

The Lifestyle Magazine of the Central Coast

# Carmel

Spring  
2017

magazine™

Carmel Valley's

**Michael  
Nesmith**

ARTIST JOHNNY APODACA • COMFORT FOOD • CARMEL BEACH DOGS



## A Delicious Exploration with Carmel Food Tours

BY VANJA THOMPSON

Carmel's abundance of fantastic food shops, wineries and restaurants can be overwhelming to choose from, especially if you have only a few days—and meals—to spend in the one square mile of Carmel-by-the-Sea. Enter Carmel Food Tours.

This three-hour guided walk takes you through picturesque streets and courtyards, with seven perfectly paced stops featuring foods so varied yet complimentary, you're sure to leave satisfied, surprised, and with at least one future dinner reservation and some ideas to try at home. The surprises are spectacular, and it's best to attend the tour without knowing too much. But I'll give you just a few hints.

You will stop at Carmel's most famous and innovative eateries. You will enjoy diverse locally sourced treats ranging from haute cuisine to premium pub fare. You will indulge in at least one thing you've never tasted. You will be enchanted by your local guide, and she'll have you in stitches—and you'll wonder how you became such fast friends with the strangers you just met.

You will become spellbound by chefs and sommeliers who regale you with passionate personal stories and insider information you'll be dying to not share with your friends...so they can experience the magic themselves.

*Ticket prices depend on tour type. For more information, go to [www.carmelfoodtour.com](http://www.carmelfoodtour.com) or call 800/656-0713.*

**Carmel Food Tour co-founder Staci Giovino takes diners into downtown restaurants and wineries for delicious tastings and shares historical details. A new tour offers breakfast.**

Photo: Keili Urcali



Buggy

# Pawprints in the Sand

Carmel Beach...Where Everybody  
Knows Your (Dog's) Name

BY VANJA THOMPSON • PHOTOGRAPHY BY KELLI ULDALL

CARMEL BEACH IS A DELIGHT; THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT IT. EVEN AN OVERCAST DAY IS, WELL, A DAY AT THE BEACH. WHITE SAND, FRESH AIR, SOOTHING SOUNDS OF CRASHING WAVES AND MUTED LAUGHTER ALL BRING THE WORLD INTO SIMPLER TERMS. AND THEN, THERE ARE THE DOGS. THE GLORIOUS DOGS!

HERE ON THIS ONE-MILE STRETCH OF SAND, PUPS ARE PERMITTED TO RUN OFF LEASH SO LONG AS THEY'RE WELL-BEHAVED AND OBEY VOICE COMMANDS. IT WASN'T UNTIL I ADOPTED A DOG THAT I STARTED FREQUENTING THE BEACH MORE OFTEN AND GOT TO KNOW THE REGULARS—THE DOGS, THAT IS. I KNOW MANY DOGS' NAMES, WHILE I ONLY KNOW THE HUMANS AS "LIL' JOE'S DAD" OR "GIZMO'S MOM" AND THEY KNOW ME AS "KEVIN'S MOM."

IT'S NO JOKE THAT MY DOG HAS A FAR MORE ACTIVE SOCIAL LIFE THAN I DO—HE REGULARLY GOES TO THE BEACH WITH HIS PAL REGINALD BARCLAY, AKA "REGGIE," AND MEETS UP WITH SEVERAL OF THE OLD GUARD, SO TO SPEAK. WATCHING THEM RECOGNIZE AND GREET ONE ANOTHER IS AMUSING. SOME HAVE GROWN UP TOGETHER. SOME HAVE MET THEIR FRIENDS' PREDECESSORS AND REPLACEMENTS. SOME HAVE FORGED FRIENDSHIPS BETWEEN THEIR HUMANS. AND ALL HAVE PUT SMILES ON THE FACES OF COUNTLESS LOCALS AND VISITORS.

"HE THINKS HE'S THE MAYOR OF CARMEL BEACH," SAYS KARL OF HIS FRIENDLY BLACK-AND-WHITE FRENCH BULLDOG BUGSY WHO HAS WHAT HE DESCRIBES AS HAVING, "A FACE ONLY A MOTHER COULD LOVE."



