

Lazy Susan Cafe knows importance of breakfast ritual

Review and photos by
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On my first trip to the Lazy Susan Cafe, it didn't take long to decide what I'd have: Eggs Benedict.

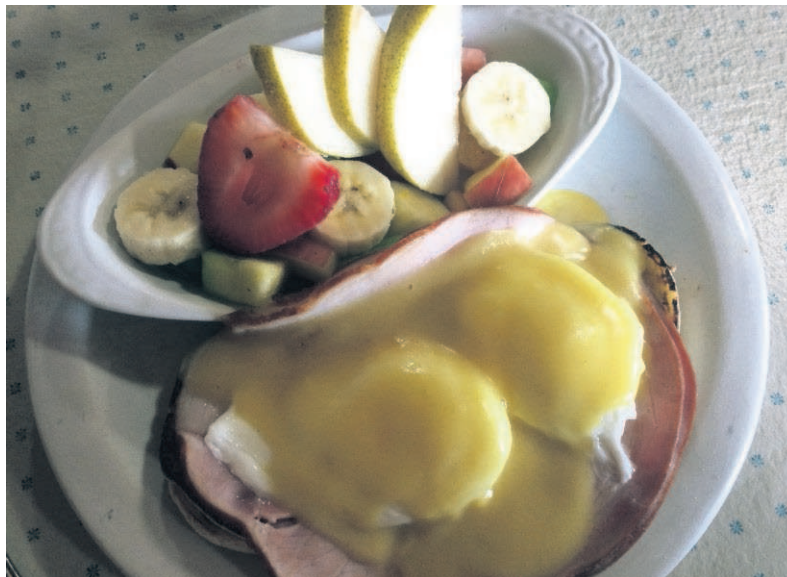
More than perhaps any other meal, breakfast embraces ritual. In the morning, it's most acceptable — treasured even — to find a favorite and stick with it. It makes sense: When your synapses are still warming up, you want something familiar, comfortable. Adventures can wait.

The thought of breakfast routines take me back to my early college years in Eugene. Every Sunday — and often many more times throughout the week, sometimes in lieu of class itself — I'd shuffle the few blocks to Cafe Siena, at the foot of campus, for a plate of luscious, lardy huevos rancheros and a cup of coffee as thick and strong as motor oil.

The pattern has repeated itself at other breakfast joints since then. Maybe it's a breakfast burrito, a scramble or just a coffee and muffin. The specific dish is less important than the warm welcome it provides. Again, breakfast is rarely a time to take chances.

There are other aspects of the breakfast ritual that are equally important: speedy, attentive service (keep that coffee coming!) and a bright, easy space.

All of these characteristics can be found at the Lazy Susan Cafe, a compact, rustic, woody cabin-turned-restaurant in downtown Cannon Beach. Despite a cramped, open kitchen, the Lazy Susan is quiet, cozy and quick. Teeny tables for two and four guests are packed around the bedroom-sized ground floor, and up a steep flight of stairs in the loft. The menu is made up mostly of eggy breakfasts, waffles and a few brunch and lunchtime



Eggs Benedict



Gingerbread waffle with lemon sauce and pear

specialties (the place closes at 3 p.m.).

It's also worth mentioning, perhaps in bold-faced type: **the Lazy Susan doesn't take credit cards, only cash and checks**, which, according to the menu, require the accompaniment of a "check guarantee card." When was the last time you heard of such a thing? Honestly, what even is a check guarantee card? While I'm sure it's nice for the Lazy Susan's servers

and book keepers (as well as the vampiric operators of the nearest ATM), it's a ridiculous inconvenience in this day and age, one that probably costs the Lazy Susan a fair amount of business.

Anyway, about those Eggs Benedict (\$12.95): They hit the mark — velvety smooth, rich, salty and gooey. The English muffin beds were lightly toasted, and two slices of deli-style ham covered them like a blanket. The poached

eggs were rippling, begging to burst. The hollandaise, while unremarkable, proffered requisite richness. The accompanying fruit was varied, finely sliced and carefully arranged. Thin slices of ripe pear fanned out like a peacock's tail above a smorgasbord of apple, grape, orange, strawberry and melon.

The omelettes, which make up nearly a quarter of the entire menu, are pretty standard, not too fluffy, milky or French. I tried the My Favorite (\$10.75). With mushroom, tomatoes, green onions and cheese, it was mushroom forward. Very much what you'd expect. The potatoes — with their crisp, blackened skins, soft innards and faint herby seasoning — were finely executed.

There are daily specials, including quiche and a waffle of the day. Feeling confident that the egg dishes are pretty robust, I went with the waffle, which on this day was gingerbread, topped with a thin lemon curd sauce and another fanning of pears (enough to include fruit in every bite). Waffles include choice of yogurt or whipped cream. I went with the yogurt. Unsweetened, the acids, along with the lemon, offered just enough sharpness to keep the dish within the realm of sweet treat rather than decadent dessert. It's probably worth noting that it was just a single, medium-sized waffle, which disappeared pretty quickly. It's not an overwhelming amount of food.

Specials include pastries, too, like muffins and scones. I tried the marionberry scone, which eschewed the usual pie-slice shape, opting for a round. It looked too overwhelmed by the purple-blue berries, but underneath was the crumbly, creamy doughy foundation. I could've done without the extra sprinkling of the crunchy, granular sugar, though; the tart sweetness of Oregon's signature berry is enough to carry the day.

I dabbled in the lunch menu as well, which includes a few dishes

LAZY SUSAN CAFE

Rating: ★★☆☆

126 N. Hemlock St.
Cannon Beach, Ore.

PHONE: 503-436-2816

HOURS: Wednesday-Monday
8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

PRICE: \$ - Entrées run \$10 to \$15 (no credit cards accepted!)

SERVICE: Keeps the coffee cups full

VEGETARIAN/VEGAN
OPTIONS: Vegetarians will do all right

DRINKS: Coffee, tea, wine

KEY TO STAR RATING SYSTEM

- ★ Below average
- ★★ Average
- ★★★ Good
- ★★★★ Excellent
- ★★★★★ Best in region

from left field, like the Mediterranean Seafood Stew and a Hot Seafood Salad. I would happily trade those two, along with the Tuna-Apple Hazelnut Salad (\$13.95) — assertively spiced, leaner and cleaner than it was enticing — for a few more breakfast excursions like, say, huevos rancheros or a breakfast burrito. (No shame in my game!)

However, I stand wholeheartedly behind the Broiled Shrimp Sandwich. Open-faced with three melted cheeses — Swiss, cheddar and jack — swirling, browned and bubbling with sour cream and green onion, over supple bay shrimp on English muffins, the viscous creaminess was irresistible.

I thought of the Broiled Shrimp Sandwich on my final trip to the Lazy Susan. But the breakfast instinct took over. When the server came to take our order, I hesitated, but only for a moment: "I'll have the Eggs Benedict, please."