

# Dundee's fare neither star nor benchwarmer

Review and photos by  
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For sports fans, fall presents a veritable quandary. As the summer sun recedes into late October and early November, the big three American professional leagues perk up. For a short time, the NFL, NBA and MLB not only overlap, but offer compelling reasons to tune in: baseball is neck-deep in the playoffs, football games become make-or-break, and basketball's new-look teams are taking shape.

On a few nights during this sports smorgasbord, I found myself at Dundee's Bar & Grill in Seaside, drifting from one game to another.

Like any sports bar worth its salt, Dundee's has plenty of TVs, not only above the bar and papering the walls, but in a number of booths, too. And, as opposed to the more communal bar experience, it can be nice to have your own personal screen — sometimes you want to go out, be cooked for, but avoid the comments of would-be experts.

Along with the glowing flat-screens, the collective groans, cheers and a cute but superfluous icy track ringing the bar that keeps drinks cold, Dundee's offers the requisite sports bar foods: burgers, wings, pizza and the like. All come in reasonably hefty portions.

To put it in sports terms: Dundee's fare is akin to a "replacement-level player." In other words: the food is neither star nor benchwarmer, but a dependable worker who executes a limited role.

To be sure: players such as these, while perhaps indistinct, are necessary. Like a good blocker or third baseman, sometimes you need a simple sports bar with good sight-lines and food you can keep picking at through the



Pizza: on the left, Ricardo's, on the right, Tillamook Head.

commercials.

I began with the burger. It's big, but the patty is thin and wide, flattened out. Bites have a beef-to-bun ratio that's light on beef. Of the handful of different variations, I had the Hot Lips (\$9.99), and enjoyed the generous, gooey, creamy pile-up of pepper jack, twangy jalapeños, chipotle mayo and crispy shards of fried onion. Midway through I was dabbing sweat from my welled-up cheeks.

The burger, like most of the sandwich-heavy menu, comes stocked with house-made potato chips, which I found wholly dull — either tasteless, oily crunch or soft and cardboard-y. Fries, tots, sweet potato fries, chowder, chili or a trip through salad bar can be had for \$1.99 more.

The salad bar, with a foot still

planted in the era where cottage cheese and peaches are indispensable, was nonetheless worth the minimal up-charge. I was thankful for the spinach, so much heartier than a wilting, watery iceberg mix. Really though, the simple act of making it my way is what did it. (On a recent trip to a similar sports bar I was reminded how lame salads at places like these can be: easily ruined with a crop dusting of chalky shredded cheese, for example.)

Despite the thin, snappy parlor-style crust, Dundee's pizzas are weighty, loaded with deep layers of cheese, an unsweetened marinara and piled with toppings. In one instance I counted seven pepperonis layered over each other.

There are four tiers of pie and

four sizes, from 8-to-16 inches. The premium-tier 16-inch varieties top out at \$25.99. I tried two different iterations from the most-loaded category, both marinara-based: the Ricardo's and the Tillamook Head, which a server told me was one of the most popular. The Tillamook Head was absolutely teeming, with almost full coverage of ground beef and sausage blacking out everything below (salami, pepperoni, Canadian bacon, mushrooms, olives, green peppers, onions, pineapple). Seriously, it was burgers upon burgers of ground meats. The Ricardo's, with salty prosciutto, pepperoni, garlic and olives, swerves into its own lane thanks to dry chèvre and sun-dried tomatoes. The pizza hit the necessary marks.

So did the fried, beer-battered

## DUNDEE'S BAR & GRILL

**Rating:** ★★

414 Broadway St.  
Seaside, Ore.  
97138

503-738-7006

**Hours:** 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. every day

**Price:** \$\$ – Entrées start near the \$10 range, drinks a bit pricey

**Service:** Cheerful, competent

**Vegetarian / Vegan Options:** Not a destination, but will have something for the vegetarian in your group

**Drinks:** Full bar

### KEY TO STAR RATING SYSTEM

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

fish. Cod, tuna and halibut are available, either as fish-and-chips or in a sandwich. I went with the sandwich, and on the server's recommendation, chose the tuna (\$12.99). The crust was right on, the fish thick and flaky. And while not astoundingly fresh or flavorful, the essence was there.

The Wings (eight for \$8.99, available in hot & spicy, teriyaki, spicy Asian and BBQ) were big, and they scratch that itch.

And while no particular dish I ate at Dundee's will be gracing the All-Star Team, they all earn their spots on the roster. Just like replacement-level players, when they're doing their job right, you might not even notice. As such, what may end up coloring your experience at Dundee's is whether your team wins. 