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Environmentally sound sandwiches in Lafayette

By Susie Iventosch



A new favorite chicken salad. Photo Susie Iventosch

There's a new sandwich in Lamorinda! Well, make that a new sandwich shop in town with plenty of fun and interesting sandwiches, salads, soups and grain bowls and it is called Homegrown Sustainable Sandwiches.

Founded in the Seattle area by Brad Gillis and Ben Friedman, Homegrown was born from the cofounders' belief that "if we thoughtfully curate everything about our sandwiches - which grains go into our breads, how the animals behind our meats and cheeses are raised, what chemicals we're keeping off our produce -- each sandwich will be a little bit healthier for the planet and the people who enjoy eating them," according to their menu.

Gillis and Friedman are often referred to as "sandwich environmentalists" and the stores are designed and built with an eye toward the environment using reclaimed building materials. From top to bottom, these guys are all about leaving a positive impact on the environment and happy, satisfied customers.

Toward that end, in 2014 Homegrown also started its own dedicated certified organic farm, Homegrown Sprouting Farms, in order to supply the restaurants with

their own produce. Now that they have entered the Bay Area market with stores in San Francisco, Danville and a brand new store in Lafayette (their 13th, which opened on April 11), they have also started an organic farm in Discovery Bay to supply their Bay Area restaurants with their own seasonal, organic "hyper local" produce. The new Lafayette store is located at 3597 Mt. Diablo Blvd. right where La Boulange used to be situated.

When I visited the Danville Homegrown location, I had one of the daily specials, which was a grilled Brie and apple sandwich, but I'll have to admit, there were so many choices it was tough to choose just one thing. The chicken and avocado grain bowl may have my name on it for my next visit.

Friedman has kindly shared for our readers their recipe for Chicken Cherry Pecan Chicken Salad, which is used in the Chicken Cherry Chicken Pecan Sandwich. I made this at home and it is superb.

"We love this chicken salad," Friedman said. "We wanted to create something that was fresh and bright enough for all seasons, but had rich, deep flavors that made it hearty and craveable. The herbs and roasted garlic cloves mix with the sweet tartness of the cherries and spice of the pecans to create an amazing umami mouthful."

Homegrown Sustainable Sandwiches

3597 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Lafayette, CA. 94549

www.eathomegrown.com

Cooking Term of the Week

Deglaze

Deglazing is the method of using liquid, usually wine or broth, to remove stuck bits of food (meats or veggies) from the bottom of a pan after cooking and using that as a base for a sauce.

Homegrown's Chicken Cherry Pecan Chicken Salad

INGREDIENTS

1 lb. roasted or grilled chicken, chopped into bite size pieces

1 cup Just Mayo or your favorite mayonnaise (I used the Best Foods Olive Oil Mayo)

1/4 cup dried tart cherries

1/4 cup pecans, chopped (we slightly candy and spice ours with our favorite autumnal seasonings)

2 Tbsp. parsley, chopped fine

1 1/2 Tbsp. roasted garlic cloves, chopped fine

1 1/2 Tbsp. fresh sage, chopped fine

1 tsp. sea salt

1 tsp. black pepper, ground

DIRECTIONS

Mix all ingredients and serve on a bed of lettuce or as a sandwich filling. If using as a salad, garnish with a little extra parsley. For the pecans, I browned them slightly in a tiny bit of olive oil, sprinkled sugar over the top and cooked just long enough for the sugar to melt, stirring a few times. Remove from stove and toss with a mixture of 1/2 tsp. cardamom, 1/2 tsp. cinnamon, 1/2 tsp. cumin, and 1/2 tsp. sea salt.

Reach the reporter at: suziven@gmail.com

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