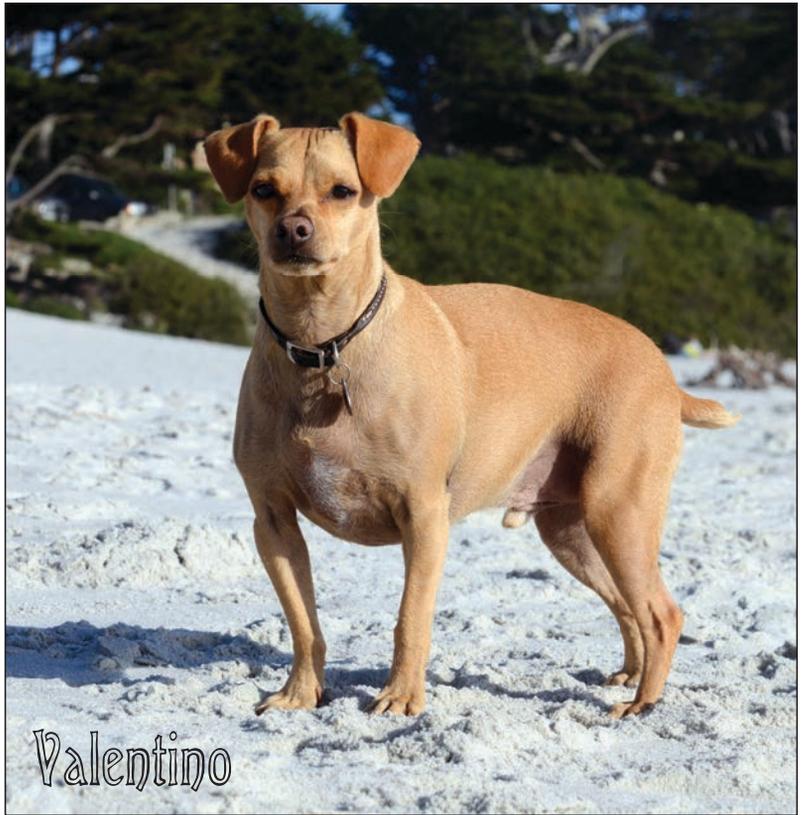
Koa



Dixie



Bode



**Reggie, Valentino, Bailey, Daisy and Elmo are just some of the pups who have playdates on Carmel Beach. There is an opportunity for great exercise and social interaction for both the dogs and their owners.**

I don't have the heart to tell him that Jim's caramel colored Chihuahua-Terrier mix Reggie also thinks he's mayor of Carmel Beach, as does Koa, the sociable bird-chasing short grey Boxer Terrier mix. I have to give it to Buggy, though. He's been a regular since before the other two were even born and is on the beach every single day, greeting his public.

"He's well known and carries himself with a

mayoral walk," says Karl, adding, "He should have a seat on the City Council." Buggy gleefully greets all dogs and people in his path, and is known for his signature play move—the butt tap—wherein he forcefully throws his beefy hind quarter against another dog to scoot them along.

Old-timer Dixie, a Chow Chow and Australian Shepherd mix, and her "brother" Elmo frequent the beach at least four times a

week, and each has their signature move too. Five-year-old Border Collie mix Elmo loves to jump to catch his Frisbee with a flourish. And at 13, Dixie prefers to greet people and check their pockets for treats.

"Dixie loves seeing Valentino's dad, Michael. She can spot him from miles away," says their mom Lisa, adding, "If she catches him in time, he'll have a treat for her."



Gizmo



Abu



Apollo & Jetson

Michael, who's also at the beach every evening with his Chihuahua-Dachshund mix Valentino, has lots of canine followers—literal followers who run to his feet and offer up their best treat-seeking tricks and pleading eyes with high hopes.

Similarly, Bode's mom Susan has her share of four-legged friends. "I have more dog friends than he does because of the treats I carry, and

he's very good about sharing them," she says. "His greatest joy is finding someone who'll throw the ball for him."

I actually met Bode before I met Susan, when he dropped his ball at my feet and nudged it toward me with his nose. The two-year-old small black, grey and white mixed breed SPCA rescue is full of personality.

"Most people seem to take great delight in

**At Carmel Beach, dogs may play off leash, as long as they are well behaved, respond to voice commands, and are vaccinated. Carmel-by-the-Sea is ranked the number one dog friendly town in America.**

humoring him. He gets along well with other dogs, but much prefers humans," says Susan.

