

PARK LABREA NEWS

BEVERLY PRESS

Serving the Park Labrea, Miracle Mile, Hancock Park and West Hollywood communities since 1946

Grub

By Jill Weinlein, 3/30/2011

Comfort Food With a Twist

Nestled among recording and post-production studios, and a performing arts magnet school on Seward St., is a 1920s cottage that houses a great little restaurant, Grub. About ten years ago, the “Grub Gals”, Betty Fraser and Denise De Carlo, happily ran a successful catering business and were looking for a space to store all of their supplies and a full kitchen to prepare their unique fare for studio parties, weddings and special events. They stumbled upon the cottage and found it to be an ideal spot to set up their catering headquarters. At the time, they had no inkling of turning the cottage into a restaurant.



“Beets the Alternative” salad comes with house-roasted beets - and plenty of them - at Grub, where chef/owners Betty Fraser and Denise De Carlo offer unique comfort food in a comfy, casual cottage.
(Photo by Jill Weinlein)

Nearby residents or workers would peek in while the girls were whipping up creamy soups, colorful salads and fancy dishes for an upcoming event, and ask “When are you going to open your restaurant?” The gals shrugged their shoulders and sweetly answered back “Oh, maybe in about six months.” This thrilled the neighbors, because of their limited dining options. Fraser and De Carlo realized there was a big need for a restaurant with their type of California comfort food, so they decided to open Grub for breakfast and lunch.

The cozy cottage feels like a comfortable home. Strings of white lights add to a festive mood along the front garden patio and inside.

The general manger, Libby skipped over to our table and greeted us with a huge smile and enthusiastic twinkle in her eyes. She greets every guest as if they are old friends that she invited over for a home cooked meal.

We sat at a corner table and drank a glass of sangria and lemon basil champagne cocktail while Libby shared with us her favorite items on the playful menu. “You have to try the ‘crack’ bacon quesadilla, because it’s really good,” boasted Libby. “The bacon is made with a blend of spices and individually hand rubbed and coated before cooked. It’s called ‘crack’ because the bacon is so yummy that people come back again and again for their fix.”

This spinach tortilla quesadilla with melted cheddar cheese, thinly sliced Granny Smith apples, caramelized onions and drizzled with a pear and apple butter was served warm with sour cream. It was one of the high points of our meal.

Next we ordered the “Beets the Alternative” salad. Housed roasted beets are served in abundance with a bed of greens, spiced pecans and crumbled gorgonzola cheese, and a slightly sweet molasses and balsamic vinaigrette.

Libby brought out one of their biggest sellers for us to try, the “After School Special” – or the Grub Gals version of grilled cheese and tomato soup. Theirs is on grilled sourdough with Swiss and cheddar cheese and dill butter with a cup of creamy and thick tomato soup with large chunks of tomato, fresh tarragon and cream. The best way to eat this dish is to dunk the grilled cheese into the soup and take a bite. Ahhh, comfort food at its best.



Grub offers a friendly dining environment.
(Photo by Jill Weinlein)

Two years ago the Grub gals decided to stay open for dinner. People going to Comedy Sportz up the street wanted to stop in for a bite before the show. Recording artists needed to refuel with Grub food before another long evening of work. The women added some new items to the menu for dinner after 5 p.m.

We tried the Hunka Hunka Burning Loaf – 12 oz. of ground beef mixed with chopped Grub bacon, fresh basil, cheddar and Parmesan cheese and topped with a fire roasted red pepper ketchup. With the basil, cheese and homemade ketchup, it tasted like an Italian meatloaf. It's served with mashed potatoes and sautéed spinach leaves.



Whimsical names like “Crack bacon quesadilla” and the “After School Special” characterize dishes at Grub perfectly. They’re fun, and fabulously tasting.
(Photo by Jill Weinlein)

Another dish we tried was the potato chip chicken. The boneless chicken breast is marinated in buttermilk and coated with crispy potato chips before its baked and sliced onto mashed potatoes and sautéed spinach. Almost every table had a guest enjoying this unique chicken dinner.

We finished our meal with one of Libby’s famous Fosse cookies. Imagine a chocolate chip cookie rolled in salty potato chips and baked. It’s sweet, salty and a bargain for \$.95.

When I inquired about Libby’s last name, she shared that her uncle was the great actor, dancer, choreographer and director, Bob Fosse and her mother was a Radio City Hall Rockette. Libby did not pursue dancing, but is a success in modeling and helping the Grub gals run a happy place to eat, relax and feel right at home.

\$\$\$. Open Mon. – Thurs. at 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., Fri. from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Sun. 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.
911 N. Seward St., (323) 461-3663.