

MOUTH OF THE COLUMBIA

Coast Weekend's local
restaurant review

Readers tell me what's what

Column by
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It's time for another round of reader responses. Thanks to everyone who wrote in.

World Cup fever

Mouth,
We're nearly a month from the start of the World Cup. Any recommendations on viewing options? I'll be rooting for Belgium, so if you do publish a column on the topic, please include team affiliations if they exist. It's a strong year for Scandinavian teams, as they have three representatives, so I'd expect at least one venue in Astoria that will be enthused about that.

Thanks, Ed

MOUTH: Ed —

My first trip to Europe coincided with the World Cup and I've been hooked since.

Four years ago I remember catching a few games at Season's Cafe in Cannon Beach. As for this year, I'm afraid I haven't a clue.

Part of the difficulty is that 2018's Cup is being played in Russia. As such, live matches will be broadcast absurdly early on the West Coast, beginning as early as 5 a.m. PST and kicking off, at the latest, at 11 a.m. I imagine there will be replays, but I'm not sure if that'll be enough to draw die-hard fans out in public.

That said, if you're a restaurant or bar owner planning to show World Cup games, let us know in the comments.

In defense of Capricorn Pub & Fine Foods

Online comment by whoops123, re: Capricorn Review (May 9, 2018)

The back area is too small for a pool table. She is making due with the space that she has. Google

minimum space requirements for a pool table before you condemn her for the layout.

You are trying to make a restaurant out of this bar/restaurant, in a location where good restaurants have failed in the past. Part of that means that she has to lure locals in despite their hesitancy. So she gives them a place to drink and socialize. Then, hopefully, they will eat and keep this yummy restaurant alive. In the cold winter months, indoor games such as the pool table, foosball and darts do exactly that.

You didn't call attention to the fact that she is serving much later than the surrounding restaurants. Astoria badly needed a late night place to eat, and that this actually includes good, wholesome fare rather than the normal fried offerings that permeate this city further accentuates the value that this restaurant brings to the area.

She's doing a great job. We will all be better off if she succeeds.

MOUTH: We're going to have to disagree about the importance of a pool table. As I wrote, billiards are lower on my list of what draws me to a restaurant than a clean bathroom. Seeing people eating, though, helps.

We do agree, however, that Capricorn makes a few worthwhile Romanian specialties (though the great majority of the menu is indeed the fried junk you lament). Two things Astoria has plenty enough of are pool tables and fried pub grub. Romanian food, on the other hand, is in woefully short supply.

Delicious writing

Dear Mouth:

After having them several times, I have come to believe the best burgers in the North Coast area are at the Relief Pitcher tavern just south of Seaside on U.S. Highway 101. Their Pastrami Reuben sandwiches are to die for.

I only live in Seaside part time, but when I do the local things I most look forward to reading are The Ear and your restaurant reviews in The Astorian.

I once assisted Elizabeth Gillenwater, the food editor at the Oregon Journal in Portland, and was food editor of a daily newspaper in Oceanside, California. Thus, food writing is of special interest to me. And yours, just like much of the food you write about, is delicious.

Cheryl Adamscheck
Seaside and Lacey, Washington

First, let me thank you for your contribution to the local dining experience. Your column is the first thing I read in every week's newspaper.

Regarding the subject (Best Chowder) — please include Bailey's Bakery in Nahcotta in your samplings. In my opinion, Jayne's chowder is the best pre-prepared in the region, surpassed only by The Depot's made to order offering.

Ed Burnett, Ocean Park

MOUTH: Cheryl and Ed — Thanks for both the kind words and the suggestions. I'm still doing my due diligence in hopes of creating some best-of lists (like Best Burger, Fish & Chips, Chowder and so on). In the meantime, readers, take a cue from Cheryl and Ed: Tell me your favorites! What do I absolutely have to try before naming Best Burger and the like?

D'oh!

I really think you need to check your info as far as female chefs... Chef Alec Evans, our chef at Astoria Coffee House & Bistro... has been doing a masterful job... Breakfast, lunch and dinner... sushi night, taco night... prime rib night... and our killer busy weekend breakfast/brunch... chef always does everything with a smile... She got second place as best chef on the list... There was a photo of

her... are you not paying attention... we are one of the most popular restaurants in Astoria....

James Defeo (owner, Astoria Coffee House & Bistro)

Hi, my name is Alec Evans. I was just shown the article that was written about best chef. Just wanted to inform you that I am a woman.

Thanks,

Alec Evans (chef, Astoria Coffee House & Bistro)

MOUTH: I felt terrible about this. Alec, I apologize.

While it's of little consolation, if there's anything I'm happy to be wrong about it's the underrepresentation of female chefs being recognized in the region. I will say, considering my need for anonymity, it can be easier to know who's working in some kitchens than in others.

Nonetheless, I regret the error, and should've caught it prior to publication.

Praise for Plaza Jalisco

I was disappointed in your review of Plaza Jalisco. My wife and I have been going there for almost 13 years (since our second date) and never once have we had bad service or bad food. In fact we love there food.

The waiter, he is awesome to us and our kids. We eat there cheaper than most places and never leave hungry. I recommend Plaza Jalisco to everyone.

To me it says something that in almost 13 years we have never left there disappointed, never. I'd like to see that happen anywhere else in half that time.

Your review is the only time I have heard a not-so-great review of this restaurant. Unfortunately reviews like this can be the downfall of a great place.

Respectfully disagree,
Nate.



DWIGHT CASWELL PHOTO

Alec Evans, the chef at Astoria Coffee House & Bistro, won second place in the 2017 Readers Choice Awards' Best Chef category.

MOUTH: Nate, I appreciate your passionate defense. While certainly we differ on the basic quality of the food, there is some overlap to our experiences: I noted the portions and appreciated the service. But when reviewing, I have to distance myself from sentimental concerns as much as I can.

I appreciate the history you've developed with Plaza Jalisco, but I've got to focus primarily on the food that's on the plate as it relates to the region's restaurants. It gives me no pleasure — and, often, some pain — to give tough or negative reviews. But to brush an inferior restaurant's shortcomings under the rug would be unfair to those striving for excellence.

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MOUTH: I'm often asked to recommend wedding caterers, but I don't have much experience in the matter. Know a good one? Share with us in the comments, or via email.

As always, I'm looking to hear from you! Write with tips, criticism, suggestions and sad teenage poetry: mouth@coastweekend.com

The Mouth is taking some time off and will return soon. CW