Daisy also prefers to befriend people, and greets them at eye-level while riding on her dad Stacy's shoulders. The short legged Puddin' Jack Russell Terrier is enamored of people, and is now training her lookalike sister, 4-month-old Bailey, who follows her every move as they run along the beach, far faster than you'd expect their little legs to carry them.

Quite a few of the regulars come in pairs, including Jetson and Apollo, two sleek and swift Italian Greyhounds who engage in spectacular circular races, often collecting other dogs along the way.

"Carmel Beach is a wonderful place to be free and run like the wind with other dogs of all breeds," says their dad Aaron.

Reggie loves to join in, running alongside the racing dogs, whether they notice he's involved or not. For Reggie's dad Jim, the most rewarding part about taking him to Carmel Beach is "his big smile."



Tansy



Ziggy



**Dogs provide an easy introduction for their owners. Many friendships are started while watching dogs romp among the white sands and surf and greet other canines and humans, who often carry doggie treats.**

back daily, and has come to know everyone.

It's this effortless cooperation between so many dogs, large and small, that makes Carmel Beach so magical. Watching my clumsy Chihuahua Kevin try to run alongside the likes of Atlas, a majestic and graceful Rhodesian Ridgeback, is funny. Observing the young German Shepherd Tyla as she contains her energy to slow her leaps and peacefully places her paws flat on the sand, crouching down softly to greet smaller dogs, is beautiful.

And watching the most energetic and entertaining of them all, Lil' Joe, is worth the price of admission. With his long black curls glistening in the sun, the Cockapoo jumps, rolls, lies on his back, and otherwise mugs for his audience. No matter how many times Lil' Joe passes the same dog or same person on his daily patrol, he greets each one all over again with the enthusiasm of a long-lost friend, and he makes every single one glad they came.

For information on adopting or fostering a dog or other animal, contact Animal Friends Rescue Project (AFRP) at [www.animalfriendsrescue.org](http://www.animalfriendsrescue.org) or The SPCA for Monterey County at [www.spcamc.org](http://www.spcamc.org).

Indeed, many of the dogs on the beach visibly smile, in turn eliciting human smiles and chuckles.

One of the broadest doggy smiles belongs to Tansy, a black-and-white short-hair mixed breed with perky ears. An Animal Friends Rescue Project adoptee, Tansy is all about her toys.

"She has little time for anything or anyone else when she's focused on playing catch," says her dad Eric.

Also focused on toys above all else is newcomer Abu, a 5-year-old energetic English Bulldog who goes to the beach a minimum of twice daily, and loves to chase after sticks, balls and Frisbees—whether they're his or not. Abu's charm and obedience keep him out of any scrapes.

Keeping a close eye and a tight tooth on his orange ball is Ziggy, a beige-and-white Australian Labradoodle whose broad smile is still prominent even as he's holding the ball in his mouth.

"His favorite thing to do is run after another dog with it in his mouth, proud as can be," says Ziggy's mom Katy, who brings the bouncy teddy bear-like pup to the beach no fewer than three times each week, rain or shine, even as a part-time resident.

"Ziggy makes friends all the time at the beach," says Katy, "from Great Danes to little Terriers."

Another teddy bear, Gizmo, is also a friend to all. The five-pound, frequently clothed, Yorkshire Terrier walks the full length of the beach and

# The Reveal Is in The Details

A Mélange of Ancient Style and Modern Living

BY VANJA THOMPSON • PHOTOGRAPHY BY WAYNE CAPILI

Jan and Brigitte de Luz's home stands out with a stunning view of Carmel Valley, plenty of sunshine and a tremendous attention to detail.



**F**or over 20 years, Jan de Luz and his wife and business partner Brigitte have collaborated with homeowners, designers, architects, and builders on a grand scale to create highly personalized Mediterranean inspired home and garden environments throughout the Monterey Peninsula and beyond.

The renowned Jan de Luz brand has become

famous for championing the “serviceability” of ancient traditional Mediterranean materials, from weighty building stones and antiques to feather-light linen fineries, and everything in between. These are not pieces to be timidly admired from afar, but to be celebrated and used in daily life. The couple’s passion and reverence for even the smallest construction and

design details are what set their designs, and their brand, apart. Every tile, every engraving, and every stitch tells a story, and visiting any of the Jan de Luz showrooms is like an immersive history lesson.

