

Restaurant Review

Sustainable Sustenance *Where to Find Locally-Sourced, Eco-Friendly Meals*

By Cheryl Sternman Rule

In honor of Earth Day, we serve up these local restaurants that offer great family-friendly – and planet-friendly – meals.

Café Borrone

1010 El Camino Real, Menlo Park. 650-327-0830.

With its gurgling fountain, plentiful outdoor seating and hip neighborhood feel, Café Borrone caters to students, older folks, parents and kids alike. Order at the counter from a wide selection of breakfast items (available until noon), sandwiches, salads and pastries, then pull up a chair outside and let your kids play near the fountain. Servers will bring your food to the table when it's ready.

My kids sipped fancy, whipped-cream-laced hot cocoa (\$2), and indulged in Belgian waffles (\$6.75) and scrambled eggs with cheddar and ham (\$5.95). I adored my cheesy veggie melt, served open-faced on a toasted baguette and loaded with sliced mushrooms, avocado and tomato (\$7.95).

Owner Marina Borrone proudly serves Niman Ranch meats, free-range organic chicken, organic breads, wild salmon and a vast amount of locally grown produce. Go for the food, but stay for the lively atmosphere and friendly service. Best of all? Kepler's Books is half a step away, and it boasts a new and expansive "Go-Green" section. The children's department is top-notch, too.

Pros: Wide variety of café favorites, terrific location next to CalTrain stop and Kepler's Books

Cons: No highchairs or changing tables (but plenty of parents with strollers abound)

Whole Foods Market

20955 Stevens Creek Blvd., Cupertino. 408-257-7000.

Currently the largest Whole Foods on the west coast, this newest flagship store is the megachurch for the eco-conscious food set. On one side sits the prepared foods department with a huge salad bar, pizza station, taqueria and sandwich counter. Indoor and outdoor tables are plentiful, and highchairs are available. I'd highly recommend this eating area for those with young kids in tow. (You're also closer to the restrooms.)

On the other side of the complex — and it feels a hemi-

sphere away — is the sit-down Market Bistro. My two kids split four enormous buttermilk pancakes with strawberries and organic maple syrup (\$5.99), and the adults enjoyed a hearty tuna melt on sourdough (\$6.99) and a respectable veggie burger (\$5.99). Swapping a side salad for the fries was no problem. Our meal was tasty, but I wish we'd taken advantage of the wider array of options in the prepared food area instead.

When shopping, prominent signage makes it easy to locate Santa Clara County-grown produce, and you can pick up all the fixings for a sustainable dinner, as well as eco-friendly apparel, without leaving the store. If ever there were a place for one-stop "green" shopping, this would be it.

Pros: Unparalleled variety of food options, two seating areas with highchairs, changing table

Cons: Sheer size can be overwhelming

Cool Café

Cantor Center for Visual Arts, Stanford Campus. 650-725-4758.

Here's a twofer: Nosh on local, organic fare *and* expose your kids to high – but accessible – culture at the same time. The Cantor Arts Center's outdoor sculpture garden houses a breathtaking collection of bronze Rodin sculptures in a peaceful, park-like setting. Grab some food from the café and then sit outside at one of the many umbrella-covered tables and drink in the scene with your kids.

What to eat? You really can't go wrong here. All of the cuisine is locally-sourced, sustainable and in-season. The 4-year-old at my table

devoured her grilled cheddar on multigrain bread with sliced fresh apples (\$5). Other kid-specific options include nitrate-free hot dogs, PB&J, organic milk and soymilk. Older kids will enjoy the regular menu, which includes sandwiches, soups and salads made from pasture-raised chicken, grass-fed meat, and wild or sustainably-farmed seafood. The grilled burger on sourdough (\$9) and chicken salad sandwich (\$8.75) were especially good.

Word to the wise: Lunchtime lines are long, and the café gets crowded. Come on a sunny day and plan to sit outside.

Pros: Responsibly-sourced cuisine in a unique museum setting, sculpture garden, highchairs and changing table

Cons: Lunchtime crowds, limited lunch options for very young children

San Jose-based Cheryl Sternman Rule is a local food writer and mother of two well-fed boys.



Melia Dobner, 4, of Los Gatos enjoys a grilled cheese sandwich at Stanford's Cool Café.

PHOTO BY CHERYL STERNMAN RULE