

IN THE DOG HOUSE

A wiener, a bun and then some BY ANDY VALENTINE

Upon walking into Dog in a Box on the corner of 17th and Pearl, I was greeted with the smell of freshly cooked sausages, two smiling faces and a large sign reading “Legends,” beneath which hung framed portraits of history’s better known jazz musicians. From outside, the view had been of windowpanes packed from left to right with prices, drawings and signs — an intriguing hole-in-the-wall appearance that welcomed me inside.

When I sat down to try the “Oktoberfest” hot dog that the employee kindly recommended; I was pleased to find that it was hot, with a fresh bun and evenly distributed condiments. In short, it had the all the characteristics and qualities of a legit hot dog.

“We wanted variety, we wanted originality, we wanted quality and we wanted to control the process from beginning to end, which we did,” says owner, founder and self-proclaimed delicatessen hound Steve Solomon. “All our hot dogs are custom made to our own recipe.”

Dog in a Box boasts two Eugene locations, each of which is partly solar powered and stacked with options including vegan and vegetarian alternatives. With almost 15 entirely Oregon-grown and Oregon-made hot dogs from which to choose, there’s sure to be something fitting everybody’s tastes.

Since first opening in 1993, the restaurant over time has garnered influence from cuisines around the world, with especial focus on European sausages and the beloved, traditional all-American hot dog. There’s been demand for hot dogs in the U.S. dating back to 1870, when original hot dog badass Charles Feltman sold sausages in buns on Coney Island. And while they may not have Feltman’s added attractions of the beach, boardwalk and Cyclone, Dog in a Box wieners still know how to draw a crowd.

“We’ve been in business 17 years, and every year it gets greater and greater, demand is very strong,” Solomon says. Demand, the crucial counterpart to supply, is definitely an important thing to consider, and there should be no shortage of it with the prices listed on Dog in a Box’s menu: A fat, condiment-slathered wiener will run you about five bucks — a fair price considering the quality and

rate of service. Throw in a drink and you might even be able to pay with a card, considering they have a \$5 minimum on debit and credit (be wary of this fact before going in, cash is preferable). If a trip to the ATM is all that’s separating you from an awesome and reasonably priced hot dog, I’d say it’s worth it.

From the checkerboard floor to the glossed-leather stools, Dog in a Box has that homey, vintage appearance you hope to find in a traditional hotdog and European sausage joint. Oh, and there’s this — all aesthetics aside, the food rocks. Charles Feltman would be doggone proud. ■

Dog in a Box has locations at 195 E. 17th Ave. and at 210 W. Sixth Ave.; more information at www.doginaboxeugene.com



Otum Hambleton ties into a wiener at Dog in a Box

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