

BAR BULLETIN

KCBA KING COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION
Justice... Professionalism... Service... Since 1886

This is a reprint from the King County Bar Association Bar Bulletin
April 2019



Mind Your Ampersands

Ampersand: a character typically “&” standing for the word and — Merriam-Webster. The ampersand links two things, like restaurant & bar. More and more Seattle restaurants are using ampersands in their names and, if you mind your ampersands, you can dine any time of day in one of those establishments.

Breakfast

It does not get more “Ampersand” than a café called **Ampersand Café** on Alki (2530 Alki Ave. SW; 206-466-5254; <https://www.facebook.com/ampersandalki/>). This cozy café is located right on Alki Beach in West Seattle, nestled between a brewpub and a surrey rental. We have run past this place many times, and after visiting Ampersand for the first time for breakfast, we will surely be back to enjoy an adult beverage or two.

When we first walked in, we noticed two things — the aroma of delicious Hawaiian coffee permeating the air and the soft sound of reggae music playing in the background. We decided to try several things off the breakfast menu. We started with a hot cup of coffee, which was so good that we bought a bag of beans for the week.

The menu offers several savory breakfast and lunch sandwiches, some sweet breakfast options such as french toast, and baked goods. We tried the egg sandwich with spinach, mushrooms and cheese; a ham and brie sandwich; a Cuban sandwich; and one of the most amazing creations — a big ol’ slice of banana bread slathered with Nutella and salted walnuts. We ordered the last item to share, but after taking one bite, one

diner ate it so quickly there was nothing to share.

We enjoyed all the food; it was well made and very tasty. But, we must say that what we enjoyed most was the atmosphere of this lovely little gem. We felt at ease the moment we walked in, as if we were transported from real life to a beachy vacation.

Brunch/Lunch

Our ampersand brunch quest took us to **Brunswick & Hunt** (1480 NW 70th St.; 206-946-1574; <http://www.brunswickandhunt.com/>) in Ballard. This small, 40-seat, neighborhood restaurant is dominated by a beautiful back bar built more than 100 years ago by the Brunswick Balke Colander Company. It was found in a tavern in Winlock, along with the massive companion painting (“The Hunt”), and restored to its current, impressive, domination of this space in the Hunt Building, hence the name.

We tried the vegetable hash — potatoes, seasonal veggies and over-easy eggs with bread (although we substituted a huge biscuit for which we ordered a side of gravy) — and the bacon-braised pork Benedict on brioche with avocado and, of course, hollandaise. We enjoyed all of it, although we found the gravy to have an unusual red wine or sherry flavor.

The service was very friendly and informal, more like eating in a tavern than a restaurant. We enjoyed the experience and will brave the lack of easy parking to try it again for another meal.

Happy Hour/Dinner

For dinner, we visited gastropub **Brimmer & Heeltap** (425 NW Market St.; 206-420-2534; www.brimmerandbeeltap.com). The restaurant took over the old Le Gourmand space in Ballard, but it

has expanded to include some outdoor courtyard seating that is very popular in the warmer months.

Brimmer & Heeltap is known for having a great bar and it did not disappoint. We started our evening with a selection of house cocktails, including one called “Just in Thyme,” made with gin, lemon elderflower, blackberry thyme and cava, which was delicious.

The restaurant focuses on shared plates, with a selection of “snacks” and larger, share-sized portions. We started out with some homemade tapioca puff chips, seasoned with achiote and apple cider — these were downright addictive. Other highlights from the small-plate menu were a pair of hibiscus tacos, served on small, fuchsia corn tortillas, and topped with ginger-poached shrimp, chipotle-pomegranate glaze, apple and cucumber. We thought about ordering more.

For our larger plates, we shared a roasted-squash salad with house made ricotta and a tagliatelle with achiote “alfredo.” The squash was a winner, but the tagliatelle was just okay.