Likewise, the prominent couple’s home in Carmel Valley exemplifies their passion for living comfortably with history and honoring tradition

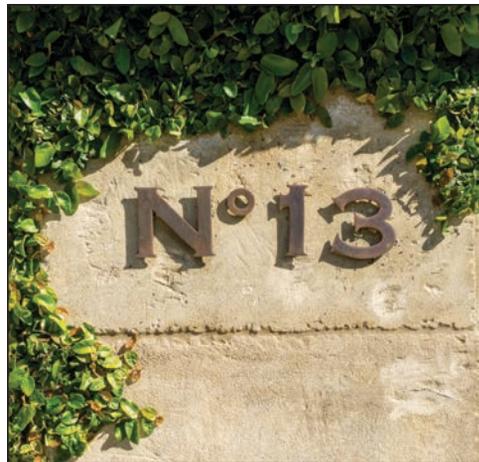


**A blend of past and modern comforts supports the European aesthetic that is carried through the Jan de Luz antique and linen shops. The property is the source for olive oil “No. 13.”**



by incorporating it into modern life. The magically anachronistic sun-drenched French estate, where bees and hummingbirds flit to the tune of a gently cascading fountain and quietly rustling olive leaves, is less than 20 miles from downtown Carmel but feels like a world away.

A stately iron gate opens onto the expansive olive and lemon tree lined driveway made entirely of 150-lb granite pavers re-claimed from 300-year-old European streets. The driveway runs alongside a portion



of a spectacular meandering retaining wall, built entirely by hand with imported limestone from Gordes. The French village in Provence is home to ancient “bories” or stone huts, estimated to date back to the Bronze Age. Jan brought in a French mason from the area, skilled in the historically accurate architectural method of stacking the stones, to train—and

work alongside—his local staff.

Tall slender Italian cypress trees line the pathways leading to the ivy-covered main home and guest houses: one attached and one separate, each with a private entrance. The paths are adorned with stone benches, garden

pillars, decorative stone statues, and an antique fountain.

The main entrance leads to a living area bathed in natural light from floor-to-ceiling 12-paned, hand-carved walnut doors that open onto a large patio, home to a

fully functional dream kitchen, large dining area, and a heated, covered seating area.

Indoors, the living area features a 1680s’ Louis XIV mantel and a comfortable large sitting area with cotton/linen blend seat coverings, handwoven by Brigitte, using the same fabric as the iconic tablecloths sold at the downtown Carmel Jan de Luz linen shop.



**While the home is filled with antiques, everything is very livable, including the modern country kitchen and the fabrics that Brigitte sells in her shops.**

“The fabric is strong enough, and I just throw the whole thing in the wash. The whole house is really easy. It’s made to live in,” says Brigitte, who loves to cook. The indoor kitchen, too, is chef-worthy and spacious, featuring a deep farmhouse sink and marked by a tasteful mélange of country and modern styles, with professional grade appliances and a walk-in pantry.

The ultimate indoor showpiece, also fully functional *bien sûr*, is a pewter topped 1880s’ French café bar that’s been lovingly restored and serves as a modern wet bar with an inconspicuous 90-bottle wine refrigerator. The bar is complemented by a full set of handcrafted



**Jan de Luz began as a French cabinetmaker with a passion for making antique fabrics through Basque weaving. He and his family moved to California in the 1990s and started importing French antiques and selling linens.**

stools and a large train station clock, and is flanked with two cherub sculptures. Nearby, an antique crystal chandelier hangs from the open-beam ceiling to light a French casino roulette table.

The bedrooms elegantly blend rare antique flooring and objets d'art—like vintage French school desks—with modern earthy tones

and spare décor. The strategically placed plentiful windows serve as wall art, displaying the stunning grounds, of which Jan is the proud curator:

His reverence for preserving natural beauty and craftsmanship extends to the grounds and vegetation.

"I love the birds, the bees, and every one of the insects here," says Jan,



**The Jan de Luz business mission statement is, "hunting the fine, the rare, the serviceable."**

adding proudly, "there is not one chemical on this property." That includes the gently sloping hill just above the 3,260 square-foot structure, where Jan tends to over 450 Arbequina olive trees. What started as a landscaping choice "to maintain the hill" blossomed into yet another business venture for Jan, who now sells his "N°13"

olive oil and design book "The French Touch," with images by local photographer Tom O'Neil, in the retail shops and online.

