

Restaurant Adventures
Spring 2016
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Restaurant: Saint Anejo

Date: May 24, 2016; Time of day: 11:30 am

Location: M street in the Gulch (McGavock Street)

8 explored

Restaurant description: Saint Anejo has a very different vibe than most other Mexican restaurants. Interior is “interesting” and quite unexpected. The walls have dark wallpaper (with a unique design) that fits the theme well. There is plenty of seating and a huge bar (keep that in mind the next time you want to join a friend for a quick bite or drink). When weather is appropriate, there are many windows that can be rolled up, making for an inviting atmosphere.

Service: Staff is friendly, knowledgeable and efficient.

Food: Menu is “Mexican-inventive”. There are tacos, skillet nachos, burritos, enchiladas and quesadillas, but they are all a bit different from what you would expect. Dishes are flavorful, but can be on the spicy side. There are plenty of “For the Table” items that can be easily shared. Most members of the group would return to try something different.

Beer/Wine/Liquor: Full bar. Huge selection of tequilas. Decent beer selection and plenty of wine.

Price: Lunch prices are more than you would pay at a more traditional Mexican restaurant. Expect to pay \$10.00 to \$15.00 for lunch (not including drinks, appetizers and extras.)

Noise level: It is a large place and there is plenty of chatter, but lunchtime seems to be fine. This is a popular place for happy hours and dinner for the younger crowd, so lunch is definitely the time to go.

Bathrooms: Near the front desk. Very functional (plenty of stalls and sinks) and attractive, but a bit dark – don’t plan on putting on makeup.

Parking: During lunch, it is possible to park across the street at Adele’s, but it probably best that you use their valet service.

Restaurant: 1808 Grill

Date: June 1st, 2016; Time of Day: 11:30 am

Location: Hutton Hotel (West end and 19th)

14 explored

Restaurant description: The 1808 Grill is one of the most relaxing restaurants in Nashville. The seating is superb and comfortable, the music is fine jazz (but very much in the background,) and the atmosphere and décor add to the tranquil atmosphere.

Service: The staff is friendly, knowledgeable and efficient. They sincerely try to make your lunch a good experience. Several attendees did not like their meals and the server was willing to substitute immediately.

Food: Lunch sandwiches are a major meal. The 1808 Burger is always good (but messy). For the “Meat and Three” you can generally choose from steak, yellowfin tuna or chicken breast as your meat. (Note: this is not a typical Meat and Three.) Most of the members enjoyed their lunch. However, those that ordered the “Meat and Three,” with the steak, complained about the meat being overdone. Also, the Flat Steak, at this particular visit, was extremely tough to chew (not just overcooked, but a bad cut of meat). The crab cake was very good.

Beer/Wine/Liquor: Full bar. The beer selection is all bottles, but represents a decent variety. Plenty of wine to choose from.

Price: More than you'd pay at other restaurants during lunch, but it is a hotel that caters to the business community. Expect to pay around \$15.00 for a sandwich and \$15 for the "Meat and Three"

Noise level: A business group or social group can easily have a good conversation without competing with neighboring tables or music.

Bathrooms: In the lobby, but absolutely gorgeous. Plenty of stalls and sinks. This bathroom get an A.

Parking: The parking garage is accessed from the rear of the hotel, off of Hayes Street. Make sure you take your parking ticket with you, as the hostess will validate it. You can also use their valet parking, in which you would only have to tip the valet person.

Restaurant: Thai Esane

Date: June 16, 2016: Time: 11:30 am

Location: 907 12 Ave. South (just south of the gulch)

10 explored

Restaurant description: The outside may look plain, but the inside is pleasant enough with some nice artwork on the walls. The restaurant is larger than expected with an impressive seating capacity. The tables and set-up in general could use a bit more ambiance, but they functioned well. It was extremely busy during our visit – it is obviously a popular place at lunch time.

Service: They were able to accommodate a party of 10 without a problem (the 11:30 lunch time was probably a good thing). The group was assigned a single waitress, who had other tables to service, so taking our drink orders, then our food orders was a slow process. A smaller group would probably experience quicker service.

