

BEST GIFT SHOP
FINN WARE

ASTORIA

Runner-up: A Gypsy's Whimsy
Herbal Apothecary, Astoria
Honorable mention: Cargo, Astoria

By RYAN HUME

Uff da! Coast Weekend readers continue to channel their inner Viking, voting Finn Ware in downtown Astoria as their favorite gift shop to raid in 2017.

With an eclectic stock that ranges from haute Scandinavian design to pins that announce the pain of marrying a Dane or a Swede and onto edibles unavailable west of the Ikea near the Portland Airport or beyond, owner Saara Matthews' shop has been filling a niche that speaks to an indivisible root of the North Coast's heritage since it opened in 1987.

Walking through the front door of Finn Ware on 1116 Commercial St. is a bit like going through a portal. All of a sudden the air whiffs of holiday no matter what month it happens to be, as Finn Ware keeps up the Christmas spirit year-round, which is a Finnish tradition. For example, in the city of Rovaniemi, Santa has an office open to the public during regular business hours.

Matthews keeps most of her mannequins well-dressed and accessorized in Marimekko. Marimekko is the bold, chic Finnish clothing label, originally established in 1951 by couple Armi and Viljo Ratia, which in English means "Mary-dress," and has been a closet solid for aspiring style icons ever since Jackie O. took a liking to their bold patterns and bags. Finn Ware is the only establishment in Oregon that sells their products.

Finn Ware has also developed a delightful collection of all things Moomin, including the charming, classic illustrated books by Tove Jansson as well as calendars, plush toys and other ephemera based on these beloved characters.

Having struck a perfect balance between high and low Scandinavian culture, Finn Ware offers something for all. While Ikea tries to take over the world, Coast Weekend readers appreciate that Finn Ware is just trying to share the best of a region. 



RYAN HUME PHOTO

Finn Ware in Astoria won best gift shop in the 2017 Readers' Choice Awards.

BEST RESTAURANT FOR KIDS

BUOY BEER CO.

ASTORIA



EDWARD STRATTON PHOTO

Kids and adults alike can often be seen peering at sea lions through the plate glass platform at Buoy Beer Co.

Runner-up:
Frite & Scoop, Astoria
Honorable mention: Lost
Roo, Long Beach


By EDWARD STRATTON

Buoy Beer Co. opened in a former Bornstein Seafoods processing plant on the Astoria waterfront in 2014 and has been rapidly growing ever since.

The buildout mostly cannibalized parts of the former seafood plant. Noticing a portion of the floor just inside the entrance was rotting, general contractor Jared Rickenbach jokingly suggested creating a glass window through which to watch sea lions on the pilings below.

The suggestion turned into a double-layered, half-inch-thick tempered glass plate where children and adults alike can be seen peering down at sea lions lounging on a board below. The brewery provides a full kids menu, crayons, drawings to color and merchandise such as t-shirts identifying the wearer as a "sea lion supervisor."

Jessyka Dart-McLean, a marketing specialist with the brewery, said she enjoys the trend of family friendly brewpubs, especially as a mother who likes craft beer.

"The people who are really into the craft brew scene are late 20s to mid-40s," she said. "Those people have kids." 

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