"My husband is a perfectionist," beams Brigitte and adds, with a coy smile, "You know why the olive oil is so good? It's because he talked to the trees."

Also eco-friendly are the saltwater pool and the Teak hot tub, hand-



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# Rise, Shine & Dine

Breakfast Delights Around the Peninsula

BY VANJA THOMPSON • PHOTOGRAPHY BY KELLI ULDALL



**At Toasties Café, located on Lighthouse Avenue in Pacific Grove, diners have been enjoying breakfast treats for 26 years. Owners Therese and Robert Yee have toys for kids to enjoy while waiting for their order.**

It's an oft-repeated axiom that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. I do know it's the most fun, and not just because of bacon and pancake smiley faces. There's something very comforting about the familiar music of coffee brewing, skillets sizzling, and the overlapping voices of groggy loved ones talking about the day's plans. And if there's nowhere to be, I can think of no better way to slowly start a day than lingering over a large casual breakfast...that I didn't make myself. Luckily, within just a few miles in every direction on the Peninsula, breakfast restaurants are plentiful. Among them are a few understated gems known mostly to locals—but I'm going to spill the (coffee) beans and share a few of my favorites.

A trip to **Toasties Café** in Pacific Grove feels like visiting a dear aunt's country home where bunny, rooster and floral themed knick-knacks abound. The waiting area is a small separate room with local artists' framed prints and wicker loveseats, and children can explore a height-appropriate cupboard for their pick of loaner toys.

Since opening shop here on Lighthouse Avenue with her husband Robert 26 years ago, Therese Yee has watched customers and servers grow up and, in turn, has watched their kids grow up. Her own grandkids can often be seen playing games and having breakfast at the counter. Several of the wait staff have worked at Toasties over 10 years, and Therese remembers waiting on some of the same customers "since day



**Shannon Elmore, Alisa Balesteri, and Tisha Palma from The Breakfast Club serve up favorites like Crabcake Benedict, Ron's Omelet, and Mixed Fruit French Toast.**



**Tico's Breakfast & Lunch is a dog friendly restaurant in Marina run by the Herrera family, owners Silvia and Tico and their three sons.**

one." It's also a popular place for locals to bring out of town guests and family for special occasions, year after year.

Pressed to name a most popular dish, Therese

decides it's probably the homemade corned beef hash, but the many eggs Benedict dishes come in at a close second. But, she says, "people come back from all over the country for the

hash once they've had it." The extensive menu features all the breakfast staples you'd expect, along with some unique dishes like tortellini and eggs, and a perfectly lightly pan-fried calamari steak with eggs. I urge anyone who goes to Toasties to leave room for at least a couple "babycakes" or a slice of olallieberry pie. Who says you can't have dessert for breakfast?

About 10 miles north in Marina, **Tico's Breakfast & Lunch** is a small one-room eatery with a pet-friendly patio, where it's all in the family. Silvia Herrera runs the front of the house, while her husband Tico does the cooking and their three sons help wait tables and handle the brisk takeout business. Tico's features local fresh ingredients and a no-frills café menu with breakfast standards and a few surprises, like homemade sausage and warm apple fritters



**From Scratch is a popular Carmel breakfast and lunch spot in the Barnyard Shopping Village owned by Chef Steven Grebing. Food Network host Guy Fieri featured the restaurant on his show "Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives."**



**Jeffrey's Grill & Catering has been a favorite Carmel Valley breakfast and lunch location for 25 years. Besides classics like eggs and French toast, there is New York steak, sausage and apple fritters, gingerbread and milkshakes.**

with powdered sugar. The very fresh, very fluffy wild mushroom omelet with hollandaise sauce is the standout breakfast dish, along with the Mexican omelet made with grilled ham, roasted pasilla peppers, mozzarella cheese, and topped with freshly made guacamole and pico de gallo.

Nestled between colorful gardens on the lower level of the Barnyard Shopping Village in Carmel is **From Scratch Restaurant** where, true to its name, even the ranch dressing is made on the premises. Owner and chef Steven Grebing, who learned to cook from his mother and grandmother, specializes in large servings of down-home comfort dishes that stream out of the kitchen at an impressive pace.

