

BEST ART GALLERY

RiverSea Gallery

Astoria, Oregon

Runner-up: Imogen Gallery, Astoria
Honorable Mention: Don Nisbett
 Crewhouse Gallery, Ilwaco, Washington



Photo by Dwight Caswell

RiverSea Gallery in Astoria houses a variety of different mediums, styles and artists.

By DWIGHT CASWELL

RiverSea Gallery has been a fixture at 1160 Commercial St. in Astoria for almost 19 years, and the philosophy behind the gallery has not changed. "I want to showcase outstanding local and regional artists," says owner Jeannine Grafton, "and to

pair emerging local artists with regional and national artists."

The gallery presents a broad spectrum of styles. "The art is not selected to reflect one person's taste, but to accommodate a variety of collectors," Grafton says. All the artists in the gallery have one thing in common, though: "Whether

it's jewelry, wood sculpture, or painting, I look for an artist who has something to say."

RiverSea has a staff of three in addition to Grafton, and they make sure the gallery is the kind of place that makes art approachable and accessible to any collector. Grafton believes that, "Having a variety of work encourages people to explore. People will find lots of artists they know about, and also surprises, new discoveries."

Variety is something Grafton has certainly achieved, and RiverSea now shows the work of over 200 artists in almost every 2D and 3D medium imaginable. The audience the gallery appeals to is not limited to local art enthusiasts, but includes regional and national collectors as well.

RiverSea Gallery is one of the places in Astoria where members of the art community meet, both those who make art and those who admire it. That's most apparent every second Saturday of the month, during Astoria's art walk. Grafton says, "It's such a good feeling that art has a place in Astoria like RiverSea, and that we have the support of the community."

BEST THEATER & BEST CHEAP DATE

Columbian Theater

Astoria, Oregon

By NANCY MCCARTHY

Why is the Columbian Theater so popular?

"Probably because it's inexpensive and family friendly," said Jeanine Fairchild, theater owner and general manager. "We have options that other theaters don't offer."

Those options include movies that may have been seen by only a few serious film followers to classics from another era.

"I like to mix up what I think might make money and what I'd like to see," Fairchild said. "I try to pick family-friendly movies."

It doesn't hurt that it costs only \$4 for adults and \$2 for

kids for shows that run every night. Pizza and calzones, along with beer and wine, are among the munchies offered. Some of the seating includes cozy loveseats.

Business has been good since the theater raised more than \$60,000 in 2013 to

switch from 35 mm to digi-

tal projection equipment to meet industry stan-

dards, Fair-

child said.

At first, it

appeared the theater might

have to close if it

couldn't raise the funds. But

the theater's fans rallied behind the Colum-

bian's fundraising campaign. Although a few performances at the theater are live — the stage is behind the large movie screen — Fairchild said



Photo by Nancy McCarthy

Voters chose the Columbian Theater in Astoria as Best Cheap Date and Best Theater.

she would like to see more done. When the Columbian first opened as the Rivera Theater in 1925, dressing rooms were built downstairs, and they remain there today.

How does Fairchild feel about being named the best by readers? "It's very flattering," she said. "It's fun to be acknowledged."

The Columbian Theatre, at 1114 Marine Drive, shows movies at 7 p.m. every night. General admission is \$4 and children 12 and under are admitted at \$2.

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