



Neal Maine

## Wings on the Estuary

**E**stuaries are among the most diverse and interesting places on the Pacific Northwest coast for bird watching. Each coastal estuary offers its own unique characteristics and birding selection. During the winter, resident birds in coastal estuaries are joined by several species of wintering and migrating birds, as well as seabirds that seek refuge from strong winds and stormy seas. Bald eagles, peregrine falcons and great blue herons might be year round coastal residents or winter visitors. Many varieties of ducks are seen in coastal estuaries during the winter. This might not sound all that exciting until Kathleen Nickerson, director of the Audubon Society of Lincoln City, starts listing the species including buffleheads, wigeon, scoters, goldeneye and ruddy ducks. Several varieties of grebes, mergansers and loons are also winter visitors to coastal estuaries. "Winter also brings new birds to the coast," said Nickerson. "The tundra swan, snow goose and even the snowy owl can sometimes be seen." Spotting birds doesn't have to be difficult, either. While some avid birders use spotting scopes and dutifully take notes, more casual birdwatchers need only a decent pair of binoculars and a good birding guide. Among the best known estuaries for birdwatchers on the Northwest coast are Tillamook Bay, Siletz Bay and Willapa Bay, but any coastal river or stream can be a prime birdwatching location for spotting the more than 110 different varieties of birds that are at home in the coastal Pacific Northwest. - Barton Howe



## Fare For Foodies

*Bridgewater Bistro has opened in a freshly restored historic building on Astoria's riverfront with a menu sure to please any foodie.*

**A**s you enter the recently opened Bridgewater Bistro in Astoria's newly restored waterfront Red Building, you can't help but look to the ceiling 35 feet overhead. The same trusses and beams are there since it was built in 1896 to house the Union Fish Co-op. The bistro, owned by Tony and Ann Kischner of The Shoalwater Restaurant in Seaview, Washington, bears no similarity to the cozy, intimate, stained glass and antique ambience of The Shoalwater. Bridgewater Bistro is big, modern, open and airy, but with inviting areas of warmth and comfort. High windows open onto the Columbia River and its active waterfront.

Downstairs, the Bridgewater Bistro is more casual, featuring burgers, fish and chips, seafood, steak and pasta entrees mostly priced at under \$20. Upstairs a fine dining Mezzanine menu is served with offerings such as an oven-poached wild king salmon with a Swedish mustard-dill sauce; halibut cakes; Moroccan chicken; and roast spice-encrusted duck breast with a cranberry, wild blackberry and truffle demi-glace sauce. The Mezzanine menu

also offers a prix fixe four course meal for \$45. Both the Bistro and Mezzanine menus offer a wide assortment of small bites and starter plates. Some of the offerings have included a Dungeness crab savory cheesecake, roasted prosciutto-wrapped quail and five-spice grilled pork tenderloin with an orange-chipotle glaze. The menu also includes paired flights of three different red or white wines paired with complementary small bites for a fun tasting experience.

Some of the Shoalwater classics show up on the Bridgewater Bistro menus including their clam and mussel chowder and the Cougar Burger that features Cougar Gold Cheddar, pepper-bacon and a cranberry-blueberry mustard. Desserts are decadent, but are offered in small portions for only \$3.50 or a trio for \$9.50.

The Bridgewater Bistro is also open for lunch with a menu served until 4pm including wraps and sandwiches. *The Bridgewater Bistro is located at 20 Basin Street (503) 325-6777, adjacent to the Cannery Pier Hotel.*