

## DINING

Creativity cooking at full boil at East Mountains cafe

## Greenside is on the bright side

By Andrea Lin  
FOR THE JOURNAL

**R**estaurants seem to blink in and out with regularity in any city; this is the nature of the industry. But when the area affected only has a dozen establishments at best, each closing is met with disappointment, while each new opening brings months of excitement and speculative gossip.

When the brown paper went up in January over the windows of the former Blockbuster Video on Highway 14 in Cedar Crest, residents wondered what was next. Soon, a sign: "future home of Greenside Cafe." Months went by, but progress was being made, slowly. Jay Wulf, of Standard Diner and The Range, even used his blog to chronicle the transformation of both space and menu concept. His writings are called "Jay Shouldn't Blog." It was entertaining to read of both plumbing mishaps as well as his discovery of how to make breakfast fries out of Cream of Wheat.

September saw the end of the wait, and right from the start the crowds seemed to want to check the new place out and try Jay's creations. A few visits in the early weeks found a few kinks in the execution, so I waited a bit more to let things settle.

Seven days a week you can now stroll into Greenside for a meal, and that's a rare conve-



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Jay Wulf is owner of the Greenside Cafe in Cedar Crest.

nience in this neck of the woods. Lunch fare might seem standard, with sandwiches and burgers scrawled down a chalkboard hung precariously over the front counter, but it is in unique combinations that the kitchen's creativity peeks out.

My favorite starter is the Romesco (\$3.95), a roasted pepper and almond dip served with pitalike homemade tortilla chips. Garlicky and rich, it ups the ante on the usual chips & salsa seen elsewhere. I only wish it were at room tempera-

ture instead of ice-cold.

Occupying some weird status between "side" and "entree" are the salads; bigger than your usual house plate of greens but yet not enough to satisfy on their own. I have yet to be won over by the portion. Yet there is no lack of great flavor — sweet mango dressing drizzled over spinach leaves (\$6.95) or a chopped salad with fragrant blue cheese and moist roasted chicken (\$6.95). Each are worth ordering at least once, though I should make mine a

double next time.

In the mains, you could have the perfectly tasty burger (\$4.95) or be daring and try the Funky Eggplant (\$6.95), blending Asian seasonings with roasted eggplant and stuffing it into a baguette.

Dinner showcases comfort this time of year, from a pan-fried Turquoise Trail Trout (\$10.95) crackling under its savory breading, to a decadent Chicken Breast (\$10.95) under creamy artichoke-and-goat-cheese sauce.

Greenside  
Cafe

★★★★

**LOCATION:** 12165 N. Hwy. 14, Suite B -1, Cedar Crest, 286-2684

**HOURS:** 11 a.m.-8 p.m. Mondays-Thursdays; 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays; 8 a.m.-8 p.m. Sundays

BEER AND WINE

This menu also is not afraid of tempting the sweet tooth. Truffles from Theobroma are the tiniest option, but a flourless chocolate cake (\$3.95) will win accolades from the cocoa lovers at your table. My creme brulée (\$4.95) was insanely eggy — just how I like it — but overcooked enough that the texture was starting to veer toward lumpy. Keep the recipe, just tweak the oven timing and the result will be lovely.

Two months since opening, things at Greenside are smoother and still on the up and up. I would love to make this my hangout spot after a weekend morning hike, eating a Hen Grenade (fluffy French toast done up like eggs Benedict, all rich and dreamy) and sipping my organic coffee, with no chain coffee shops in sight.