

## RESTAURANT REVIEW

## Fresh dishes go down a treat

## Cafe Paradiso

Village @ 7  
Cnr SH2 and Clarke Rd, Te Puna  
Open seven days, 8am-4pm

**Prices:** From a few dollars for a coffee and snack to \$20 for the salmon fillet, from breakfast eggs (you choose how) for \$9 to \$29 for a Mega breakfast, which will fill you 'til dinner, the prices here are as varied as the menu.

**On the menu:** Every single thing is made from scratch on the premises, not even a packet mix in sight. And it shows in the cabinet selection of delicious baking, in the generous and well-presented meals.

The owners, Ellen and Duncan Place, have owned Paradiso for about 18 months; retained four chefs (three of whom have owned their own cafes) to guarantee continuity and quality, then added a few extras which reflect their English heritage, like the giant Yorkshire pudding, Camberland sausage and mash, and Lancashire eccles cake. Perennial favourites include the "Bay's best chowder" (those are the customers'

words not the cafe's).

However, the menu is about to change a bit for spring and summer.

**They had:** I spotted friends having lunch so pounced to check what they were eating; she had corn fritters with bacon and sour cream off the specials board and he recommended the pear, walnut and blue cheese salad.

**We had:** We both opted for salad lunches, my sister going for the smoked salmon and avocado and me taking seriously the pear suggestion.

Her salad was pronounced a perfect size, a nice strip of salmon not too much to overwhelm the greens; mine a common combination done especially well, with no stinging on the key ingredients.

My sister, who visited during the school holidays with her three grandchildren, could also report positively on the Big Boy wedges with bacon and sour cream. In the interests of research, I took pies home for dinner — beef and Guinness, chicken and mushroom



The welcoming atmosphere makes you feel right at home at Paradiso cafe, Te Puna.

— flaky pastry chock full.  
**We shared:** Because it was "famous" we had to try the carrot cake — moist with dried fruit in thick icing, devoured with yoghurt to balance the sweetness.

**To drink:** English breakfast tea for her, and my flat white passed the test, smooth and strong, no sugar needed. Because my grand-nephew and nieces had pronounced the hot chocolate "spectacular", I tried it,

too. The kids were right.

**The buzz:** So welcoming and unpretentious you feel right at home.

Very child-friendly, reported the sister, and dogs welcome and welcome, too. The cross section of patrons proved its appeal. The lounge fire is lit when it's cool; you gravitate to the garden courtyard or deck on sunny days. Cafe Paradiso is not trying to be trendy; just does good food exceptionally well. — Liz French