



Meet Me at The Riverside

The place to chill and be chill in Central Oregon

story by Sara Freedman photography by Elena Pressprich

In Central Oregon, you can find hippie, yuppie, and cowboy pretty easily.

Hipster is a little bit harder to find.

But there it is, tucked away in the downtown neighborhood of Old Bend. The Riverside Market & Pub, or “the market” as it is called by many regulars, has a southeast Portland feel with its flat-billed cap clientele, indie rock soundtrack and outside drinking games. PBR abounds.

Meet owner Melanie Gaipo and it all makes sense. She moved to Bend three years ago after 23 years in Portland, purchased the Riverside Market with her business partner Jon Gaipo, and expanded food and drink offerings to create a neighborhood gathering place.

Located just one block from the Deschutes River and a few blocks from Drake Park on N.E. Riverside Boulevard, the Riverside Market is easily noticeable with eclectic tables spilling out to the front patio and big backyard. Over the years the building has been home to everything from a cafe to a head shop.



"I love the neighborhood," says Gaipo. "We sit on the four corners of all the best parts of Bend—Downtown, the Old Mill District, Galveston and Drake Park."

The market is open every day from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. It's half market/half pub on the inside. Cold cases lining one wall are filled with a good selection of beer to go. Neighbors stop by for a pack of gum, a bottle of wine, a forgotten toiletry or a gallon of milk.

The pub side is all long tables with wooden benches and a shuffleboard table. In the evenings, the line can go out the door for beer on tap and pub fare. Breakfast, lunch and dinner are served daily.

Most of the Riverside Market staff live in the neighborhood and walk to work. Regulars are greeted by name; strangers are welcomed as new friends.

When the sun comes out, the outside of the market comes to life. There's the popular castle-themed swing set full of "market kids" playing while parents sip local craft beer at a nearby table. (Hey, this might be hipster, but it's still Bend, and Gaipo pours her share of Boneyard, Deschutes and other local brew.)

Out front, there's usually a game of corn hole in progress (that's the lawn game where you attempt to throw little bean bags through holes in a platform), dogs are allowed on leashes, a guitar is lightly strummed. Recent river floaters, still in their swimsuits, lean their inflatables against a wall and kick back with a beer.

Happy hour is daily from 4 to 6 p.m. with deals on local craft beer and house wine. And it's not just a human happy hour—you can get a pint for yourself and a pint of local nonalcoholic dog brew Dawg Grog (on tap!) for your best buddy for five bucks. Everyone can take drinks home in growlers.

Popular items on the pub menu include the Bend burrito stuffed with marinated tri-tip and salsa verde, tacos on Tuesday, and a weekly burger and beer special. Those looking for something a little lighter can choose from a large selection of salads including a BBQ chicken salad, or grab the Greek salmon burger.

But really, you can't go wrong with a bacon-wrapped corndog and a basket of crispy tater tots.

Since Gaipo took over the market in 2010, Riverside has held fundraisers for the Miller's Landing public park up the street, hosted baby showers and birthday parties, put on holiday events and featured local music.

"I love seeing the neighborhood kids growing up," says Gaipo. "The place has evolved into what we wanted it to."

Sitting outside in the soft summer air, beer in hand, a twinkling string of lights overhead—the neighbors agree. 🍷



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