

Best market meals embrace coastal smorgasbord

Review and photos by
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Last week's column highlighted farmers market purveyors. This week we turn to the food courts. There's one at each market. (For times and locations, see the sidebar.)

The best market meals take advantage of the smorgasbord of freshness that surrounds them. Indeed, it's a special thing to see the vendors, the farmers, the ranchers, and have a dish prepared from the bounty.

No one is doing this better than Roll & Bowl, a sushi and ramen cart you'll find at the Manzanita, Cannon Beach and Seaside markets.

When Roll & Bowl appeared on the circuit last year I marveled at the veggies, for I'd never had sushi with such vibrant ruffage. (They get the lion's share of their produce from KingFisher Farms.)

In year No. 2, Roll & Bowl have upped their game considerably. The improvements began with a new trailer, increasing both capacity and efficiency. The menu has grown, and so has the team.

Sushi chef Bryan Tiller added a ramen specialist: Brae Bartlett. Starting with scratch-made noodles, Bartlett builds beautiful, teeming, artfully arranged bowls. The offerings evolve week to week, shaped by inspiration and availability.

You're likely to find a "tonkotsu," a pork-based broth, and a vegetarian option, which of late has been a marvelous Green Curry (\$11). With marinated tofu, mushrooms — both pickled shiitake and the long, thin-stemmed enoki — sesame-marinated bamboo chutes, green onions and other elements, the vegetarian bowl's broth has a depth of flavor that's nearly bottomless. (It includes miso, green onion, garlic, shio koji curry paste and more.) The Tonkotsu (\$12),



CS Fishery at the Manzanita Farmers Market

with luscious slabs of pork belly and a similar smattering of mushrooms and veg, is equally divine. Each bowl comes with a sous-vide egg whose viscous yolk unwinds in slurpy ecstasy. (For \$2 more you can upgrade to an even richer duck egg from a flock raised by Tiller himself.)

Then there are rice bowls, which make lean little lunches. Atop perfect white rice is that shifting array of mushrooms, veggies and herbs. They're topped with, say, juicy slices of seared flank steak, marinated in Korean chili paste, fish sauce and soy. Or grilled salmon skewers. Or seared pork belly and tangy kimchi. Again, it changes week to week.

Tiller's sushi has evolved, too. The most obvious difference is structural: hand rolls (cone-shaped with a dried seaweed wrapper) have replaced rolls (sliced bites with rice on the outside). For \$6 each, or two for \$10, Tiller offers a few choices. The stalwart Philly-style includes smoked salmon and cream cheese. The Veggie packs spicy arugula, goat cheese, sweet potato and beets. And, from time to time, you'll find raw fish. The Albacore Lox, with burdock, carrots, cucumber, arugula and an edible flower, was tangy, buttery and irresistible.

Together, Tiller and Bartlett's dishes exhibit a studiousness and refinement that comes only through apprentice and passion. Theirs is food every bit as good as — and, in many cases, better than — the



Roll & Bowl's Green Curry

brick-and-mortar restaurants in the region.

Alongside Roll & Bowl's green trailer at the Cannon Beach and Manzanita farmers markets you'll find CS Fishery, grilling up rockfish on a big round flat-top. The catch comes from a collective of fisherman in the Garibaldi area who're committed to sustainable practices.

CSF's flagship is the Rockfish Taco (\$10 for two). On 8-inch flour tortillas, they're not quite street-style. The flaky white rockfish is grilled, not fried, topped with slaw, a drizzle of spicy mayo and salsa. It's reasonably clean and simple.

Atop the grill you'll also see a pile of sizzling veggies — mostly onions, cabbage and chard (again from KingFisher). While some veggies may make their way into tacos, most are reserved for the Rockfish Bowl (\$12). It's kind of like an unassembled fish taco, tortilla included. The veggies in the bowl were dominated by long-cooked, caramelized onions. Adding some sharp and sweet to the veg — like, say, bell and spicy peppers — or some body — potatoes, for instance — would punch the bowl up significantly.

In Manzanita, CSF offers hamburgers, too, with beef from their neighboring Nehalem River Ranch. The burger (\$10, served with chips) is stout, thick and generous. Though it could be more astutely seasoned, the beef has a cleanliness and — how do I put it? — a local flavor signature. (Or maybe I'm just not getting enough well-raised,



Rawk Star Creations' Sage Garden Burger

grass-finished beef?)

It's heartening to close that distance — to know where your food comes from, not to mention knowing your purchases are supporting the local economy.

Though it's the largest by far, you won't find as much preparation of market goods at Astoria food court. To me, it feels as much like carnival fare as it does farmers market. Some of Astoria's food court vendors are extensions of brick-and-mortar businesses, and I couldn't resist Himani Indian Cuisine's pop-up. I just don't get enough Indian food on the coast, and the combo (\$13) scratched that itch with smooth, buttery chicken, silky eggplant curry and the singular seasoning of a tandoori chicken.

I'd heard good things about Rawk Star Creations, a vegan vendor from Olympia, Washington, but was a bit deflated that the Sage Garden Burger (\$8) was pre-made and packaged, simply pulled from a cooler. The grainy, nutty patty, between raw, grainy, onion bread was like a car crash of protein bars. The cashew "cheese" was hummus-like, and the veg was solid. But don't get me wrong: My body was thankful for this raw, natural, healthy sandwich. Were my diet thusly restricted, I'd be quite thankful for such a robust, on-the-go snack.

It would be another vendor from Olympia, though, that would be the star of my Astoria market: Claddagh Coldbrew Co. As I drink my coffee black, I had no use for the nitro (which emulates creaminess without

IF YOU GO

ASTORIA SUNDAY MARKET

12th St., Astoria, Ore., 97103
10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sundays
through Oct. 8

ASTORIA RIVER PEOPLE FARMERS MARKET

577 18th St., Astoria, Ore.,
97103

Third Thursday of the month
through Oct. 19

CANNON BEACH

163 E. Gower Ave., Cannon
Beach, Ore., 97110

1 to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through
Sept. 29

MANZANITA

Laneda Ave and 5th St. S.,
Manzanita, Ore., 97130

5 to 8 p.m. Fridays through
Sept. 1

4 to 7 p.m. Fridays, Sept. 8
and 15

SEASIDE

1120 Broadway St., Seaside,
Ore., 97138

3 to 7 p.m. Wednesdays
through Sept. 27

ILWACO, WASH.

Port of Ilwaco

10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays
through Sept. 30

LONG BEACH, WASH.

212 Pacific Ave, Long Beach,
Wash., 98631

3 to 6 p.m. Fridays through
Sept. 29

the dairy). For a moment, I scoffed at the puny 12-ounce cold brew. But about a third of the way through I found caffeine nirvana. A habitual coffee drinker, the descendant of prodigious, all-day-and-night coffee drinkers, I rollicked in a glorious buzz the likes of which I haven't had in many years. Huzzah! 