



Santa Monica Daily Press

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THE ROCKY RELATIONSHIP ISSUE

Santa Monica Daily Press

Food

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Tour De Feast

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THE SPOT: Tender Greens' seventh restaurant in the chain replaced The Lighthouse Seafood Buffet on Second Street and Arizona Avenue.

Fresh from the farm to your table

FOR AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER THE corner of Arizona Avenue and Second Street was home to The Lighthouse Seafood Buffet. For me, all you can eat seafood lost its luster somewhere between a bad experience at the Tropicana buffet table, and the documentary "The Cove."

For many Santa Monicans, organic, hormone-free, and portion-controlled cuisine has become more than just a trend, but rather a way of life. With many people changing up their eating habits, it was only a matter of time that The Lighthouse indeed went dark. But out of the vacant Lighthouse sprouts up a new restaurant with fresh fare and ideas, as Santa Monica welcomes in Tender Greens.

This being the newest of its seven California locations, Santa Monica seems to be a good fit for the franchise, and is more of an extension of the Santa Monica Farmers' Market, rather than an imposing chain. Chef-turned-manager Rian Brandenburg admits that the food is his priority at the Santa Monica location. Much of the ingredients are purchased at the Farmers' Market happening right outside Tender Greens' front door every Wednesday and Saturday. Fresh, locally-grown produce going from the stand to the kitchen in 5 minutes is one of the perks of the restaurant's prime location.

Natural, antibiotic-free, and sustainable fare is certainly a draw for people trying to eat right. With a menu that boasts a variety of salads, as well as hot plate items, at a flat rate of \$10.50, sustainability on the wallet is another plus. Although with add-ons and some really tempting desserts strategically placed by the cash register, it can be easy to go above that mark.

The salads range from your classic Cobb, to the more creative grilled octopus and everything in between. The hot items are your choice of marinated steak, chicken, albacore, or grilled veggies presented on a hot plate or sandwich both accompanied by sides. You can pick your protein on a simple salad as well. There is nothing too complex about the menu, just quality ingredients that are able to stand on their own rather than being masked by over seasoning or drowned in sauce.

This was the case with the Chinese chicken salad I ordered. The sesame dressing was very light and was more of an accent rather than a gloppy mess. Most notably, it ren-

If You Go

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FRESH: Tender Greens uses quality ingredients that are able to stand on their own rather than being masked by over seasoning or drowned in sauce, as was the case with this Chinese chicken salad that packed a serious crunch.

dered a serious crunch from the carrots, wontons, and roasted peanuts. Upon finishing I was very much satisfied but not rolling over and slipping into a food coma.

With windows everywhere, the dining room is bright and inviting. Recycled tables, microfiber organic carpet, and compressed hay ceiling seem more expected than anything with the franchise's all natural, eco-friendly mantra.

With the name Tender Greens, salads are obviously going to be a staple, but it appeared that the hot plate items were just as popular with the customers. As the weather starts to cool down, it is nice to know that there is some healthy, fresh, and easy access comfort food amongst the mayhem of the Third Street Promenade.

MICHAEL can be seen riding around town on his bike. To reach him visit his Twitter at twitter.com/greaseweek or his website at tour-defeast.net