

Dine / Laguna Fish Co.



Clockwise from left: the bar inside Laguna Fish Co.; a poke bowl (back), Winter Citrus salad (right) and Laguna Tacos; halibut ceviche and the Smoked Apple (left) and basil martini cocktails; and fried ice cream

Fresh Catch

LAGUNA FISH CO. SERVES UP TACOS, SANDWICHES, CEVICHE AND MORE IN A SLEEK YET CASUAL SETTING.

By ASHLEY RYAN

It's been over three years since Tommy Bahama Restaurant, Bar & Store shut its doors and the building has remained empty ever since. But in January, the space finally gained a new tenant: Laguna Fish Co.

Owner Ivan Spiers, who also launched Laguna hot spots Mozambique and Skyloft (which is located just upstairs from the new space), developed a fast-casual concept for Laguna Fish Co., which showcases a spacious bar close to the entrance as well as a counter where customers place their food orders. The dining room is sleek and chic, with modern

design in neutral colors, but is also adorned with black-and-white photos of Laguna in years past, courtesy of the local historical society, that provide a sense of place.

Choose your drink to start: All beer on draft is brewed by Laguna Beach Beer Co. and there are a number of cocktails to choose from as well. Try a classic espresso martini or the house margarita, or go for signature options such as the mezcal-filled Smoked Apple or gin-based basil martini.

As you wind your way through the food menu, make sure to check out the board detailing the day's fresh catches. Sourced

from a San Pedro fisherman, the daily selections range from branzino to rainbow trout to red snapper and beyond. The daily and specialty catches can be added to a number of menu items, including soups, salads (we recommend the Winter Citrus, which combines grapefruit, mandarin oranges and cranberries with baby kale, arugula, fennel, almonds and feta in a citrus-honey vinaigrette), burritos, bowls, tacos and even pasta.

Outside of these rotating specialties, consider some starters to share. The halibut ceviche is a refreshing option with a bit of spice, incorporating serrano peppers and fresh lime. Seafood nachos with shrimp and lobster, topped with black beans, mozzarella cheese, sour cream, guacamole and pico de gallo, are another delectable option.

For something a little more substantial, opt for the ever-popular poke bowl, in which your choice of tuna or salmon is tossed in a citrus-ponzu sauce before mingling with pineapple, scallions, edamame and sesame seeds on a bed of wasabi rice.

If it's an entree you seek, you can never go wrong with beloved fish and chips. Hand-battered Alaskan cod is fried to golden perfection, then served with warm, hand-cut fries and a jalapeno-infused tartar sauce. Another favorite, the halibut Veracruz, offers a bit of Latin flare with a tomato clam broth, onions, green olives and capers over rice.

However, the most mouthwatering menu item is the Laguna Tacos, featuring three crispy corn tortillas stuffed with shrimp and fish sofrito, cheese and cabbage then drizzled with spicy pasilla chile-lime aioli.

End your meal with a sweet treat, like fried ice cream, which is breaded then deep fried and smothered in a caramel drizzle, or double thick malts in flavors like chocolate, strawberry, caramel or banana.

In addition to lunch and dinner, Laguna Fish Co. also serves morning meals Friday through Sunday with an organic crab omelet, lox bagel and the LFC or smoked salmon Benedicts—for seafood any time of day. ■

LAGUNA FISH CO.: 400 S. Coast Highway, 949-715-1002; lagunafishco.com

HOURS: 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Wednesday; 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Thursday; 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday; 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sunday