



Photos by Melissa Righero
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Food from Frite & Scoop. Astoria mural artist Andie Sterling. Chariot in Astoria. A view from a room at the Arch Cape Loft.



Food from Sage Bleu Catering in Seaside.

Righero: ‘I know it’s tough right now, but I think we’re all gonna pull through this together’

Continued from Page B1

Her path took a turn, however. She later went to beauty school and eventually owned a spa in the Bay Area. It was there that her career in professional photography was born. Righero began to photograph her spa products to promote the spa and posted her shots on Instagram. One independent makeup line that she featured in an Instagram post caught the attention of Sephora.

“I realized suddenly that one of my favorite days at the spa was product photography day. I was like, ‘This says something,’” Righero said. “So I decided to pursue photography full-time. It’s been almost 10 years full-time.”

Moving north

Righero moved from the Bay Area to Astoria with her family three years ago. Her husband, who is from southern Oregon, used to vacation in Astoria as a child and dreamed of living in town permanently.

Righero’s photography evolved to fit the Pacific



Food from Street 14 Café.

Northwest ambience after her family moved to the North Coast.

“My photography was actually very different in California. Very light and bright, lots of white backgrounds, lots of minimalism, too,” she said. “Now I’ve shifted to dark and moody, lots of shadows, lots of props. I think it’s very fitting for Oregon versus California. The gloomy weather, playing with the darker shadows. In California, you’re having bright smoothie bowls in the sun all day.”

To amateur photographers looking for pointers, Righero said, “Play, have fun and

be yourself. There are a lot of photographers out there nowadays. Just be you.”

She is also looking forward to photographing more clients in the food and retail industries.

“I know it’s tough right now, but I think we’re all gonna pull through this together,” Righero said. “We’ll see each other on the other side, bonded even more.”

Natalie Skowlund is a Portland-based creative storyteller. Her work has been published with National Public Radio-affiliate WDAV Classical Public Radio, among other publications.

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