Food: The number of menu options is fabulous – so much to choose from. The menu has photos of the dishes to help you decide. The satisfaction with the food seemed to depend on what you order. However, the majority of the luncheon folks were happy with their meals. Those who had a soup as an appetizer enjoyed them thoroughly. The Red Curry Stir Fry also received high marks. One attendee did remark that the Pad Thai Chicken, ordered medium hot, came out very mild, with not much Thai flavoring. The Pad King with Ginger comes with actually sticks of ginger, so you need to enjoy ginger in a super-human way.

Beer/Wine/Liquor: The restaurant has a full liquor license. The beer selection is OK, but did contain some Thai beers that were quite good.

Price: Extremely reasonable! Appetizers/soups run between \$4.00 and \$7.00 and lunch entrees are around \$11.00 to \$13.00.

Noise Level: This is a popular place during lunch and the chatter was loud. It was difficult to have a conversation with anyone other than the person next to you or across from you.

Bathrooms: Clean, functional but unattractive. Plus there is only one toilet – very odd for a restaurant this size that gets this busy. Ladies...be prepared to wait in the hall (at least they provide chairs).

Parking: Very easy -- the restaurant is surrounded by parking spaces. No one in the group had a problem.

Restaurant: AMCE Feed and Seed

Date: Monday, June 27, 2016; Time of day: 11:30 am

Location: 101 Broadway (at the corner of Broadway and 1st)

3 explored

Restaurant Description: The interior is too hard to describe. This used to be an actual feed store many years ago. The new restaurant owners have done an unbelievable job of repurposing much of the original wood/timber, plus lots of the “junk” they found on the premises (check out the figures on the walls). The restaurant is actually 4 levels, the first level is the restaurant, the second is full of conversation areas and the sushi bar. The third is for private events and finally the 4th floor has the best balcony overlooking the Cumberland in the city.

Service: This is not a sit-down dinner place. You walk in and order from the order desk, on your left. We had a small group and were able to order directly from the bar tender, who was very accommodating (Viv had already ordered a beer – and tips really well!). The staff member gives you a number that you place in front of you. The food arrived extremely fast (except for the brisket sandwich – probably takes a bit longer). It’s actually very efficient.

Food: July was a very busy traveling month for the OSHER folks and only 3 people were able to attend the lunch. However, everyone enjoyed their lunch. The menu gives you 3 selections in each of these categories: chicken; pork; beef; fish; and vegetarian. There are several inventive appetizers/snacks to choose from if you do not want a meal. The “Rule the Roost” sandwich claims to be “hot chicken” but it doesn’t come close. It is extremely flavorful, but not the least bit hot. The beef brisket sandwich is always a favorite. The French fries are fried in peanut oil and are very good. All tables have a condiment container. Make sure to try the “Texas Ketchup” with your food and French fries. It’s got a bit of a kick, but the taste is wonderful. There are plenty of sides to choose from, including slaw, collards, Mac N’ Cheese, black beans and cucumber salad.

Beer/Wine/Liquor: Full liquor license. The restaurant has one of the best beer selections that focuses on local microbreweries. A haven for “beer snobs.”

Price: Lunch and Dinner menu is the same. Expect to pay \$11.00 to \$17.00 for your food. Snacks are inventive and they run between \$5.00 and \$10.00.

Noise Level: While we were there the music was nice and not at all too loud. However, they sponsor ACME Radio and their DJ can sometimes make the music a bit loud. It seems to depend on the day.

Bathrooms: The restaurant tried to keep as much of the old structure as possible, but restaurant bathrooms are actually in the basement. You will pass original masonry stone work as you make your way down. The bathroom is unexceptional but functional with plenty of stalls and sinks. Anyone with a walking disability should take the elevator to the second floor which has the “nicer” bathroom.

Parking: ACME is at Broadway and 1st, so you should park at your favorite downtown location, if you have one. Here is a link to downtown parking locations.

<http://www.parkitdowntown.com/maps/interactive-map>