

In the mood for a traditional deli sandwich? Then try

Tsunami Sandwich Company

Just a stone's throw from the sand, Tsunami Sandwich Company features a mural depicting Seaside's iconic Lewis and Clark monument and the neighboring beachfront. At first glance the scene appears peaceful. But in the distance, an enormous tidal wave looms, big enough to engulf the entire town.

At Tsunami, that tidal wave comes in the form of pastrami.

While promotional photos often exaggerate portion size, the giant heaping of pastrami featured on Tsunami's advertisements is no ruse. The shop's "MegaTsunami Pastrami" sandwich (\$18.25) is huge. I ordered it, and the cheerful staff got busy, placing handful after handful of thin-cut pastrami onto a scale until the weight of the meat alone totaled one pound.

At first it seemed like fun. And, in a way, it was. When the sandwich arrived at the table, pastrami stacked high and spilling out the sides, I couldn't help but smile. Then there was the matter of getting it into my mouth. Like an elephant stepping on a banana, pastrami exploded in all directions as I bit down. The taste was enjoyable, but not enough to make me forget my favorite Jewish deli.

Quickly though, charm gave way to absurdity, as the mass of pastrami soaked the marble rye bread. Though the horseradish mustard was peppery enough to peak through all that meat, the Swiss cheese all but vanished. It was more akin to eating a pile of pastrami with a bit of mustard than an actual sandwich. And while I only ate half —

along with half of another, a lighter, turkey sandwich — my gut was bombed. All that beef left me less than limber, lumbering an hour later, even after a two-mile walk. Indeed, why anyone would seri-

ously want to consume an entire pound of pastrami along with bread and cheese remains a mystery.

Rather than opting for novelty, I opined for the tried and true. I wished I'd ordered the Lewis and Clark (\$9.75), a regular-sized pastrami sandwich leavened with sauerkraut, Thousand Island dressing and Swiss cheese.

The Promenade (\$8.75), however — a classic, deli-style turkey sandwich with lettuce, tomato, red onion, and a subtly elevating olive spread — was right on. The serving of turkey was hearty, as was the multi-grain bread.

And let's be clear: The majority of Tsunami's hot and cold sandwiches hem more to the Promenade's model — an even mix of meat, cheese and veggies, lean enough not to weigh you down but generous enough to fill you up.

And though it wasn't what I expected, I also enjoyed the Hot Chick (\$8.75). Described as a buffalo chicken breast with bleu cheese, what emerged was more like a turkey melt. The chicken — if it was chicken and not turkey — was sliced like deli meat



The Promenade, left, a classic, deli-style turkey sandwich, features a balanced combination of components. In comparison, the MegaTsunami Pastrami, right, with its pound of pastrami, is too absurdly meat-heavy to be an enjoyable, practical or tasty sandwich.

Described as a buffalo chicken breast with bleu cheese, the Mouth found the Hot Chick, with its sliced deli meat, light buffalo sauce and melted cheddar cheese, to be more akin to a turkey melt.



rather than a whole breast, and light on the buffalo sauce. Still, with the buttered, nicely toasted bread and melty cheddar cheese, it worked.

Besides sandwiches, Tsunami offers hot dogs and sausages. I went for the flagship Tsunami Dog (\$8), a quarter-pound, all-beef dog with sauerkraut, pastrami and horseradish mustard. Crammed in a sizable bun, the dog itself stuck out nearly an inch on both ends. It was, however, a little over-boiled and could've been juicier. The serving of pastrami was ample, though I would've preferred a more equitable ratio of kraut, which seemed more of an afterthought. (Apparently customers of this sandwich shop can't have enough beef.)

Locally owned, Tsunami carries a few region-

al ingredients and products, including Tillamook cheese and ice cream, plus Buoy Beer. To their credit, Tsunami proudly displays the signage of their providers, making no attempts to confuse what is or isn't made in-house. The pastrami and other meats come from Thurmann's (New Jersey); the breads from a bevy of bakers, including Oroweat, and a gluten-free option from Udi's. The clam chowder comes from Ivar's (Seattle).

How that chowder makes the cut, though, I fail to understand. It was generic, thin and overpriced (\$4.75 for a cup). And though I didn't try it, a peek at the chili didn't make me want to.

By and large, the sides at Tsunami fail to match the thoughtfulness, taste or value of the sandwiches. At around \$8 or \$9, sandwiches are served with a tiny bag of name-brand chips (Doritos, Lay's, Cheetos, etc.), with soup or chili available at a \$3.50 up-charge. I would've appreciated something more filling like fries, or healthy like salad or slaw. There's room for improvement here.

But in the balanced, traditional deli sandwiches, Tsunami makes a fair case against the burgers and fried foods that dominate Broadway. The tidal waves of pastrami, however, simply bowled me over.

mouth OF THE COLUMBIA

COAST WEEKEND'S LOCAL RESTAURANT REVIEW

Story and photos by THE MOUTH OF THE COLUMBIA • mouth@coastweekend.com

Tsunami Sandwich Company

Rating: ★★½

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HOURS: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday through Thursday; and 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

PRICE: \$ — Most sandwiches between \$8 and \$9.

SERVICE: Smiling and helpful.

VEGETARIAN / VEGAN OPTIONS: There are sandwiches made without meat or cheese. Gluten-free bread from Udi's is also available.

DRINKS: Many different soda options, as well as bottled beer and single-serving wine.

KEY TO RATINGS

- ★ poor
- ★★ below average
- ★★★ good & worth returning
- ★★★★ excellent
- ★★★★★ outstanding, the best in the Columbia-Pacific region