

Three Seventy Common Has a Common Denominator

The former Sorrento Grill brings affordability to Laguna Beach with its Sunday meals
By [EDWIN GOEI](#) Thursday, Dec 22 2011

Ever since [Ryan Adams](#), the last chef to mind the stoves at Sorrento Grille, bought the restaurant and opened Three Seventy Common in its place, there has been a palpable sense of change in the air. Re-energized, the staff seems genuinely enthused, even when no one's looking. And so is [Mitch Gillan](#), Adams' chef de cuisine. The two, both veterans of the [Laguna Beach](#) restaurant trenches and previous employees of [David Wilhelm](#)'s now-extinct empire (Gillan for French 75; Adams for Sorrento), are now in charge of their own destinies, cooking as if they have something to prove.



Meranda Carter
Char-ming



Meranda Carter



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[Three Seventy Common](#)

370 Glenneyre St.
Laguna Beach, CA 92651

Category: [Restaurant](#) > [American](#)

Region: [Laguna Beach](#)

Details

Three Seventy Common, www.370common.com. Open Tues.-Sun., 5 p.m.-close. Sunday Social meals, \$16-\$29 per person, food only; regular-menu entrees, \$13-\$27. Full bar.

The best night to pay a visit is Sunday, when the duo tosses out the regular menu and offers a rare thing for Laguna Beach: an affordable multi-course dinner. Adams has dubbed these family-style suppers "Sunday Socials," and they're evocative of meals at home when everyone's at the table and the TV's turned off. Every week brings a new protein, sides and dessert. Priced anywhere from \$16 per person if it's chicken to a few bucks more if it's a costlier meat, Adams' idea isn't necessarily new, but the downright sincerity in how they do it should make Three Seventy Common more beloved than Sorrento Grille ever was in its 23 years.

To preserve the homey ideals of his meals, Adams has said he intends to make the restaurant smart phone-free zones on these nights, issuing warnings that he'll throw out anyone caught using one. I've not seen him make good on this promise, though. It's one thing to have the rule whispered around town as an intriguing selling point, but another

to actually enforce it. On the Sunday I went, the usual glow of touch screens lit faces at every other table, proving you can lead the Laguna elite to water, but you can't make 'em turn off their [iPhones](#).

I rather like the idea that these folks were texting friends to brag about how good and cheap the meal was. One Sunday, as a lead-up to the main course of pork saltimbocca, a bread basket featured Tweet-worthy rolls reminiscent of the ones your mother made from those Pillsbury crescent tubes, the dough coiled and baked into decadent Danishes gushing herb butter. This was followed by a big, family-sized salad of wilted chicory tossed with lightly dressed greens, mandarin orange segments, crumbles of goat cheese and nuts. Then the pork arrived, essentially a hog steak as thick as a Roget's volume, caramelized to sweetness on every exposed surface, paradoxically lean and juicy inside, cooked so well it became an indictment of every depressingly dry pork chop I've had. A garnish of deep-fried sage disintegrated to herby powder, and a layer of stinky Gruyère melted beneath a sheet of rendered-to-crispy prosciutto.

For the starch, creamy polenta crested away from the weight of the pork slab as though it were the sea off a ship's bow. I scooped it up and ate it in concert, the thick gruel blooming to corn-flavored velvet in my mouth. It contrasted the crunchy texture of the oven-hot roasted root vegetables Adams offered on a separate cast-iron skillet. When the dessert of warmed bread pudding arrived, I was already on my own cell phone, scanning the restaurant's website for what next Sunday's supper would bring.

On every other day of the week, Three Seventy Common's standard menu cuts to the chase. Adams has divided his food into sections titled "Bites," "Small," "Medium" and "Large." There's the usual roll call of recent chef obsessions, including bone marrow (roasted, of course) with parsley and grilled bread. But get the pork belly: As compact as a pack of smokes, its exterior was thoroughly browned to a bacon crunch, the interior made so soft and homogeneous you couldn't tell where the fat ended and the meat began. For one of the most popular small plates, spears of broccolini became a raft for a sunny-side-up egg fried to lacy edges. Grated asiago showered the yolk, the crackly, crisp prosciutto and everything else on the plate. Sitting at the countertop seats directly across from the stoves, I saw a half-dozen eggs sputtering on a flat-top griddle, destined for other orders.

From this seat, I also witnessed my sea bass main entrée being built from the ground up. Cipollini onions were thrown into the hot pan, with wedges of potato for the vegetable hash hissing to a sear, the whole thing coaxed and coddled amidst the lapping flames. Then, still sizzling from the heat of the broiler, the pristine piece of fish arrived, wearing a perfectly formed crust, ready to be laid atop the finished vegetables. I savored the dish morsel-by-morsel, taking more time to eat it than it seemed to take Adams' sous chefs to cook it. I was biding my time. After all, next Sunday's meal was still a few days away.

This review appeared in print as "Common Denominator: Three Seventy Common brings affordability to Laguna Beach with its Sunday meals."