

Bread and Ocean

This Manzanita deli and bakery gets it right for carnivores and vegetarians alike

As much as its crisp and vibrant brunch fare, Bread and Ocean's environment and ethic too brightened my mornings. The Manzanita deli and bakery gets it right, from the space to the service to the flavor. It's enlivened, nourishing, thoughtful and rich enough to please just about anyone.

Perhaps all this figures, as Bread and Ocean was hatched by beloved North Coast restaurateur Julie Barker. Barker operated Manzanita's Blue Sky Cafe for 16 years before opening Bread and Ocean in 2003. She sold the business last year and launched the marvelous Buttercup a few miles south in Nehalem this spring (see Mouth of the Columbia: Buttercup, May 28, 2015). And while I never visited Bread and Ocean under Barker's watch, the model bears her fingerprints: simple recipes lifted by quality, mostly local ingredients. And while it's not quite so narrowly focused as Buttercup (which does made-to-order chowder and ice cream), Bread and Ocean picks its battles.

Closing at 2 p.m., it's all bright breakfasts and lunch. A small space packed with tables, customers and employees, Bread and Ocean is full of light. A large skylight and a wall of windows and glass doors welcome in the day. The bustle rarely ceases, customers coming and going, their names and orders being called, yet a sense of easy serenity prevails — it's not a madhouse. A row of deli cases features half the menu, full of quiches, frittatas, polentas, salads, pastries and more. Over them hang the sandwich menus, including a host of regulars and the daily panini and soup specials. By the register, where you order, is an espresso machine and the grinds of Sleepy Monk beans.

If it's before 11 a.m., lunch is off the menu — that means no sandwiches or soup. (But who wants a sandwich before 11 a.m. anyway?) The egg dishes in the deli case, presumably cooked the morning, are delightful, a cross between sultry and strong fuel.

A slice of frittata (\$6.95) was generous and tall. Its ideally singed thin outer layer was lightly crisp, and its insides were moist and gooey. Around broccoli and roasted red peppers, the herbed goat cheese sashayed and permeated the scrambled egg base, warm, potent and slithering. The polenta was a cousin. Its layers of spongy grains acting as riverbanks to flows of melty Tillamook cheddar cheese, scrambled eggs and smoked ham. Both the polenta and frittata are gluten-free, and both

came with a small but welcome side salad of field greens in a light vinaigrette. Their make-ups — eggs, cheese, veggies and animal protein — were much like that of the quiches, only without crust.

Like the ingredients in the egg dishes, the salads in the case seem to rotate. On a given day there are three or four, and with heavy starches and/or proteins — like pasta and cous cous — they're more meal than roughage. The chicken curry (\$4.65 for 1/2 pint) could hardly be called a salad at all. It was almost all meat, covered in a thick, creamy yellow curry sauce (including homemade mayonnaise), and featuring a few grains of wild rice, raisins and celery for flourishes of taste and texture. It was hearty, and by itself a scrumptious energy boost. The broccoli, in soy sauce and tossed with flakes of almond, ginger and garlic, was more lean and mean — real high-octane. The broccoli itself was exquisitely prepared: moist enough not to be a chore, still raw, crispy and delectable.



A slice of frittata, served with a small side salad, had a singed, crisp outer layer and gooey inside.



The Dagwood sandwich is a customer favorite.

In each of these salads the respective Eastern sauces were welcome, well-executed excursions outside of Bread and Ocean's more dominant and familiar daytime flavors.

Which brings us to the sandwiches. There are loads of them, from tuna to turkey to egg salad, and all served on Bread and Ocean's freshly baked breads. (By substituting tempeh, all the sandwiches too can be made vegetarian). And, in a package that's as precious as it is practical, the sandwiches — along with everything else on the menu — are available as boxed lunches with choice of side salad or soup and cookie for \$3.25. Indeed, the perfect package for a trip to the beach.

Of the many sandwiches and rotating daily panini specials, I tried two: the Tuna (\$10.30 for a whole, \$6.15 for a half) and the Dagwood (\$10.20 whole, \$6.10 half). The Dagwood, ac-

cording to the cashier, is a customer favorite and it wasn't hard to see why.

The half Dagwood was well-portioned, stacked high with smoked ham, finocchiona salami, provolone, Gruyère and organic mixed greens. With those multiple meats and cheeses, along with a house-made red pepper mayo on a soft, fresh baguette, the Dagwood was smooth and rich. And though the meats themselves were oily and juicy, the construction of the sandwich — with cheese on bottom and greens on top kept the bread dry. Pepperoncinis and a dash of Italian vinaigrette offered a nip of sharp contrast (though I wouldn't have minded a few more pepperoncinis).

The Tuna sandwich, however, I found a little out of balance. The local, line-caught tuna on buttery ciabatta bread was overwhelmed by an olive tapenade spread. Rather than tuna, I felt like I was having an olive sandwich, and the artichoke hearts didn't help. Either the flavor pairing didn't work, or the ratios were out of whack.

But the Tuna was the only misstep of the many dishes I tried at Bread and Ocean. (Another standout: the gluten-free Blueberry Coffee Cake. It was full of tangy, juicy blueberries and the texture was marvelous — had I not known it was gluten-free, I'd have never guessed.)

On one of my visits to Bread and Ocean, I stayed almost until the 2 p.m. closing time. Just moments before the doors would shut, perspective customers literally came running in, hoping to beat the cut-off. It's not hard to understand why: Bread and Ocean is a place I could take both my friends who are gluttonous carnivores and my sister, who's vegan, and each would leave equally satisfied.

mouth OF THE COLUMBIA

COAST WEEKEND'S LOCAL RESTAURANT REVIEW

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

Bread and Ocean

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

154 Laneda Ave., Manzanita
503-368-5823

HOURS: 7:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Wednesday to Sunday.

PRICE: \$ – Full-serving entrées in the neighborhood of \$10.

SERVICE: Counter service. Lively and good-natured.

VEGETARIAN/VEGAN OPTIONS: Solid. Plenty of vegetarian dishes and substitution options.

DRINKS: Coffee, espresso, juice and tea.

KEY TO RATINGS

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