

DINING

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MyCovios adds international flavor to the Long Beach Peninsula

Dutch-born chef delights in everything Italian

By **PATRICK WEBB**
FOR COAST WEEKEND

A Dutch chef cooking Italian-inspired food in an American restaurant.

That's the international combination that has come to the north end of the Long Beach Peninsula in Ocean Park.

When Paul Klitsie was growing up in Holland he developed a liking for all things Italian.

When he encountered a man who wanted to open a restaurant in the United States, it changed his life.

He emigrated to Portland in 1998 and operated the restaurant there until 2013. A while later, he opened his own restaurant, Willem's on Main, in the historic downtown of Vancouver, Wash., which he ran until February 2018.

Love of ocean, Italian food

Klitsie and his wife Kathy Janke, who designed the interior decor, like the ocean so the Peninsula was a natural choice for their next venture, MyCovios, which opened earlier this year.

The unusual name is an amalgam of their grandchildren's names.

Klitsie was born in The Netherlands' port city of Rotterdam then moved to the capital Amsterdam.

He has worked in the food industry all his career.

When asked, "Why Italian?" he smiled. "Go to Italy and figure it out!"

"I like Italian food, cars and fashion," he added. "Anything that's from Italy has a claim on me."

When it came time for me to choose, the majority of the guys at cooking school went to French. I went right when everyone else went left."

Being chef-owner of a restaurant

that caters to visitors but has a regular local clientele is his ideal arrangement.

"It's hard work, but there's a big advantage — you don't have a boss," he laughed. "The reward for me is . . . that it's just what I like to do. I like results fast; I am that kind of guy. I like to work with food, it's very versatile."

Intimate dining

MyCovios has limited tables and reservations are not taken.

A comfortable lounge offers the hungry somewhere to wait if the restaurant is full.

The dinner menu features appetizers including bruschetta, Caesar or mixed green salads, a risotto featuring scallops, or spaetzli (Swiss-German style pasta) with crab.

Main dishes include braised ribs with penne rigate (furrowed pasta), a couple of versions of spaghetti, and three substantial plates featuring pork loin piccata Milanese (in lemon juice and butter), a New York steak with a whiskey-honey sauce, or seared rockfish on a bed of spinach.

All are available to take out.

There are also multiple, varied desserts.

Two beers on draft are Buoy Beer Co. Czech Pils and North Jetty Leadbetter Red Scottish Ale.

Italian wines predominate, plus a Northwest pinot noir, chardonnay and a riesling, all by bottle or glass.

The restaurant switches gears on the weekend, serving brunch offerings featuring bread pudding French toast, waffles, pulled pork with country potatoes, risotto with sausage, eggs benedict and crab dishes.

For the dinners, Klitsie is especially proud of his braised beef; when he eats



Patrick Webb photos

Chef and owner Paul Klitsie prepares some pasta at his restaurant MyCovios in Ocean Park, Wash. Behind him helping is server Matthew Sites. The restaurant offers Italian dishes in an intimate setting near the ocean on the Long Beach Peninsula.



The chocolate lava cake is light with a soft exterior and even softer center, served with a warmed raspberry compote and cream.



Main entrees at MyCovios include braised ribs, spaghetti, pork loin, a New York steak or rockfish (pictured). This is lightly pan seared and served on a bed of garlic spinach with an unobtrusive sauce antiboise, which combines onion, olive, parsley, garlic, tomato, orange and lemon zest, olive oil and apple cider.

IF YOU GO

MyCovios

1311 Bay Ave., Ocean Park, Wash.

Dinner: 4:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday; 4:30 p.m. to 9 p.m., Friday and Saturday.

Brunch: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

No reservations. Take-out available.

360-642-347 or MyCovios.com

elsewhere, he always checks out how others compare.

He has the inevitable challenge of keeping in fresh shellfish and the knowledge that he is far from replacement supplies if he runs out of anything.

"The only thing I buy is canned tomatoes," he said. "Everything else is made in-house. It doesn't have time to get old." 