

The Mouth responds to readers

By THE MOUTH OF THE COLUMBIA
MOUTH@COASTWEEKEND.COM

It's your turn! This week's column is made of reader's letters to the Mouth. I love it when y'all take the time to write, and I'd love it if y'all did it more often!

In hopes of continuing the conversation, we're starting a Facebook page for the Mouth. Find it at Facebook.com/MouthoftheColumbia. And, as always, you can email me at mouth@coastweekend.com.

Letters have been edited for length and clarity.

A food-founded friendship

I read your review of The Kitchen in Seaside over a year ago and that was what pushed me to finally stop and try the food. I had driven by The Kitchen many times, noticed the menu on the whiteboard next to the highway and the tiny building adjacent. I was curious about the little place and the unusual offerings. So I stopped, talked to Jeanne (O'Donovan, owner and operator), and became a regular customer.

After a next few weeks, as Jeanne and I became more acquainted, I finally said, "How about if we just agree on a set price and you give us whatever you want us to eat?" She agreed, and so my husband and I picked up food from Jeanne five days a week for over a year.

All of this to say that you led me to a friend. Jeanne was generous, intelligent and witty. She loved cooking for appreciative customers. Along with her innovative menus, she paid attention to details and added occasional whimsy to them. She served a dessert once of narrow toasted pound cake strips with raspberry sauce, which was 'fries and catsup.' That just made me laugh! On last New Year's Eve Jeanne left a surprise meal on our front steps: individual



FACEBOOK.COM

The Kitchen sits at 1820 S. Roosevelt in Seaside.

beef wellingtons and prawns with accompaniments.

We texted each other a lot and often discussed her business and its ups and downs. She was very proud of your positive review. She was proud about winning the Cannon Beach Clam Chowder Cook Off. She was proud of passing the three year mark with her business.

This is in past tense because (I'm very, very sad to tell you) that Jeanne recently passed away. She had increasing pain this winter and went into the hospital in Portland around the end of January. She was cared for by her large extended family in Portland until her passing. I just wanted to share the news with someone who also appreciated her.

Sincerely,
Pam
Seaside

MOUTH: Pam, I'm very sorry for your loss. But I'm glad that you and Jeanne developed a bond that began with food, and I'm grateful to have played a minuscule part. Indeed, it is my sincere hope and belief that the effect of this column's positive reviews far outweigh the

negative. Your letter also reminds us that time is fleeting.

Farewell, Street 14 dinner

Hi,
I just wanted to send along a brief note to thank you for the wonderful "obituary" you put together recently about Street 14 dinner.

From the first review to the last, I was consistently impressed by the thoughtfulness of the pieces, and was certain that what I had hoped to convey from the kitchen had reached the dining room.

Knowing that what we on the Street 14 dinner crew were doing was being heard went a long way to softening the blow of Thursday night empty dining rooms and, of course, the news that dinner was ending.

Thank you again for getting it, and liking it, and writing so eloquently about it.

Andy Catalano
Astoria

MOUTH: I promise the inclusion of this letter is not to heap praise upon myself. (Seriously: if you have



PHOTO BY DWIGHT CASWELL

Chef Andrew Catalano, who headed Street 14 Cafe's dinner service.

criticism or complaints send them to mouth@coastweekend.com — I'm listening.) I publish it instead to highlight that the phenomenal chef Catalano has started a new business: a weekly meal service kit (a la Blue Apron) that uses local ingredients called Alimento. You can find out more at alimentoastoria.com. (And if you try it, tell me what you think!)

Best in the region

Mouth,
I split my time between NW PDX and Long Beach, Washington, in the summer, where I am a captain on a tuna charter boat.

I have the Chinook Observer delivered to my PDX home and get it fresh off the presses during the summer.

I always look forward to your thorough and honest reviews, and try out pretty much every place you like on my side of the river.

Long Beach dining has improved immensely over the 20 so years I

have been going there, especially when the Depot, The Adrift, and Serious Pizza opened up.

This summer, it looks like Serious Pizza is finally going to get their Ilwaco location up and running and I can't wait.

A new generation is moving to the beach and I think dining is going to keep getting better and better on the Peninsula.

Keep up the excellent work and keep calling them like they are.

Mike
Long Beach

Hello,
I was wondering why there has been no mention or reviews of any of the superb restaurants in Cannon Beach? The Irish Table is perfect and outstanding and what about the Castaways Restaurant & Tiki Bar restaurant which is really great. There are several other wonderful dining options in Cannon Beach that should be officially raved about and recommended.

Thank you,
Candace
Gearhart

MOUTH: I grouped these two letters together as I think they go tête-à-tête. Each makes an argument for best restaurant city in the Columbia-Pacific region. And while Cannon Beach is a strong contender — Candace didn't mention the Stephanie Inn, the Bistro, Newman's 988 or the new Harding Trading Co. (see last week's review) — I've been thinking a lot about Long Beach as a potential top dog, too. As well as the restaurants Mike mentioned, the Shelburne Inn and 42nd Street Cafe are top notch. Indeed, even after losing Nancy & Jimella's, one can make a strong argument for the Peninsula.

The region's big brother, Astoria, has to be in the conversation as well.

So ... who do you think has the edge? 