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EXPLORING THE SOUTH SHORE ONE BITE AT A TIME

Breakfast Salvation at 5 South Main

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When I dropped the car off for an oil change at 7:15 one morning recently, the garage owner informed me that the mechanics hadn't arrived yet. "Leave it and come back at 8:30," he said. Hark! Was that a breakfast bell I heard? It sure sounded like it—and since I required a location within walking distance—and made-to-order food, there was only one choice, **5 South Main**, a storefront eatery down the street.

When my daughter and I ate our morning meal at this particular restaurant almost two years ago, it had just changed hands. The good news is that after slip-sliding down the snowy sidewalk for a second visit, I can now say: Hooray for mechanics who don't report to work early.

Details make this Cohasset restaurant noteworthy, starting with a smiling waitress who asked whether I was "waiting for anyone," rather than delivering the one raised eyebrow, "All Alone?" I usually receive when pulling up to a table solo. It was a nuance, but appreciated, since I enjoy breakfast unaccompanied from time-to-time.

A cup of strong coffee and my own carafe for refills foreshadowed additional finer points. On our original visit, the single waitress was too busy to offer refills, so that carafe triggered a sigh of pleasure. A stainless steel pitcher brimming with cream accompanied it, an improvement over the impossible-to-open and environmentally questionable thimbles favored by other places. I like my coffee light thank you very much, but dislike leaving the table littered with debris.

A friendly vibe fills the 20+ seat restaurant. Tables are tight so don't plan on sharing secrets, but regular patrons are greeted by name, including an elementary school boy dining with his dad before school. A chalkboard menu consists of eggs, frittatas, pancakes, French toast, oatmeal and yogurt at reasonable prices. From my seat I could see a tray of over-sized homemade muffins and jars of crunchy granola.

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As she took my order, the waitress asked whether I wanted my bacon crispy or “regular,” a notable distinction, and my first bite provided a rewarding crunch. The meat accompanied eggs over-easy that arrived perfectly so, seasoned home fries, sourdough toast, and another touch, my choice of jam, minus the traditional plastic packets—at 5 South Main the offerings are homemade. When I

selected peach over raspberry, the waitress brought me a container of each, informing me that they were both delicious. She was right. A diner in the party across from me chose blueberry.

5 South Main also serves lunch, including rustic soups, salads and sandwiches. A turkey, apple and cheddar sandwich, and blackboard specials of broccoli quiche, lentil soup and warm apple bread-pudding had me pondering the possibility of stretching that pitcher of coffee until noon. My seat, beside a hot air vent was comfortable enough to do so.

Original tin ceilings and painted wooden cupboards add to an inviting décor. So does the rustic sign hanging over the doorway to the kitchen that notes: “Laughter is brightened where food is best.” Let’s just say as I shrugged into my coat I was grinning. Only three thousand miles before the car will need another oil change. Next time I’ll drop it off even earlier.

Liza Carens Salerno is a freelance business writer from the South Shore. She works part-time at a cheese shop and can’t decide which is more fun—working with food or writing about it. Liza blogs at www.middlepassages-lcs.blogspot.com

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