



Photo by Matt Love

The Merry Time Bar and Grill in Astoria is an excellent place to watch football, pro or college, particularly if you don't have cable television.

A GLIMPSE INSIDE

An occasional feature by MATT LOVE

Merry Time Bar and Grill

Here we go again. Football season in America. Grown men wearing oversized jersey and screaming in public? Are we ready? I'm not. Wasn't the Super Bowl just concluded?

I'm sitting in the Merry Time Bar and Grill in Astoria on a Sunday morning and some nondescript NFL pre-season game blares away. The announcers crank out one cliché after another, but for some reason, I find the trite commentary comforting. "Nickel package" and "He's good in space" sound like working class poetry of the gridiron to my ears.

The Merry Time is an excellent place to watch football, pro or college, particularly if you don't have cable television like me. The food is good and inexpensive in here, the service friendly and efficient. On my most recent visit a server also gave me a homemade book-

mark and a piece of cake from her going away party. When I asked her about the impending football season, she just shrugged and said, "I could care less."

My only reservation about the Merry Time is this: Any potential customer should be forewarned when a Notre Dame game airs in the bar. There is a certain male fan bedecked in Irish clothing from head to toe who stands up from his table and screams and motions "first down!" every time Notre Dame's offense registers a first down — even when they are trailing by three touchdowns in the third quarter.

The man does this for an entire three-hour telecast. His wife just sits there and drinks her beer in silence.

It is quite possibly the most obnoxious boisterous gesture I have ever witnessed in a bar. But then again, it was so memorably obnoxious that I'm

writing it about now and wondering when Notre Dame plays its opener because I might just have to see him in action again. With a cocktail for the sideshow, of course. It's actually better watching than a football game on television.

Matt Love lives in Astoria and is the author/editor of 14 books about Oregon, including "A Nice Piece of Astoria: A Narrative Guide" and "The Great Birthright: An Oregon Novel."

They are available at coastal bookstores and through www.nestuccaspitpress.com

Wild SIDE

Thunnus alalunga

Albacore tuna

By LYNETTE RAE McADAMS

One of the smallest species of tuna (and actually a member of the mackerel family), the albacore makes its home in every tropical and temperate ocean in the world, as well as the Mediterranean Sea. Prized for its delicate meat, which is enjoyed both fresh and canned, it is a highly sought-after fish, popular in both the commercial and recreational fishing industries.

A stunning, metallic dark blue on its backside, with glistering, silvery-white sides and underbelly, *Thunnus alalunga* (also called the long-fin tuna) can reach lengths up to 4 feet and can weigh up to 80 pounds (though 2 feet long and 25 pounds is more typical). One of the fastest swimmers in the sea, it is a fish designed for speed, with a stout, torpedo-shaped body and long stream-lined pectoral fins.

Though it belongs to a group of cold-blooded creatures, the



Photo by Lynette Rae McAdams

A sea of albacore tuna await their fate at the Sportsmen's Cannery in Seaview, Washington.

albacore has an atypical circulatory system that keeps its body temperature above the temperature of the water, allowing for the extra tissue oxygenation that promotes its agility: When its crescent-shaped tail pumps through the water, this fish can move 50 mph.

A female albacore lays her eggs in the open sea, where she releases two million eggs per season, in two sets, two days apart. If fertilized, the eggs will take two days to hatch. Though most are caught by the time they

are six or seven years old, in the wild, these tuna can survive 10 to 12 years.

A highly migratory species, albacore swim long distances and travel in schools that can exceed 19 miles in width. In the North Pacific, they begin their annual journey in the spring near the coast of Japan, moving to inshore waters off the U.S. Pacific coast by late summer; in the fall, they reverse the journey.

As a food source, albacore is a heart-healthy choice of protein, low in fat and cholesterol, but, like other fish, it can accumulate methylmercury within its tissues — a poison produced from the burning of fossil fuels, namely coal, which can be passed to humans during consumption. The good news: Recent studies by NOAA indicate that tuna pulled from the waters of Washington, Oregon and California, all have much lower mercury levels today than in previous years.

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