



Photos by Lissa Brewer/The Astorian

**ABOVE:** Scott Lee, owner of the new Norwegian restaurant The Haunt, stands beside the bar. **RIGHT:** A sign for both The Haunt and Bikes & Beyond, both located one block from the Astoria Riverwalk.

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“We live in this town with all of these Scandinavians, but we don’t have a Scandinavian restaurant,” Scott Lee, the restaurant’s owner, said.

The Haunt’s menu includes variations of lefse, a traditional Norwegian flatbread, along with cold charcuterie boards with fish, cheese and meats. Also on the menu is a “Vegan Viking Bowl,” aimed at those seeking a plant-based option.

The restaurant’s Norwegian fare is a nod to Lee’s heritage. His family spans generations of commercial fishermen on the North Coast. “My family is from Norway, and (we) grew up eating Norwegian food. It just seemed natural,” Lee said.

Already the owner of Bikes & Beyond, situated next door, Lee began dreaming up a restaurant and music venue. “We just said, ‘well, let’s open a restaurant and bar,’” Lee said.

Construction for the restaurant stretched through this past winter, including the bar and wooden tables Lee handcrafted himself from recycled crates and boxes. “It was a lot of labor. We did pretty much all the labor we could ourselves,” he said.

With both a restaurant and bar in tow, the experience isn’t complete without a sampling of local craft beer. “We’ve got the cheapest beer in town,” Lee said.

There’s a balance Lee hopes to find, facing rising food costs while trying to keep prices low. “We’re constantly changing our menu and trying to find that niche,” he said.

Friends and family of Lee’s have supported him throughout the process. They also help run the establishment. You won’t find Lee behind the bar, but he says he enjoys running the kitchen.

“That’s my area where I want to add consistency and put out some really good food,” he said. The Haunt’s atmosphere echoes its menu. Lee describes it as a Norwegian goth-style bar.

The restaurant also features live, local music. A few bands have rotated through, though the restaurant’s mainstay house band is a staple – it even features one of the restaurant’s bar managers.

The naming process was relatively straightforward. Lee recalled when he and his co-workers were debating the name, “The Haunt” clicked well when they were talking about the building’s haunted history. Now it’s a new haunt for Astorians.

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