

Review

Davis Bakery foodie treat on many levels

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I headed to **Avalon Park** in search of holiday dessert inspiration before Thanksgiving and ended up enjoying one of the best lunches I have had in a long time.

With a name like **Davis Bakery & Co.** I had assumed this place was going to be similar to **Charlie's Gourmet Pastries** with a few savory sides. Before I headed out I checked out davisbakeryandcompany.com and found a bake-shop menu, a catering guide and a cake guide (they had me at "we use butter").

The bake-shop menu is where you will find the lineup of **breakfast and lunch savories**. The morning crowd can choose from an assortment of **bagels** (99 cents each, \$9.39 for a dozen), the Davis Bakery & Co. signature "**bagelwiches**" (\$4.59-\$6.89) and the daily individual servings of **quiche** (\$4.99). Of course, there is a fine assortment of **caffeine-fueled beverages** to wash it all down.

I arrived just before noon and several breakfast customers were lingering on the outdoor tables. I stepped inside expecting a display of cakes and pies and discovered a fresh **deli counter** gearing up for lunch.

"You won't believe the **pastrami** here," I overheard some say as they entered the restaurant with a group in tow. "It's unbelievable. And the bread is just amazing." I stepped aside to study the chalkboard menu and watched the well-trained staff engage each guest. This was no treadmill operation where you place an order, step to the side and pay. The employees were passionate about the food they were serving and took time to answer questions about types of breads, the chicken salad recipe and more. That means the line may move a little slow. But it also means outsiders and newbies feel welcome and the owners are committed to building customer relationships.

I stuck with the **signature sandwiches** and ordered the **king of clubs**, the **DB&C chicken salad** and the **rancher** (all \$6.39) and served with chips or fruit, which on this day were gorgeous plump purple grapes.

For the club, instead of a traditional double-decker stack, the classic ingredients of **turkey, ham, bacon, cheddar, lettuce, tomato** and **mayo** were in one layer between slices of soft artisan white bread.

The chicken salad was delightful; a chunky mix of white meat, creamy mayonnaise, fresh **tarragon** with a subtle punch of freshly cracked **black pepper**.

The rancher had a generous amount of freshly sliced rare **roast beef, provolone** and a nice kick from horseradish mayo.

The sandwich concepts didn't break new ground but they were fine examples of quality ingredients and attention to detail in composition. Overall this place is deli heaven.

I passed on the drool-worthy assortment of treats (\$2.49 to \$3.99) because I have sampled Davis Bakery & Co. sweets and breads at **Virgin Olive Market** (807 N. Orange Ave.) in downtown Orlando; **Bikes, Beans & Bordeaux** (3022 Corrine Drive) in Orlando's Audubon Park; and **Cup O' Soul Café** (711-A Orange Ave.) in Winter Park. You can also find the products at the **Winter Park Farmers Market** on Saturdays.

But we can't exit today's table without a mention of the Davis Bakery & Co. **cakes** and **pies**. The pies (\$12-\$15), which can be found on the bake shop menu, range from classic fruit concoctions to a killer **banana cream** number. The cakes (\$12-\$55) can rise to three layers and include Southern favorites such as **red velvet** and **hummingbird**.