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Territory by Melville Farms. Basil and heirloom tomatoes arrived from 46 North just outside of Astoria. Shallots were obtained from LaNa Conscious Farm in Astoria, with sourdough bread coming from Sea Level Bakery in Cannon Beach.

All of this was complimented by a perfect pour of house-made vinegar in a small reusable jar. Each bite burst with flavor and freshness, having traveled less than the distance of a marathon to make it to your dinner plate.

Humility in the kitchen

While the home cook can certainly pick up culinary tricks and inspiration from Alimento's meal kits, the recipes are designed to be executed quickly.

"I really believe that good cooking depends less on technical skill than on an attitude of humility in the kitchen," Catalano explained. "When it comes to making a tasty plate of food, high-quality ingredients will do most of the work for you if you let them."

During a recent trial of Alimento's meal service, nothing more was required than basic cookware and cutlery, olive oil, salt and pepper, and every dish was pulled together in about half an hour. What makes these meals special is having a talented chef curating the freshest possible ingredients from the best local sources, not to mention the hours of magical prep that Catalano puts into his menus behind the scenes.

One week Catalano put a heritage pork shoulder he had acquired from Nehalem River Ranch on the smoker at 6 a.m. for a



LEFT: Bucatini pasta with house bacon, English peas, and salt-cured egg. Total prep time: 25 mins. RIGHT: Roast chicken with purple filet beans and heirloom tomatoes. Total prep time: 35 mins.



PHOTOS BY RYAN HUME

twelve hour low-and-slow burn before it was pulled and portioned for sandwiches. The next week it was house-cured bacon and salt-cured egg yolks to round out a sinfully delicious dish of house-made bucatini pasta with fresh English peas. House-made vinegars, ferments and pickles, pre-measured sauces and dry ingredients, all of these expert touches allow the home cook to reach depths of flavors in record time.

Exact quantities, easy directions

With this attention to detail, sometimes the vegetables even find their way back to the farm. Teresa Retzlaff, of 46 North Farm, recently ordered an Alimento meal kit for her and her husband, Packy Coleman, on a week when they had supplied much of the produce for that week's meals.

"Andy felt awkward selling our own produce back to us," she said. "But I wanted the opportunity to see how what we

grew was presented. It's like eating a meal at a restaurant that you supply produce to — it's a good thing to support your restaurants, even if you have to cook the food yourself!"

Retzlaff said Coleman, who likes to follow specific recipes when cooking, was immediately smitten with the kit. "I wish I had filmed him unpacking it," she said, "exclaiming over everything, so happy to have everything measured out in exact quantities and easy directions to follow."

Retzlaff and Coleman, who have been working with Catalano since his Street 14 days, took turns cooking the meals and found each meal delicious and filling — though, as Retzlaff recalled Coleman saying, "I'm sure it would have been better if Andy cooked it himself."

Catalano will be catering the Astoria Co-op's upcoming annual meeting Sunday, Sept. 17, at the Red Building Loft where

the Co-op will unveil the design for their new store. The event is currently completely booked.

Soon Catalano will start bi-monthly fundraising dinners for the North Coast Food Web with seating limited to twelve guests per dinner. Retzlaff and Catalano are planning a series of farm-to-table dinners at 46 North for next year that would feature their local produce as well as local meats, fish and cheeses.

Alimento's website will soon begin selling Jacobson Salt products from Nertarts, and Catalano hopes to start selling more quality pantry essentials in the future. With autumn fast approaching, expect to see Asian pears, fall greens like kale and cabbages, root vegetables, pastured meats and wild mushrooms entering rotation in the meal kit service.

More information

Alimento's meal kit service is available at alimentoastoria.com. Sign up for a newsletter that comes out every Tuesday and details that week's menu.

Kits can be purchased through the Alimento website at any time during the week, and are readied in insulated bags every Friday.

Kits are available for pick-up on Friday afternoons at the offices of the North Coast Food Web on 577 18th St., where the meal kits are prepped and assembled in the on-site commercial kitchen. Alimento also offers free delivery in the downtown Astoria area.

See what Coast Weekend cooks up with Alimento on our website! [CW](#)

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