



DINING

Huckleberry Bakery & Cafe: Review

Baked Goods and Healthy Salads ... What More Do You Need?

BY ERIC ROSEN

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You'd never think that a former franchise of Pick Up Stix could become a quaint daytime Santa Monica eatery until you stepped through the door of Josh Loeb and Zoe Nathan's newest project, **Huckleberry**.

The husband-and-wife Santa Monica natives made their name with **Rustic Canyon**, but take a different approach to casual fine dining with this already bustling breakfast and lunch joint.

In the morning, you'll find a variety of egg dishes, and sides like Niman Ranch fennel sausage links and maple-bacon biscuits. A rarity at L.A. establishments, Nathan bakes all her own breads on-site, so everything is ultra fresh with specials that change constantly.

For **lunch**, there are several made-to-order salads, like the BLTA with jumbo croutons and free range chicken; but the real draw is the changing array of prepared salads based on what comes in at the farmer's market, like one with roasted carrots, lemon juice, cumin and avocado; or another with chickpeas in a spicy tomato compote.

The sandwiches include elements of the familiar but with gourmet garnishes, like the Niman Ranch roast beef sandwich with arugula, roasted spring onions, garlic aioli and parmesan on ciabatta; or the marinated peppers and burrata on a baguette with la Quercia prosciutto. The rotisserie fires up to barbecue free-range Jidori chicken, and duck on Thursdays.

Later in the day, there is a closing menu that features warm plates like turkey meatballs and brisket. Dessert here is an absolute must since Nathan is also the pastry chef over at Rustic Canyon, and her goodies include incredibly rich yet light fruit tartlets, banana caramel pie, chocolate éclairs, layered carrot cake with mascarpone, and various cookies.

Take a look at the drinks cooler too, since you'll find some fancy refreshments like **Vignette Wine Country Sodas**.

Address: 1014 Wilshire Blvd.

Cross Street: 10th St.

Neighborhood: Santa Monica

Phone: (310) 451-2311

Hours: Weds-Fri 8:00am-7:00pm, Sat-Sun 8:00am-5:00pm

Type: Bakery, Salads, Sandwiches

Price: \$

