Garden they use the ingredients somewhat sparingly to create a delicious meal where quality and diversity rule over quantity. Pizza here is an experience.

The list of toppings includes almost thirty veggie options, with the usual suspects like mushrooms, artichoke hearts, spinach and roasted garlic, but also features items like cashews, mandarin oranges, roasted pine nuts, pistachios and pickles. The gourmet meat selection is also extensive; in addition to Pepperoni, Italian Sausage, Seasoned Beef, Canadian Bacon and numerous other toppings you may have already tasted on a pizza, you can also try Andouille Sausage, Lemon-Herbed Shrimp, Prosciutto, Herbed Lamb and Smoked Salmon. Seven sauces and seven cheeses mean you could try something different every time you visit. The sauces include Marinara,

Creamy Garlic, Pesto, Rustico, Herb & Garlic, Creamy Dill and Thai Peanut; for cheese options you can chose from Mozzarella, Provolone, Gorgonzola, Cheddar, Parmesan, Feta or Montrachet. They also offer a gluten-free crust and a vegan cheese for special diets. Choose a thick or thin crust and build your own pie or choose from the interesting combo pizzas on the menu; the possibilities are almost endless.

The dining room is filled with hanging plants and features a very small

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