My favorite, the "breakfast roll," is a colossal customized, and then baked, breakfast burrito topped with two kinds of cheese and salsa fresca and served with baby red breakfast potatoes. Signature dishes include the brisket chili and the deliciously daunting "extreme sausage biscuits and gravy" served on cheese biscuits that Guy

Fieri called "the bomb" when the *Food Network* host featured *From Scratch* on his show, "Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives." While all dishes are substantial in size, there are lighter options including homemade sugar-free granola, hand mixed and baked in small batches, and available for purchase in 12 oz. packages.

A short six miles inland on Carmel Valley Road, the Mid Valley Center has been home to **Jeffrey's Grill & Catering** for 25 years. The large one-room restaurant is bright and bustling, with tables often configured to accommodate large parties, and floor-to-ceiling windows facing the dog-friendly heated patio dining area. Proprietor and gourmet chef Jeffrey Thompson uses only fresh herbs and grinds his own spices. In fact, the spiced nuts he created in the '90s to serve atop salads were so popular; they've become a retail item available onsite, online, and at the weekly Monterey Farmers Market.

The inspired menu is supplemented by a long list of daily and weekend specials, and a written

disclaimer that "our menu is only a guide, so feel free to be creative!" Weekend specials include grilled marinated lamb and eggs and a lobster and scallop omelet. Even the "straightforward and simple" fare, as it's labeled on the menu, is anything but—every dish has some distinguishing subtle flourish. The mesquite grilled New York steak is the best breakfast steak around, and has impeded my resolve to try any of Jeffrey's other creations.

The undisputed locals' favorite in Seaside is **The Breakfast Club**. Tucked away at the back of Fremont Street's Laguna Plaza mall, the large two-room, two-counter restaurant is always packed at peak hours, but the staff is expert at crowd control. They even provide coffee for people waiting at the door. The Breakfast Club's logo, a cartoon coffee mug on wheels, its contents splashing in the air, suggests speed. Indeed, service is prompt and turnover is brisk, which has made it a popular pre-work stopover.

Servers don sporty logo shirts and exercise pants as they race around the open floor plan in

a seemingly choreographed flurry. "You have to be comfortable and able to move," says waitress Rosemary. What stands out about Rosemary, and all the servers, bussers, and kitchen staff within view, is their energy and jovial interaction with one another as well as with customers, many of whom they know by name. "And the regulars know each other too," says Tisha, who's worked at The Breakfast Club for 25 years, adding, "It's so cute, they even stop by each other's tables to say, 'hi!'"

The word family is spoken by every employee I talk to, and they all credit owners James and Tami Newton for fostering the welcoming work environment. Several employees have been at the Breakfast Club for over a decade and have been joined by their children working there as well. James insists, "It's all my wife. It's her creation; she is awesome!"

## FROM PANCAKES TO BURRITOS, BREAKFAST OPTIONS ABOUND...

### **Toasties Café**

702 Lighthouse Ave. Pacific Grove  
831/373-7543

### **Tico's Breakfast & Lunch**

330 Reservation Rd., Marina  
831/582-2509 or [www.ticosrestaurant.com](http://www.ticosrestaurant.com)

### **From Scratch Restaurant**

3626 The Barnyard, Carmel  
831/625-2448 or  
[www.fromscratchrestaurant.com](http://www.fromscratchrestaurant.com)

### **Jeffrey's Grill & Catering**

112 Mid Valley Center, Carmel  
831/624-2029 or  
[www.jeffreystrillandcatering.com](http://www.jeffreystrillandcatering.com)

### **The Breakfast Club**

1130 Fremont Blvd. Ste 201, Seaside  
831/394-3238 or  
[www.breakfastclubrestaurant.com](http://www.breakfastclubrestaurant.com)

James says the most popular dish "changes all the time. Right now, it's the chicken and waffles. I wasn't sure about putting it on the menu, but it's been huge." My personal favorite is the chile verde Jack cheese omelet. Tisha says the cinnamon roll pancakes have been a big hit. "But what people seem to especially love," she says, "are our portions and that we allow substitutions and have a good variety of gluten-free and vegetarian options. We try to cater to people's needs and make them feel special."

It seems to be working, both through the food and the environment where, despite its hopping pace, The Breakfast Club is also a comfortable spot to enjoy that third cup of coffee and unrushed conversation, encouraged by the mural reminding diners that "the fondest memories are made when gathered around the table." ■



**In Seaside, The Breakfast Club is a locals' pick. Though popular, they keep the food like chicken and waffles coming, and if there's a wait, hand out coffee. Regulars know each other and the waitstaff.**