

DAILY BREEZE

ENTERTAINMENT

Craft Shack delivers burgers, craft beer plus other great eats at The Point in El Segundo



Craft Shack's poke tacos are topped with guacamole, coleslaw, grilled pineapple and wasabi cream. (Photo by Merrill Shindler)

By **Merrill Shindler**, *Daily Breeze*

POSTED: 08/30/16, 3:48 PM PDT | UPDATED: 11 HRS AGO



If there's a signature selection at the Craft Shack, it would be the Craft Shack Burger. It pairs nicely with the local brews served at the restaurant. (Photo by Merrill Shindler)

CRAFT SHACK

★★½

Address: The Point, 850 S. Sepulveda Blvd., El Segundo

Information: 424-277-0283, www.eatcraftshack.com

Cuisine: American casual

When: Lunch and dinner, every day

Details: Full bar. No reservations

Prices: About \$18 per person

Cards: MC, V.

As the last of the half dozen sit-down dining options at The Point in El Segundo, opening several months after the others, there's been much anticipation of the unveiling of Craft Shack — the latest concept from the undeniably successful, crowd-friendly Simmzy's Group.

With a name that seems a blending of Tom Colicchio's Craft Restaurants and Danny Meyer's Shake Shack phenomenon, the place promises a culinary fun ride — a bit of Pirates of Shopping Mall, with something for everyone.

It sits in the middle of The Point, just a fry's throw from the more or less similar Hopdoddy — though the concept in this case is all outdoors. You order at a window, go inside for utensils and condiments, find a table — and wait for your chow to arrive, which it does with remarkable speed. This is a very efficient restaurant — and a very casual one — a fine destination on warm evenings, with plenty of activities for the young 'uns on the adjacent lawn.

What does come as a surprise is that — though the menu is certainly kid-friendly — Craft Shack verges on being a gastropub with a smattering of chow. There are just nine dishes on the menu (along with five sides, and four dishes for kids). By contrast, there are 10 bottled craft beers, and nine draft craft beers.

There are a handful of wines — and unexpectedly a handful of house cocktails as well. Burger and beer joints are not famed for offering a Moscow Mule, a Bloody Simmzy and a bourbon and beer concoction called In the Green Room. But there they are.

There, as well, are such local brews as Strand Harvest Ball, El Segundo Mayberry IPA and King Harbor The Swirly. There's no Bud or Miller or even Corona on the beer list — small and local is the way they roll, and the way they drink.

And let me tell you — while my wife and daughter busied themselves shopping at The Point favorites like Madewell and Planet Blue, I was only too happy to find a seat on the patio, and consider the secret meaning of Smog City Sabertooth Squirrel and The Dude's Grandma's Pecan.

But eventually, as their shopping minutes ticked on by, some food was called for. Like I said, the selection is finite — but there certainly is enough.

SIGNATURE DISH

The Craft Shack Burger would seem to be the defining dish. It isn't an outlandish burger — this will not make the folks at Shake Shack tremble in consternation. But it's an eminently decided local burger, topped with American cheese and garlic aioli, on a soft potato bun.

It gets better if ordered with the cheese covered nacho fries, which do approach the outlandish — crispy shoestrings, topped with a mudslide of nachos cheese and chile de arbol sauces, with sour cream and pico de gallo — salsa on top of salsa.

For a few bucks more, you can add ground beef. And more than that, you don't need.

But lest I give the impression that the food here is heavy with heavy, there are some very pleasant poke tacos — simple and flavorful, topped with guacamole, slaw, grilled pineapple and wasabi cream. There are grilled fish tacos too, along with a trio of salads — you can add chicken, shrimp or rock cod to the Caesar salad. And most everyone seems to get the mixed bag of shoestrings and sweet potato fried with garlic aioli and ranch dressing for dipping.

Next time, I'll try the grilled corn layered with queso fresco and lime crema — Mexican street food in an El Segundo shopping mall.

The menu includes shout-outs to the farms that supply some of its products — Drake Family Farms and Tanimura Antle Farms. And to Sir Kensington's Ketchup and Mustard. Which a web search revealed to be a gourmet condiments company in New York's SoHo District, with a long history that smacks of bogus — but then who knows.

And indeed, who knows that Craft Shack isn't the prototype for a Simmzy's chain that will spread from coast to coast. It feels easily transportable — the sort of eatery that would work well in an airport or a food hall. Simmzy's has done it before — and very well too.

Merrill Shindler is a Los Angeles-based freelance dining critic. Send him email at mreats@aol.com.

WANT TO GO?

Rating: 2.5 stars

Address: The Point, 850 S. Sepulveda Blvd., El Segundo

Information: 424-277-0283, www.eatcraftshack.com

Cuisine: American casual

When: Lunch and dinner, every day

Details: Full bar. No reservations

Prices: About \$18 per person

Cards: MC, V

[Read the full article here](#)