

MOUTH OF THE COLUMBIA

Coast Weekend's local
restaurant review

Cannon Beach Smokehouse a stickler for detail

Review and photos by
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The words to describe Cannon Beach — an expensive, refined, quaint resort town — could well cover its restaurants.

What you won't find much of: youth and modernity.

But with the Cannon Beach Smokehouse, the glimmers of a new generation's influence are peaking through.

While smoking meats may not seem especially groundbreaking, remember that the modern movements in food are all about going back-to-basics, prizing hands-on craft and locally made products. They're about doing it yourself, professionalizing your passion and the precision in the small batch.

All of which fits the Cannon Beach Smokehouse to a T.

Smoking began as a hobby for co-owner Brian Raymond, who started out with the fish he caught then moved on to sausages, charcuterie, anything he could dream up.

While honing his smoking skills, Raymond kept his job as a server at Bill's Tavern. There he found partners: a similarly aged, entrepreneurial Jacob Bond and the Bill's family ownership. The partnership adds deep industry experience to burgeoning inspiration.

The Smokehouse, which opened in November of last year, crams seating, a bar, deli coolers and a



Smoked Trip-Tip Sandwich

kitchen into what amounts to a bedroom. Space is saved by an all-in-one hood, fryer and flattop grill that's about the size of a refrigerator. This kitchen-in-a-box is cute but limited; there are only so many square-inches to cook on.

Which is to say: Don't be in a hurry — dishes at the Smokehouse can take longer than you'd think. To be fair, some of the Smokehouse's turnaround is due to their being sticklers for detail. Most dishes, particularly the sandwiches, were constructed with care,

as if they were to be eaten by their maker. The cheese is melted just so, layers stacked in particular order, bread perfectly toasted, sauce spread evenly in total coverage.

And let's take a minute to talk about the sauce and the Smokehouse accoutrements at large. Some smokers and BBQ joints go all in on that woody, time-earned, vaporous flavor. While smoke is apparent at the Smokehouse, it's not the end-all-be-all but a thoughtful component of a greater whole.

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The All Day breakfast sandwich



Smoked Pork Chop

Take the All Day breakfast sandwich (\$10). There's smoke permeating the sliced ham, thick, juicy bacon and the mozzarella. But just as forward is sweet chili aioli, the creaminess of the scrambled eggs, the buttered ciabatta. The ratios — sweet, salty, meaty, creamy, crunchy, supple — were right on.

The tender, sinewy Tri-Tip Sandwich (\$12) had a lush and zippy horseradish-blue cheese spread that I want to take home a bottle of. While delightful, the Tri-Tip was dainty enough where it might mystify congregants of the church of

Texas BBQ, where meat is king and all portions come in nap-inducing, artery-clogging piles.

The housemade andouille sausage (\$12), though, would make 'em smile. It was a big ol' thing, overwhelming the buttery pretzel bun. With a kiss of smoke, the sausage seemed designed to be eaten with a knife and fork, but that's not how I roll. With a dollop of sauerkraut, chips or coleslaw and a pair of quality mustards — whole grain and a sinus-clearing spicy honey mustard — the sizable sausage was enough to satiate on its own. With a

CANNON BEACH SMOKEHOUSE

Rating: ★★☆☆

181 W. Second St.
Cannon Beach, Ore.
97110

503-436-4035

Hours: 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Tuesday-Sunday

Price: \$\$ – It's still Cannon Beach

Service: Don't be in a hurry

Vegetarian / Vegan Options:
Mostly for meat eaters

Drinks: Crafty cocktails, beer,
wine, soda

KEY TO STAR RATING SYSTEM

★ Poor

★★ Below average

★★★ Worth returning

★★★★ Very good

★★★★★ Excellent, best in region

sandwich and an appetite, however, one might add a side of hand-cut fries.

Though a thick, sizable slab, the Smoked Pork Chop (\$18) was way overcooked, tough to cut even with a steak knife.

There are an array of sides, including the Smokehouse Pretzel, which comes dangling like a hangman from the gallows, as well as deli cases with a smattering of meaty products — some smoked in house, some not — that you can take home or on the go.

Much like the sandwiches, cocktails at the Smokehouse are made with care, balance and flourish. The Kickin' Mule, a riff on the Moscow Mule, featured a funky splash of ginger turmeric kombucha.

Kombucha in a cocktail is something you surely won't find elsewhere in Cannon Beach. Same goes for the Smokehouse's emergent vibe. When not spinning classic vinyl, the Spotify playlists include music from this century.

Indeed, the influences of a new generation on Cannon Beach are overdue, refreshing and oh so welcome. **CV**