

Eat + Drink

Exquisite Eating

Newport Beach continues to thrive and strive in becoming an OC culinary capital as more new restaurants open their doors in 2015.

By Peter A. Balaskas

If there is one thing that the locals of Newport Beach love, it's good food at reasonable prices and a warm, welcoming ambiance. For the past year, more than ten restaurants have opened in popular areas around Newport, offering the community a variety of cuisines that satisfies all kinds of tastes. El Cholo owner Ron Salisbury, whose franchise has now opened in Corona del Mar, points out that Newport includes a well-traveled clientele, whose horizons—and palates—have been expanded and developed because of their exposure to culturally exotic dishes from around the world.

“So, they will appreciate good food and service in an atmosphere that you're drawn to,” Ron says.

“But in the long run, they will return to outstanding restaurants that serve food they are most familiar with.”

Other popular chains that have branched out to Newport include Sushi Roku in Fashion Island, where customers can indulge in their captivating Katana Robata skewers and their Chilean sea bass. The Glendora-based Krave Kobe Burger Grill, whose second location now resides in Newport Coast, offers a plethora from their culinary spectrum, such as their grilled shrimp Po Boy sandwich on ciabatta bread and Kobe Burgers made from Wagyu beef.

The Rancho Santa Margarita-based Trough Kitchen spread its wings and flew towards their second destination on Harbor Island, presenting a sandwich assortment that comprises of cheese steak, chicken Caprese and pork belly Chasu sandwiches. And for those who desire deluxe pizzas, they can go to the Saponi Restaurant's next door neighbor at their Bayside Center location: the Saponi Pizzeria. There, culinary connoisseurs can indulge their appetites ranging from the meat dishes to the marinara and margherita pizzas.

But Newport Beach is also known for offering business opportunities to first-time restaurateurs. Brian Huskey, owner of The Tackle Box on East Shore Avenue in Corona del Mar, avoided the temptation of creating a full dining restaurant, and instead harnessed his entrepreneurial vision by creating a short-order stand from the perspective of a restaurant chef, combining fresh food with reasonable prices, excellent services, and a picturesque view of the beach.

"Now...I'm trying to bridge that gap of what \$20 gets for you and redefine what awesome food is," Brian says. "I'm cooking a concept where I can hit every social and economic class, every demographic."

Although 2015 was a boon for new restaurants, that doesn't mean there isn't room for more. Dori Deli co-owner Andrew Gabriel feels that their present location offers a lot of opportunity for restaurant owners to establish their new businesses. "I think the McFadden Square and Newport Pier area need this influx the most," Andrew says. "As far as kinds of restaurants, I think anything that fills a void. There are several culinary concepts out there that I think would flourish here."

With this ongoing demand for more new eateries that include culturally diverse menus, the Newport Beach community will continue to savor the flavors that these new venues have to offer.

And if 2015 was a success for the restaurant industry, there is no doubt 2016 should open the door for more Newport epicurean delights.