

Readers' Choice Awards

BEST CATERING & BEST HAPPY HOUR

Baked Alaska

Astoria, Oregon



Photo by Dwight Caswell

Voters picked Astoria restaurant Baked Alaska as offering the Best Happy Hour and Best Catering in this year's Readers' Choice Awards.

For the second year in a row, Baked Alaska has triumphantly won the Readers' Choice Award for Best Catering. Three or four times a week, a Baked Alaska catering van delivers happy culinary experiences to baby showers, graduation parties, weddings, anniversaries, memorial services, Astoria-Warrenton Chamber of Commerce After Hours events and Liberty Theater events. The Astoria restaurant is guided by a "customer-first" catering philosophy inspired by the terrific service owners Chris and Jennifer Holen received

from a caterer during their own wedding.

The Baked Alaska team has also, for the first time, taken home the award for Best Happy Hour. Baked Alaska's happy hour runs from 3 to 6 p.m. seven days a week with \$3 draft beers and well drinks. Glasses of wine and small plates on the regular menu are \$2 off, and there are also discounts on other cocktails. Items on the happy hour food menu range from \$3 to \$8 and include a hummas flatbread plate, cheesy bread, new school Chex mix, a plate of pickled items, and a rotating pizza of the day. Look for specials and enjoy the menu

yourself in the restaurant's lounge, located on the east side of the building at No. 1 12th St.

Baked Alaska offers custom catering services; find the restaurant's catering inquiry form online at www.bakedak.com or call 503-325-7414 for more information.

BEST CATERING

Runner-up: The Cove Restaurant, Long Beach
Honorable Mention: Uptown Cafe, Warrenton

BEST HAPPY HOUR

Runner-up: T. Paul's Supper Club, Astoria
Honorable Mention: Silver Salmon Grille, Astoria

BEST LOCAL FESTIVAL

Astoria-Warrenton Crab, Seafood & Wine Festival

Astoria, Oregon

Runner-up: Festival of Dark Arts, Astoria

Honorable Mention: Astoria Regatta

Entering its 34th year in 2016, the three-day Astoria-Warrenton Crab, Seafood and Wine Festival allows you to indulge your love of seafood and try many varietals from Northwest wineries at the same time.

Put on by the Astoria-Warrenton Chamber of Commerce, the festival includes live music on two stages and about 200 vendor booths with more than 60 regional wineries and 100 arts and crafts sellers.

While you sip wine and peruse vendors' wares, enjoy the authentic flavors of the Oregon Coast with seafood festival favorites like the Astoria Rotary Club's Dungeness crab dinners and the Astoria Clown's famous Clown Bread (freshly baked French bread smothered in the clown's super secret sauce, then topped with your choice of either crab or shrimp, and broiled to perfection).

This year's festival is set for April 22, 23 and 24.

A \$3-per-person round-trip shuttle ride will take you to and from the event at the Clatsop County Fairgrounds (limited car parking is available and costs \$15 per vehicle).

More than 150 volunteers help run everything from bus unloading and trash duty to the admissions table and wine check, where you can drop off bottles of wine you purchase to pick up before you leave, instead of lugging them around all day. A range of local organizations volunteer to help run the event and fundraise at the same time; most of the dollars spent during the festival get funneled directly back into the local community.

About 14,000 to 16,000 people attend the Crab & Wine Fest each year, so it's no surprise to find the festival once again earning the Readers' Choice Award for Best Local Festival (it owned the title for three years from 2010 to 2013).



Photo by Don Anderson

Volunteer Bev Bartlett of Astoria sells T-shirts and wine glasses at the festival.

BEST RADIO STATION

Coast Community Radio

KMUN 91.9 FM, KCPB 90.9, KTCB 98.5 FM

Runner-up: KRKZ Hits 94.3 FM Chinook/Astoria

Honorable Mention: KLMY Clammy 99.7 FM Long Beach



Photo by Nancy McCarthy

Joanne Rideout, general manager of Coast Community Radio, gets ready to do a broadcast at the Coast Community Radio studio in Astoria.

By NANCY MCCARTHY

The voices heard on most of Coast Community Radio's programs are those of neighbors, friends and co-workers. "You're likely to know them, whether they're your neighbor or you see them in the grocery store," said station manager Joanne Rideout. "We call it 'personal radio.' We have a great connection to the community."

Whether it's a conversation between a local farmer and a gardener about nutrition, or programs featuring blues, children's stories or Rideout's popular "Ship Report," there's something for all ages on KMUN.

Add to that several National Public Radio programs, and the station offers a well-rounded selection of news, commentary, music and whimsy.

But no matter the program — from morning classical music to evening jazz, the objective remains the same, Rideout said: "to do good radio."

Since the programmers are volunteers who have lives outside the station, the programming is always evolving. This year, local author Matt Love and Astoria area farmer Teresa Retzlaff offer new programs.

"The joke is, if you take any 20 people in Clatsop County and put them in a room, 10 would have been programmers for KMUN," Rideout said.

The station offers a radio class for those interested in learning more about the station and about programming.

For everyone, it is a labor of love. The station has only five full-time and three part-time employees. More than 100 volunteers help out, from alphabetizing the music list to fixing computers or working on the transmitting tower.

The community has demonstrated its appreciation by contributing money to KMUN since the station's inception in 1983. Many listeners tell Rideout their radios are tuned only to Coast Community Radio; many don't have televisions. For them, she said, the programs represent the "soundtracks of our lives."

For the station's employees and volunteers, the station reflects their community. "We sure appreciate people's support," said Rideout. "We wouldn't exist without it."

Tune in to Coast Community Radio on the radio, or listen online at coastradio.org