What makes Brimmer & Heeltap a great choice is not just the food, it also is the service. Our waiter made us feel right at home, as a neighborhood pub should. We will be back.

Dinner

We had our ampersand dinner at **Seastar Restaurant & Raw Bar** (205 108th Ave. NE #100, Bellevue; 425-456-0010; <https://www.seastarrestaurant.com/>). The restaurant is surrounded by office buildings, making it a fine spot for business dinners and birthday celebrations. As another featured John Howie restaurant, it not only brings a restaurant and a bar, but also a fusion of east and west. One-

third of the menu is devoted to a wide selection of sushi and nigiri, with other raw seafood and cooked dishes comprising the rest of the menu.

We arrived around 7 and the restaurant was already 90-percent filled, with only three or four tables open. Feeling adventurous, we tried the sushi, raw appetizers and cooked fish, leaving us with nothing but satisfaction and full stomachs. The spicy tuna was fresh and flavorful, with the tuna almost melting in your mouth. The scallop ceviche was chewy with a fruity touch to freshen up the flavor.

The most impressive dish was the barramundi (an Australian sea bass). It came with a filet resting on a bed of paella rice mixed with chicken, shrimp and chorizo. The fish was very tender and tasted fresh even though cooked. In contrast, the rice had a heavy and flavorful taste. The mix of fish and rice made this dish quite enjoyable. We also ordered a side of truffle fries to share, which did not disappoint.

We appreciated the attentive service from our waiter and left feeling satisfied as all the dishes came in relatively large portions, except for the sushi. We will come back for the ceviche and barramundi, and would love to try the nigiri selections and other “tastes from the land.”

Dessert

We could not close out an ampersand edition of Dining Out without saving room for the ultimate ampersand: dinner & dessert. After an evening of spicy food on Capitol Hill, we stopped by **Frankie & Jo's** (1010 E. Union; 206-557-4603; <https://frankieandjos.com/> — there's a sister shop in Ballard) for some “ice cream made from plants,” e.g., cashew milk and coconut milk, to cool down.

What is most exciting about Frankie & Jo's is the versatility of the vegan menu. It combines options for nut-free, gluten-free and vegan diners with flavors that will entice even the most loyal lover of dairy products. The seasonal flavors on the menu were inventive and tempting — “Kombucha Creamsicle” and “Rhubarb Yuzu Yogurt” promised new twists on classic malt shop favorites. But ultimately, the “Everyday Flavors” (split into ice cream, date-sourced, and sorbet options) stole our attention, and we tried as many as we could.

The “Salty Caramel Ash” and “Brown Sugar Vanilla” were strong updates on classic flavors, and the activated charcoal in the former makes for a picture-perfect trendy cone. If you're looking for layers of flavor, try the “Beet Strawberry Rose Sorbet.” The beet-forward flavor is earthy, but not overpowering. The strawberry

note tempers the beets, carrying them into a fragrant and light rosewater finish.

A scoop of the “Chocolate Mint Brownie” is also delicious: not too minty, and with good, chewy texture to the gluten-free brownie. Our personal favorite was the “Chocolate Tahini Supercookie” — a scoop enjoyed in a freshly made, gluten-free, waffle cone. The waffle cone, made with oat flour, has the mild, balanced flavor of a vanilla wafer and the nostalgic texture of a sugar cone. The ice cream itself is the perfect balance of light chocolatey flavor with a slight (also gluten-free) cookie crunch. The hint of tahini is not strong, but it complements the cocoa well. We absolutely will be back to either location for more. ■

Schwabe, Williamson & Wyatt is a multiservice, Northwest regional law firm with offices in Seattle, Vancouver, Portland and Bend. For comments on this article or to share your favorite places to eat or drink with the Schwabe, Williamson & Wyatt attorneys, contact Christopher Howard, the shareholder in charge of the Seattle office, at 206-407-1524 or at choward@schwabe.com; see also www.schwabe.com/dining_out.aspx.