

MOUTH OF THE COLUMBIA

Coast Weekend's local
restaurant review

Seaside Brewing Co. 'easy, familiar, fulfilling'

Review and photos by
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Despite its digs in the sparsely refurbished, heavy old Seaside jailhouse, there's a lightness to Seaside Brewing Co. It's easy, familiar, fulfilling.

Sure, it's the norm for North Coast brewpubs: burgers, chowder, sandwiches, fish and chips.

But if, after a hike or a surf, you find yourself in need of a burger and a brew, Seaside Brewing will more than suffice.

And they get extra credit, not only for brewing their own beer, but for punching up those familiar dishes just enough.

Come to think of it, the Chipotle Jalapeño Cheeseburger (\$14.50) is one of the more satisfying burgers I've had in Seaside lately.

I came in famished, and the 1/2 lb. patty and pillowy bun had me trundling out. It was well seasoned and cooked right with some pink in the center. It wasn't the beef that sucked me in, but the swirling chipotle mayo oozing out the sides, the melted jack cheese and snappy jalapeño peppers. The dressing is what has me considering another.

The chipotle mayo was a significant component of the Fish Tacos de Dennis (\$14.95) as well. To be sure: You're tasked with assembling them yourself, which, despite some astoundingly clueless Yelpers, is how the Western world makes the best tacos.

I went hard on the vivid mango salsa, which crackles with diced jalapeños, the chipotle mayo and shredded cabbage. While it was over-breaded, I appreciated the choice of rockfish, a local and abundant catch (as opposed to, say, cod that's been frozen and flown halfway around the world).

The Wild Salmon BLT Sand-



Wild Salmon BLT Sandwich

wich (\$14.95) struck an endearing partnership between fatty bacon and a lean but hefty salmon steak, to which the lemon-y aioli was a no-brainer. (And hey, crummy pubs: a fish sandwich without breaded fish — what a concept!)

That's about as wild and creative as the food at Seaside Brewing gets. Which is to say: not much.

But what they lack in diversity they mostly make up for in accoutrements — the mango salsa, the chipotle and lemon aiolis, decent bread and so on.

Now, wait ... I shouldn't leave out the BBQ, though it's often left out of plain sight. Over four separate trips to Seaside Brewing I was never, by server or signage, notified of any specials. But, occasionally, specials of the BBQ variety do exist.

I know because, on one trip, I saw a smoker out back with fresh wood on top of it and asked my server. The message had to ping the kitchen before an answer returned. Indeed, there was a special on the day's menu: a pulled pork sandwich.

As I understand it, BBQ specials at Seaside Brewing are sporadic, found more regularly on busy weekends but occasionally on weekdays. Those specialties are said to include brisket and bratwurst as well, though I found only the pulled pork.

And I mean I found *only* pulled



Chipotle Jalapeño Cheeseburger



Fish Tacos de Dennis

pork. On a bun. With a side of smoky, tangy, nearly-serrated BBQ sauce. I longed for some slaw. Something. That extra element to pull it all together that items on the regular menu relish in. Where the Chipotle Jalapeño Burger and Fish Tacos were gleefully, colorfully adorned, the pulled pork was one-and-a-half-notes. It was, however, a rare pothole. Nothing else left me stumbling.

Now ... deep breath. Clear the smoke from your taste buds. Let's

talk about the beers. There are loads of them.

Crisp kölsch, sneaky Belgian Tripel, molasses-heavy Russian stout, fruity Hefeweizen and, of course, hoppy IPAs. Seaside Brewing really runs the gamut. On my visits there were around 14 house beers on tap.

The most memorable I tried was, by far, the Shōga Ace Ginger Blonde ("shōga" is Japanese for ginger). Imagine a ginger beer more beer than soda — less sweet with still plenty of spicy ginger

SEASIDE BREWING CO.

Rating: ★★ ★

851 Broadway St.
Seaside, Ore., 97138
503-717-5451

Hours: 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday–Friday, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday–Sunday

Price: \$–\$\$: most dishes in the low teens.

Service: Personable and occasionally forgetful

Vegetarian/Vegan Options: Hummus, salad, chips and salsa

Drinks: Beer, wine, soda

KEY TO STAR RATING SYSTEM

- ★ Poor
- ★★ Below average
- ★★★ Worth returning
- ★★★★ Very good
- ★★★★★ Excellent, best in region

bite. While perhaps less destined for mass consumption than the weaponized hops warheads of Oregon's explosive IPA arsenal, the Shōga is my recommendation for beerheads in search of something fresh and new.

Otherwise, though, fresh and new isn't exactly Seaside Brewing's thing. They're not reinventing the wheel, but rather finding incremental ways to make it roll more smoothly. And in this case I'm cool with it.

Like I said: easy, familiar, fulfilling. Plus there's a connection to place, a pride in Seaside.

While hardly strict locavores, Seaside Brewing reflects proudly upon its home. Be it the historic renovation, using rockfish, hosting and supporting events or brewing their own beer, Seaside Brewing makes where you are tangibly clear. Not all restaurants in the area do this.

In so, Seaside Brewing succeeds where a lot of their neighbors on tourist-centric Broadway Street struggle: giving us full-time residents a reason to return. **CW**