

FRESH, LOCAL AND COOKED AT HOME

Wheeler restaurant creates 'Taste the Coast' meal kits

BY PETER KORCHNAK

When life gives you a pandemic, make new products. That's the attitude Chantelle Hylton and Patrick Rock adopted at The Salmonberry, their restaurant in Wheeler.

In addition to offering takeout and outdoor dining on a deck overlooking Nehalem Bay, they feature a line of Salmonberry Commons branded food products, including "Taste the Coast!" meal kits.

The kits are created in collaboration with a range of North Coast food producers.

'Just a dream' made reality

In a previous life, Hylton was a music promoter, while Rock worked as a gallery owner and art teacher in Portland. The pair took a road trip to scout coastal locations to move to, and pulled into the parking lot of the former Tsunami Bar and Grill.

The restaurant was up for sale, and with Rock having family roots in Wheeler, they decided to buy it.

"It was just a dream," Hylton recalled.

The Salmonberry opened a year later, in March 2018, with a renovated and redesigned interior.

The duo also updated the menu to feature local products as much as possible, to avoid buying from the big box trucks.

"It feels like us here now," Hylton said. "It still blows my mind that I can make food with ingredients from friends."

The pandemic changed everything

Two years to the day after the opening, The Salmonberry shuttered under a state order. Hylton recalls shortages of food items at the beginning of the pandemic.

With access to wholesale suppliers, she purchased staples like yeast, flour and beans and resold it to the local community.

She also started making pasta, "to keep myself sane, my hands occupied and the lights on."

Hylton sold the Salmonberry Commons-branded line of products at the restaurant and the Manzanita Farmers Market.

"I couldn't hug my friends and neighbors but I could make food for them," she said.

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The current lineup of 'Taste the Coast' meal kits include a variety of pasta and seafood dishes.

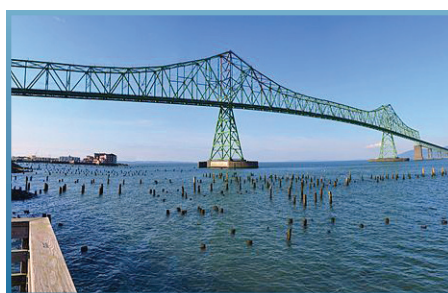


Photos by Sophia Knox

Each meal kit features ingredients from North Coast food producers.



Salmonberry Commons meal kits are prepared in The Salmonberry's kitchen in Wheeler.



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