

MOUTH OF THE COLUMBIA

Coast Weekend's local
restaurant review



French Onion Soup



Oysters Rockefeller



Fried Chicken Sandwich

THE SHELBURNE PUB

Rating: ★★☆☆

Shelburne Hotel
4415 Pacific Way
Seaview, Wash. 98644

360-642-2442

Hours: 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.
everyday

Price: \$\$ — 20-percent gratuity included to listed menu price

Service: Young, hip, gracious

Vegetarian/Vegan Options:
Worthwhile

Drinks: Full bar

KEY TO STAR RATING SYSTEM

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

The Shelburne Pub delivers simplicity, comfort, some flourishes

Review and photos by
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“The years pass in their hundreds and their thousands, and what does any man see of life but a few summers, a few winters? We look at mountains and call them eternal, and so they seem ... but in the course of time, mountains rise and fall, rivers change their courses, stars fall from the sky, and great cities sink beneath the sea. Even gods die, we think. Everything changes.”

— George R.R. Martin, *“A Clash of Kings”*

Indeed, everything changes. That includes the longest continually running hotel in Washington state, the Shelburne. The Victorian-styled property opened in 1896, and when you step inside, that history — as well as your own awareness of time itself — is transportive. It’s a special place.

Yet the Shelburne has never really been locked in stasis. Take, for example, the legions of ornate stained-glass windows: They appear era-appropriate but were brought in by longtime owners David Campiche and Laurie Anderson, who purchased the property in 1977, then did their fair share of renovating.

As much as a charming, evocative place to spend the night, under Campiche and Anderson’s guidance, the Shelburne had long been among the premiere restaurants on

the Peninsula, if not the Columbia-Pacific region. The Shelburne kitchen has been home to some of the area’s most accomplished chefs and restaurateurs, including Tony and Ann Kischner (current owners of Astoria’s Bridgewater Bistro), and Jimella Lucas and Nanci Main, who would go on to draw rave reviews from James Beard.

Over their four decades at the helm, Campiche and Anderson ensured the Shelburne was not only a fantastic place to stay and dine, but one that nourished the spirit as well. Campiche cultivated a salon-esque atmosphere, inviting fellow artists and musicians to perform, create and share.

Hence, the Shelburne was a center of community and culture. It was a place where couples got married, teary wakes were held, and the news of the day chewed over.

Among the Shelburne community: Seaview’s Tiffany and Brady Turner, who were married there and returned regularly for food and drink. Campiche, feeling his stewardship was nearing its end, began prodding the Turners to take over. He knew operating a hotel and restaurant was in the Turners’ wheelhouse; they own the nearby Adrift Hotel and Pickled Fish, among others.

“After five years of him trying to get us to bite — we bit,” Tiffany told the Coast River Business Journal. The Turners assumed operations earlier this year and began with renovations.

“The challenge is preservation while recreating something more relevant for today’s traveler; it’s going to be a difficult dance,” Tiffany told the Coast River Business Journal. “But I think it’s doing the building and the history of it justice. We’re really working hard to not do any irreparable damage. In our remodel and reinvention process we’re going to be sure to preserve everything.”

You’ll notice the changes the moment you step through the front door. The entryway has changed, as have the carpets, wallpaper and so on. In some ways the shifts are subtle — if you didn’t frequent the place you might not exactly be able to put your finger on the specifics.

In essence, though, the Shelburne has become sleeker, less busy. As one longtime visitor wondered, could the revamped Shelburne be both hip and historic?

Indeed, the makeover seems somewhat generationally driven, given to more recent aesthetics. (Visitors of the Pickled Fish, for example, will recognize the trendy Edison light bulbs.) While primed for Instagram, the Shelburne’s historical charm remains tangible.

The food, too, has gotten a makeover.

The Pickled Fish’s executive chef Brad Dodson, who joined the company in the fall of 2016, is assuming executive duties at the Shelburne, too. Essentially, that adds two restaurants to his responsibilities: the distinct Shelburne Pub

and Dining Room.

The Pub opened this spring, intent on delivering what Tiffany Turner called “simple, unfussy bites with a global twist.” The Dining Room, which is scheduled to begin service in mid-July, will offer a seasonal, monthly menu, more focused on its fine dining origins. (Like the Pickled Fish, both of the Shelburne’s restaurants add a 20-percent gratuity on top of listed menu prices, a practice I’ll address in a future column.)

In the Pub, besides the usual burgers, fries and sandwiches, you’ll find a few welcome outliers like pork rilette, a smoked salmon Reuben and the hipster favorite: avocado toast.

One chilly evening I became ensconced in the deep, gooey French Onion Soup (\$10). The perfect comfort for inclement weather, the little, pillowy hot tub warmed my bones. More places on the coast should serve it, especially in winter.

The Northwest Jambalaya (\$15) earned the regional nod with smoked salmon and oysters carousing with the andouille sausage. The oysters were every bit as melty as the duck egg, whose yolk, mixed with the lightly spicy, tomato-y rice base, afforded a divine richness.

The Pub Burger (\$9) was cooked to a nice medium-rare with pink in the center, though, when I bit in, juices poured out like I was wringing a sponge.

Then there’s the Fried Chicken Sandwich (\$9), a highly Insta-

grammable concoction thanks to its overzealous breading. Make no mistake: The way the fried chicken breast juts out way beyond the bun looks awesome. How you feel about the flavor, however, depends. The abundance of fried dough is staggering, racked with cinnamon. It’s almost like a donut. It was too much for me. Same for my companion, who has a greater sweet tooth. Still, some are going to love it. I could, too, say, by simply dialing up the acidic accouterments — more pickles, please.

By and large, though, the Pub fare does what it promises, delivering simplicity, comfort and a few flourishes in a transportive atmosphere.

Still, more significant questions about the Shelburne’s new era remain: Can the Dining Room maintain its legacy as a destination and incubator of great talent? And, perhaps most of all, will the salon-like, community-centered gathering place continue under new curatorial hands?

Only time will tell.

Next week: *The Shelburne Dining Room* 