

Fireman sandwich, homemade bread recommend Daisy May's in Seaside

Review and photos by
THE MOUTH OF THE COLUMBIA
MOUTH@COASTWEEKEND.COM

Daisy May's Sandwich Shop is tucked into the back corner of Seaside's Outlet Mall. The shop's logo — a spotted cow with a daisy flower in its mouth — offers a hint of what's within: a little more country than coastal.

Inside, the smell of baked bread wafts through the air. The deep rectangle of a restaurant is mostly quiet but for the hum of kitchen fans and appliances. It is spacious, bright and sparse. Maybe three or four times bigger than it needs to be, owner-operator Debbie Kay helps fill the room with a forthright, attentive charm. (The shop's name is a nod to her father, who lobbied to name her "Daisy May.")

The menu is no frills: There are sandwiches, wraps, burgers, salads, soups, the occasional pastries and a few odds and ends for the kids. But really, it breaks down into two much more important categories: sandwiches made on Daisy's fresh bread and all the rest.

And, as if it needs saying: You want to go with the homemade bread.

Shaped like kiddie pools, Daisy's breads are wide, shallow rectangles, sliced once though the middle. They come in three varieties: French, wheat and focaccia, all of which are light, soft and airy, almost two inches tall before slicing. The French has a minimal, flaky crust. The wheat is rather mild, not too grainy. The focaccia is spongy, crumbly and buttery and it finishes with a fleck of rosemary.

The bread being Daisy's own is a big deal. It's the foundation for all that follows. Over multiple trips, Debbie herself made every



The Fireman sandwich at Daisy May's became this reviewer's "happy place."

sandwich I had. She did so with a delicacy (like slicing the onions just so) and a consistency (the strategic layering of ingredients) that a work-a-day, less invested staff member might overlook. That investment starts with the bread.

One of Daisy's most popular sandwiches is the Fireman (\$9.50 for a whole, \$6 for a half), which I fell for rapturously. As the plate was set before me a sharp, vaporous plume threw open the bay windows of my sinuses. My eyes widened at the barrel-chested sandwich's vivid palette of deep green lettuces, pink meats (a mix of pepperoni, salami and ham), red tomatoes, white onions, medley of orange, yellow banana peppers and green pickled pepperoncini and jalapeños. The perky, spicy acids and their briny juices swirled with the fatty, salty meats and melted cheeses in a marvelous dance on Daisy's bread, the luscious and the sharp edged, hand in hand.

The sandwich took me back. I remember, many years ago, working in an office above a mall, the Fifth Street Market in Eugene. I remember the necessity of the

hushed, escapist lunch breaks, and thought to myself: If I worked at or around the Outlet Mall I'd spend so many lunch hours at Daisy May's — both looking forward to, then finally devouring, that splendid sandwich.

Daisy May's other most popular sandwich, the towering Country Club (\$9.50 for a whole, \$6 for a half), too, was thoughtfully assembled, with a different cheese — cheddar and Swiss — melted on each side. Then came layers of thick bacon, roast beef and ham, with vegetables in the center. As with any worthwhile sandwich, the ratios were right on. Nearly as tall as it was wide, it was a brick of gooey, salty delight (though no Fireman!).

The sandwiches on Daisy May's breads are substantial, as much a sub as something you find at a deli. At Daisy's, half sandwiches have nearly the same footprint as a full slice of your average store-bought bread. When you consider the height and weight, half sandwiches here approach burger-size. So a full sandwich at Daisy's is almost like two of the everyday variety. It's also worth mentioning that, while

Behold Daisy May's Country Club sandwich, a "brick of gooey, salty delight," according to this critic.

teeming, sandwiches at Daisy's stay together; they're built to remain within the package rather than tumble out the sides.

Each sandwich, wrap or burger comes with a pickle and a bag of chips. For \$1.50 more you can choose from a side salad, jojos or tater tots. In my visits, I tried both the salad — colorful, adequately fresh — and the tots which, when paired with a full sandwich, rivaled the weight of any burger and fries. You'll be beyond full.

As I strayed from sandwiches built on Daisy's bread, I found the results regressing toward the mean. The wraps, though heartier than the ones you find in airport coolers, were nothing to write home about. All were bundled in big, green, burrito-sized, spinach tortillas that tasted nothing at all like spinach. The best thing about the Turkey (\$8.95), with cheese, lettuce, tomato and onion, was the way the onions were cut thin. The Italian, with salami, pepperoni, Canadian bacon and Italian dressing and veggies, was thick with melted cheese. Each wrap would've been better with the house bread. But for a mere 55 cents more, the second tier of "Special" sandwiches, like the Country Club and Fireman, rendered these well-trodden standbys all but obsolete.

There's nothing really to

DAISY MAY'S SANDWICH SHOP

Rating: ★★ ★

Seaside Factory Outlet Center
1111 N. Roosevelt Dr. #200
Seaside, Or • 97138

Phone 503-739-7099

Hours: Monday-Sunday 10
a.m. to 6 p.m.

Price: \$ - Stacked sandwiches
for around \$10

Service: Attentive, hospitable,
easy counter service

Vegetarian / Vegan Options:
Sandwiches, hold the meat/
cheese.

Drinks: Soda, coffee, juice

KEY TO STAR RATING SYSTEM

- ★ Below average
- ★★ Average
- ★★★ Good
- ★★★★ Excellent
- ★★★★★ Best in region

condemn in the cheeseburger (\$8.95) — drive-thru style with more flavorful Angus beef — but there's nothing much to recommend it, either.

Though it wasn't on Daisy's bread, I did try the Classic Reuben (\$9.50), generally one of my favorite sandwiches. And I get that it doesn't make sense to bake loaves of rye for one sandwich. Nevertheless, the Reuben — with slippery, paper-thin sliced pastrami, and sauerkraut dulled by loads of sweet Thousand Island — left me wanting. If I could do it over, I'd have gotten it on the house wheat.

But, really, I'd already found my happy place at Daisy's: the Fireman. And while you might discover your own less spicy go-to, I'll bet they have something in common: Daisy's bread. Not to mention Debbie Kay herself assembling it just so.