

Restaurant Review:

The Ranch at Laguna Beach, California – Ben Brown Golf Course,
Harvest Restaurant...

31106 S. Coast Highway, Laguna Beach, California 92651
888-347-2319

<https://www.theranchlb.com/eat/harvest>

(By John & Deborah Sisker, including all related pictures)

What follows is our personal review and evaluation of this restaurant. The following is our opinion only, but it is also based on a background in this business.

This restaurant review was actually more than two years in the making, simply because it took that long for the owners and contractors to rebuild the place. No, it didn't burn down or anything of that nature; it was an old building/restaurant, in much need of renovating. That's how long it took.

What we're talking about here is now a brand new restaurant, called Harvest, located in what is an entirely brand new complex, called The Ranch, in Laguna Beach, California. This establishment is now a newly renovated building, build around the Ben Brown Executive Golf Course, which has 9-holes, pars 3 & 4. The golf course didn't need renovating, it was always maintained. However, the little snack bar, and quite a sizable lodge resort complex was in need of renovating - along with this major restaurant. That's why the two years renovation. In fact, the restaurant was the last on the list to reopen.

As a side note, the resort lodge complex now includes a salt-water pool, set to 80 degrees, a pool area snack bar, a Jacuzzi, as well as a small gym and therapeutic center.

Actually, the renovations mentioned so far would make for an interesting review; we even have pictures of all these renovations as well. However, for now, we'll just stay on the subject of the restaurant.

Unfortunately, at this point in time, we cannot say that we are totally positive about what we experienced. However, we feel this restaurant does have potential. After all, they are probably going through some expected growing pains. In reality though, much of what we encountered was probably more the fault of our waitress. Like the restaurant, she is no doubt new, and maybe needs a bit more training and/or experience. How do we know this for sure? Well, for one thing, when we asked for our left-over food to be boxed up for us to take home, she did so. However, upon arriving home, we discovered that the two sauce/liquid containers that she packed up didn't even have lids on both, creating one big mess. At that point, it was just easier, and far more practical, to throw everything out.

Furthermore, while in the restaurant itself, the food was served on the rather cool side. Therefore, we actually had to send it back, not once, but twice. That was totally unacceptable. Our waitress did mention that the restaurant were short-staffed, which may have been nothing more than an excuse. Besides, the place was not really all that crowded.

Yet, let's now get back to the basics. Overall, the restaurant itself is quite nice, it rather reminds us of, and looks like the Claim Jumpers restaurants. In other words, it has that outdoor, rustic, but indoor lodge look, with a big fire place. The main restaurant is more on the open side, in other words, one open type space. No problems or complaints there. That style we liked very much, and will certainly return again, once these select issues are corrected. Yet, in their favor, once the food was finally served hot, the staff apologized. Additionally, as a goodwill gesture, they offered to take \$10 off our bill. At least they were aiming in the right direction.

Overall, the food was very good, yet a bit on the expensive and sparse side. Even the dessert menu only consisted of three items. Therefore, that is really our first official complaint regarding the food itself, the menu definitely needs to be expanded. Yet, maybe our recent experience is all part of their growing pains that hopefully, the menu selection and options will expand over time. That was more of a concern to us, much more so than the rather high prices. We frequent many restaurants, some on the rather expensive side. Therefore, high prices are not that big of a concern to us, as long as the food and service are worth it. We are actually hoping for both the prices and the menu selections to indeed match in the near future at the Harvest.

Now, let's talk about the food itself. After all, the food is what a restaurant is really all about. As was mentioned before, the overall service was also a bit on the slow side, which could be nothing more than growing pains, as well as a very poor waitress. Hopefully, all of these things will change in a relatively short time. Then, we'll try this again. The food is good, very good, in fact. That's why we feel the Harvest Restaurant is defiantly worth another try. It would not really take that much effort to make the necessary improvements

Deborah and I ordered, and shared, one of their entrees: of Steak with French-Fried Potatoes, with a Béarnaise Sauce, the Lobster Bisque soup, and the Chocolate Mousse Dessert. We were still a bit hungry, so we ordered, and again sharing, a burger, with more French Fries. This burger was exceptionally good. In fact, it was one of the best we ever had.

The bottom line, give this restaurant a try anyway. We feel it is worth it, even if you encounter what we did. It was nothing that can't easily be overcome, anyway. Furthermore, just look at our pictures; it is really one attractive place.

