

# MOUTH OF THE COLUMBIA

Coast Weekend's local  
restaurant review

## Bread and Ocean prizes craftsmanship, community, family

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

For the first couple of years after purchasing Manzanita's Bread and Ocean Bakery from Julie Barker, George and Linda Reddish maintained the founder's vision.

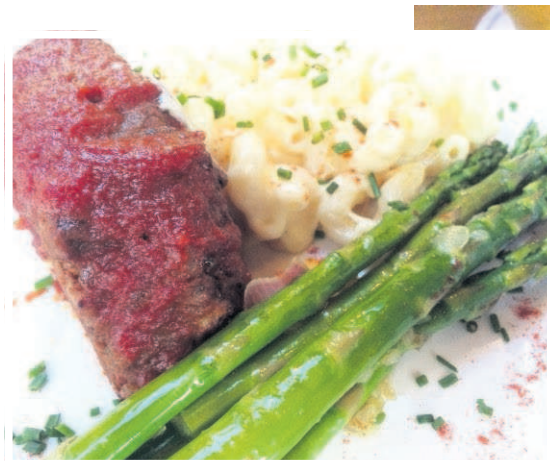
In 2016, the Reddishes added some vision of their own.

They began with a physical expansion: a second dining area that more than doubled the often packed, line-snaking, elbow-to-elbow seating. The new room included a full bar. Then, last fall, a weekend dinner service joined the retrofit.

For the Reddishes, helming Bread and Ocean has been their maiden voyage into the restaurant world. They were teachers who came to the North Coast to retire, and purchasing the bakery offered a new chapter and challenge.

At first they were shown the ropes by employees. As such, Bread and Ocean's dinner service is the product of collaboration. Where the breakfast and lunch service maintains much of Barker's original design — fresh bread, sandwiches and lean, fresh deli items — the dinner service is a menu-by-committee.

The collective approach has benefits and drawbacks. Rather than a unified style or cuisine, dinner choices are piecemeal. Influences — from Asian to soul food, all reflected through a Pacific Northwest lens — are proffered by the handful of employees, who write each weekend menu. Altogether, you might call it “family style.” Many of the entrées are not unlike those a household might share: meat, potatoes and veggies — except, of course, that moms and dads



Cajun-style meatloaf with macaroni and cheese and asparagus.

rarely worry about such aesthetically pleasing presentation.

With the edge-to-edge consistency of a Pollack painting, the Beet Salad (\$8) was lovingly arranged. Such meticulousness offered more than just a feast for the eyes, it made every bite perfect. Each fork-full had an equal distribution of smooth, salty goat cheese, delightful candied pecans, spinach with just the right amount of tangy balsamic, and a few oranges and tangerine slices for good measure.

Even the Meatloaf — with stretchy, melted Gruyère and Parmesan cheese macaroni and buttery asparagus spears — was daintily arranged. A dusting of paprika and diced chives dressed the plate's negative space.

This was a take on soul food that felt very Northwest — disruptive because it was so darn reasonable. The portions were measured, not teeming, nor overloaded with sugars, salts and fats. The ketchup-like, vinegar heavy “Cajun” meatloaf sauce wasn't rich, sweet or spicy. Unlike real soul food, one could finish this whole meal and not need a nap afterward.

These touches of arrangement keep dinner from flying out of the kitchen. So does a lack of traditional hierarchy. There's



Beet salad with goat cheese, oranges and candied pecans.

no head chef. This decentralized command structure results in certain employees being in charge of certain dishes (often the ones they themselves drummed up).

What this boosts in pride of craftsmanship it reduces in efficiency. With the restaurant mostly empty after a dinner rush, even simple foods took significantly longer than average to emerge. A similarly mild discombobulation was apparent in the front of the house. This centerlessness means you might get bread or water well before a menu. Or maybe multiple servers will try to take your order.

But the flagging speed and organization is redeemed, first, by the food and, second, by an earnest sense of warmth and community. Bread and Ocean is a place where staff appear encouraged to enjoy their individuality. Rather than being an extension of a singular chef, the establishment prizes community, democracy, family.

The labored pace probably has something to do with the evolving menu, too, though there are some stalwarts. You'll often

find roasted chicken and pork ribs, each served with potatoes and veggies. Indeed, potatoes are a mainstay.

Think “home-style,” which is a word I used to believe was meaningless marketing speak, but Bread and Ocean has me reconsidering. Here it means dishes that are humble, built from whole foods and not overly complex techniques. The result is closer to hearty and healthy than indulgent. But, indeed, there is joy to be found in eating simply, thoughtfully and well.

Along with the small handful of entrées, there are “tapas,” which is really a catchall term for soups, appetizers and salads (less than ten in total). Maybe that's because, during my trips, there was just one salad, which is absolutely fine — of everything I tried, the Beet Salad remains my enduring favorite.

I also sampled the Korean Twice Fried Wings, which were regrettable in both price and flavor. For \$7 you get just three wings. The twice-fried process stacks breading, an oily crunch overwhelming scant flesh. It's an interesting texture but more

### BREAD AND OCEAN BAKERY (DINNER SERVICE)

Rating: ★★☆☆

154 Laneda Ave. • Manzanita, OR

PHONE: 503-368-5823

HOURS: Friday through Saturday 5 p.m. through 8 p.m. (Dinner service)

PRICE: \$\$ - entrées top out around \$20

SERVICE: Inviting, enjoyably quirky, inefficient

VEGETARIAN/VEGAN OPTIONS: Reasonable

DRINKS: Full bar, juice, bottled soda

#### KEY TO STAR RATING SYSTEM

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

filler than killer. Really, when have you had chicken wings and thought: I wish these had more bread and less meat! The mild sauce, too, longed for some kick.

The Dungeness Crab-stuffed Dover Sole (\$18), on the other hand, had some killer filler. The Dungeness, bound by melted Parmesan and flecks of peppers, was a marvelous sinewy goo. On the spectrum of “home-style,” crab-wrapped fish is surely pushing the limit. Yet the vibe at Bread and Ocean is so welcomingly casual that eating the accompanying asparagus spears with my hands felt totally reasonable.

Indeed, Bread and Ocean promises no kind of elite fine dining, and at no time did I long for it. Instead, I found myself at ease and at home in the community of employees who are encouraged to bring their quirks to the table.