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The Strand House: More than just a pretty building

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Teri Roughen | 2 comments

Every now and then a new establishment comes along that sets the bar for others and changes the landscape of a city. The Strand House in Manhattan Beach is one of those places. Sitting on the best piece of commercial land in the city, The Strand House opened in 2011 to much anticipation and excitement.

I remember checking out the progress on my morning walks while it was being built and peeking in to get a glimpse of what was going on. I wasn't alone. Most who passed by or who live in the area were curious as well.

The building is stunning. It's created mostly of glass, which is apropos in order to witness the scenic views

of the surf, sand, sunset and the city's beloved pier. The interior is beautifully layered into four tiers for the best use of space, giving each level its own unique vibe. With an overall ambiance of contemporary beach chic, the design has redefined ocean-side dining.

Sitting in this restaurant is a treat for the eyes anytime of the year, but particularly on an evening in December when the pier is lit and topped with the sparkling Christmas tree. It is truly festive to be there.

Dining out can and should be enjoyed not only when it's a special occasion. When dining in a place like this, I thank my good fortune I live in these beach cities, and I'm aware and appreciative of the talents of all involved in a restaurant such as this. On this night, I gathered some girlfriends to join me (after all, The Strand House was just voted Best Girls' Night Restaurant by The Beach Reporter readers). My girlfriends and I marveled at the beautiful room and were ready to take it all in from the pier view to each delicious bite.

One's mind could easily be distracted by all the mouthwatering flavor choices on the menu. We wanted to try things we normally wouldn't, so we engaged our waiter to steer us in the right direction. I've learned to let my server be my guide as of late. I think it's a good way to find out what a restaurant's true specialty is.

On this night I tried the wild mushroom tagliatelle. Okay, so it came with a poached egg on top and I thought, huh, that's interesting. I dove in and was pleasantly surprised. It was one of the best things I'd ever tasted. Who knew?

Next was the kataifi-crust monkfish, which is something I've never had. I fell in love with it instantly. The crust was perfection on the beautifully flaky fish. The pear salad accompanied by a glass of Staglin Family chardonnay was heavenly.

Executive Chef Greg Hozinsky was kind enough to come out to greet us, and we were able to compliment him on the outstanding meal. He is humble and gracious and has an obvious passion for what he does. It was a lovely way to end the night, and we all left talking about sharing this experience with others and planning our next "girls' night out," and decidedly, we wouldn't change a thing.

The Strand House is located at 117 Manhattan Beach Blvd.

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