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Specialties of the House

By A.K. Carroll



Photos A.K. Carroll

This week's Hunt for Happy Hour takes us to Moraga's Home/Made Kitchen Café to see what's cooking with their newest afternoon offering.

Not everyone will venture off the beaten path or drive the extra distance to have a meal in Moraga, but those willing to wander to the door of Home/Made Kitchen will be greeted with a welcome that might just change their uphill aversion. A modest establishment housed in cinderblock walls with wide-open windows, the café's character comes from its creators' attention to detail - butcher paper table-cloths, dishes edged in flowers, tiny sugared cookies served alongside cups of coffee. It isn't elaborate by any means, but that is intentional. It is quaint, comfortable, homey and, well, "homemade," which isn't always a word you associate with happy hour.

Home/Made started as a daytime joint that

served breakfast at all hours, poured quality coffee, and baked dainty and decadent pastries. The local community was insatiable, so the café expanded its offerings to take-away meals and prix fixe Friday dinners. Less than two miles from a college campus and nestled among the suburbs, happy hour was the logical next step in filling out the café's offerings. You won't find crazy cocktails, truffle fries, or foie gras, but you will encounter generous portions and heart-felt food at a fraction of the price. It's like home. Only better.

Home/made's happy hour features chilled canned and bottled beers, including Lagunitas, Blue Moon and Caldera, all of which go for \$3-\$3.50. House red, white and sparkling wines are \$5 a glass, as are delicate peach bellinis made in the traditional style with a puree of fresh white peaches mixed with sparkling wine. Beverages can be enjoyed indoors at a cozy café table or outdoors on the sunny stretch of patio.

Food offerings are simple, but generous, and include a chicken quesadilla made with sharp cheddar and jack cheeses, with pico de gallo and sour cream; barbecue pork sliders served on fluffy soft butter buns with red cabbage and housemade wasabi slaw; and crunchy housemade tortilla chips with edamame hummus or a side of guacamole. Options are likely to rotate according to season, reception, and culinary inspiration.

Though you could easily make a meal off of Home/Made's happy hour offerings, if it's a Friday evening and you're in need of a night out you might opt to stick around for the curated three-course prix fixe. Like all of the café's items, these dishes are made with quality ingredients from local markets and food purveyors - the sort of places you might buy from if you were shopping for your family, which is essentially how the owners view the mission of their meals. Hop on over for happy hour and get a taste of what makes Moraga a home away from home that's worth a little drive.

When:

4-6 pm, Thursday-Friday

Where:

Home/Made Kitchen Café & Bakery, 337 Rheem Blvd., Moraga

Drinks:

\$5 bellinis, \$5 house wines, \$3 beers

Food:

\$2-3 appetizers

Recommended:

White Peach Bellini and edamame hummus





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