

# MOUTH OF THE COLUMBIA

Coast Weekend's local  
restaurant review

## Versatile little deli serves robust offerings

Review and photos by  
MOUTH OF THE COLUMBIA

Some months ago I received a letter from a reader, imploring me to visit the deli at Manzanita's Little Apple market. They said it was pretty special. So, finally, I went to see for myself.

Of course, I'd been to the Little Apple before, for groceries and whatnot, even before I'd moved to the North Coast. And I'd always found it rather charming, a throwback to what I imagine markets were like before the Safeways of the world took over, offering 400 varieties of cereal, 50-packs of toilet paper, and those infernal, ever-malfunctioning self-checkout machines.

The Little Apple, conversely, does a lot with a little, cramming a remarkable amount of product into the relatively small space. Up and down thin aisles, foodstuffs are stacked from floor to ceiling.

The deli is no exception — there's a lot in that compact corner: a cold case with vegetable and pasta salads, house-prepared and pre-packaged meats, cheeses, soups and so on. There's a hot case too, with dishes made in and out of house, as well as sandwiches made to order and a few baked goods. As I thumbed around, peering in the cases, making room for other customers passing by, I was greeted by a number of jovial, good-natured young adults who, between jokes, seemed proud — or at least fond — of the offerings.

I began by ordering a sandwich, filling out a little card, checking off the boxes: rye bread, pastrami, Swiss cheese, mustard, mayo and all the veggies.

"Wow," I blurted as the finished sandwich was handed to me. "It's huge!"

"That's that kind of response we like to hear!" the clerk said.

Indeed, it was a heck of a



Sandwiches are made to order at the Little Apple, and this pastrami sandwich was huge.

sandwich. This sandwich was so big it bullied other sandwiches in high school. This sandwich is so big it wears a mumu. This sandwich is so big its friends call it "tiny."

O.K., O.K., enough.

But really, a big deal for \$5.95. The veggies were fresh and crisp, the pastrami salty and briny, and the ratios right on. I also liked the thin bread, though that might've been a product of the sandwich's resting weight smushing it down.

At a clerk's suggestion, I tried the Spanish Rice from the hot case. It was heavy and a pretty reasonable amount of food (\$3.95/small). Seasoned primarily with tomato and pepper, dotted with black olives and chunks of beef meatballs and a few bell peppers, it was robustly simple. (It deserves mention that, at Little Apple, "smalls" aren't small — they're lunch-sized.)

The Baby Back Ribs too caught my eye, but I was foolish to take them from the cold case for a picnic. The sauce was tomatoes and not overly sweet, but at approximately \$4 for two ribs (at \$9.99/lb), a bit spendy. The Curry Chicken (\$9.99/lb) made more sense cold. With cranberries,



**Above:** The deli at Little Apple in Manzanita boasts cold and hot food. **Left:** The baked half chicken was a steal at \$5.95.



cashews, and a yogurt-like, cumin-forward sauce, it was all-killer, no-filler.

Also from the cold case I tried the seaweed-hinted Asian Slaw (\$7.99/lb.), which featured snap peas and cilantro with the cabbage base. The Beet Salad, with red onions and a touch of citrus, was an ideal beet delivery vehicle. The Kale Salad (\$2.99 for a 1/2 pint) was lightly tossed in a citrus oil, dusted with a few nutty shreds, flakes of Parmesan and cranberries. It was earthy, raw and simple, and it left me feeling lean, mean and clean — a stark contrast to the following weighty starches of the heated bulk foods, each

of which came almost bursting, stretching the walls of the paper boat in which it was delivered.

The Chicken Primavera (\$3.95/small) was a smooth, milky, cream-of-mushroom-soupy knot of noodles, shredded chicken, Parmesan and a few veggies. Prepared in a deep pan, the Pot Pie (\$3.95/small) substituted biscuits

**EACH TIME  
THE REGISTER  
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for a baked-in crust. With potatoes, peas, carrots and chicken in loads of thick, muddy gravy, it was a salty brick waiting to harden.

I much preferred the baked half-chicken. With golden skin still on, I found it a steal at \$5.95. It was salty and succulent, and it made me feel a bit like royalty — at least as much as any food for around five bucks can. Together with some of that kale salad you've got a high-co-

### LITTLE APPLE GROCERY

Rating: ★★★★★

193 Laneda Ave., Manzanita  
503-368-5362

**HOURS:** 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday; 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sunday.

**PRICE:** \$ – Deals abound.

**SERVICE:** Take-out that's quick, friendly and attentive.

**VEGETARIAN / VEGAN OPTIONS:** Vegetarians should do well; vegans should be able to make do.

**DRINKS:** Market has beer, wine, juice, soda, coffee, etc.

#### KEY TO STAR RATING SYSTEM

- ★ Poor
- ★★ Below average
- ★★★ Good & worth return
- ★★★★ Excellent
- ★★★★★ Best in region

tane, near-paleo meal-and-a-half for nine bucks.

And, hey, though I like a bargain, I'm no stooge. Add one of the Little Apple's home-made cookies for a buck and you've got dessert. The macadamia nut variety were thin and buttery, the oatmeal raisins were soft and familiar.

Each time the register rung up my bounty I was surprised at the low total, for these were good deals by any standard, particularly in the midst of a tourist town with limited options. As such, Little Apple's deli is like a Swiss army knife, ideal for a picnic at the beach, a house party spread, family dinner or a quick, working lunch. The selection is broad enough to serve all tastes, with everything from kale salads to corn dogs.