

There are a lot of businesses around Eugene that claim to have “The Best Reuben in Town.” The sandwich itself is iconic across the country: Rye bread loaded with either pastrami or corned beef, topped with sauerkraut and either Thousand Island dressing or Russian dressing. We decided that it would be fitting to find out who, if anyone, deserved the title for “the best.” Many Reubens were eaten. Lengthy discussions were held. Criteria changed and evolved to account for creativity and tradition. And through it all, only one thing ultimately was made clear: The best Reuben sandwich tends to be, without fail in this town, the Reuben sandwich you are currently eating. Below are descriptions of some of the sandwiches we sampled. We suggest getting out there and having a little Reuben off of your own. You won’t be disappointed.

THE NOBLE CAFE & ESPRESSO, known mostly for being a coffeehouse that makes its own syrups, brought a surprise Reuben to the table. This is a sandwich that is stacked thick on hearty, dense bread, which is an ideal pairing with the nicely smoked meat. This Reuben may have been the epitome of balance between pastrami, sauerkraut, cheese and dressing. When someone seeks a New York Reuben, you can bet they’re seeking Noble.

THE CANNERY’s Reuben is all about the bread, rye crusted with Parmesan and fennel before grilling. This makes their sandwich different than the rest and adds an extra layer of complementary flavors while also providing the perfect stacking platform for a spot-on mix of pastrami and sauerkraut. The Cannery also opts for a more traditional Russian dressing as the sauce, which gives the whole thing more of a tangy finish than the Thousand Island Reubens you may be used to.

EIRINN’S BISTRO knows Reubens. It says right in the ads that Eirinn’s offers “the best.” We have to admit, going in, we were a bit skeptical going into the eatery, which is based in a strip mall. The bistro offers its sandwich with corned beef or pastrami, or (if you’re feeling crazy) a combo of the two. The meat was sliced beautifully and stacked high. There was a delicious amount of sauerkraut and Thousand Island. It would do the whole place a disservice to not mention the amazingness of the homemade potato chips.

EMERALD COUNTRY SMOKED MEATS has an entire windowpane of the shop devoted to their “Best Reuben in Town” claim. This is one of the most traditional Reubens we came across. The pastrami was nearly perfect: thinly sliced, smoky and flavorful. Piled high, the meat made the rest of the sandwich take a back seat, but the bread was nicely toasted (and generously buttered), and the sauerkraut and Thousand Island were loaded on generously.

FALLING SKY POUR HOUSE & DELICATESSEN offers a Reuben with either corned beef or pastrami, both house cured, both delicious. If you have to pick, go with the corned beef. Both meats are smoked to perfection, with incredible flavor, but the corned beef has a buttery quality that takes it to the next level. As if the meat weren’t enough, the house-baked marble rye is not only delicious, it is also a work of art. Pour House has the meat-to-sauerkraut ratio dialed, not over-sauced, so you don’t end up with the majority of the sandwich down your arm or a serious case of collapsed bread.

REUBEN OFF!

EUGENE’S BEST REUBEN
IS A SERIOUS COMPETITION

BY SARAH DECKER & TRASK BEDORTHA

