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GREATNESS

CATCH OF THE DAY

Buck & Rider brings fresh seafood, shellfish and more to the Shops at Chauncey Ranch

BY ALISON BAILIN BATZ



In 2015, LGO Hospitality – then best-known for La Grande Orange, Ingo's Tasty Diner, and Chelsea's Kitchen – opened Buck & Rider in Phoenix's popular Arcadia neighborhood. The restaurant, designed to resemble a cozy yet airy beach house in Australia and inspired by a fisherman's term for intertwined or mating crabs, made an immediate splash in the desert thanks to the impeccable quality of its seafood, shellfish and USDA-certified meat offerings as well as its buzzy cocktail menu and bar scene.

In recent years, due to popular demand, LGO announced at least two more Buck & Rider locations would be coming, eventually choosing north Phoenix and Gilbert for its new digs.

Now open at the Shops at Chauncey Ranch, the stunning 10,000-square-foot restaurant, designed in the same style as the Arcadia outpost, features a 10-seat sushi bar, two patios – one for dining and a second with fire pits to serve as a cocktail lounge space – and three private rooms in addition to the ample indoor-outdoor main dining room.

All seafood and shellfish on the menu

are flown in daily and sourced directly from small producers around the world that engage in sustainable fishing and oyster farming practices. The team timestamps the menu throughout the day to alert guests to the freshest catches. Buck & Rider has its own reserve Certified Angus beef program as well.

There are both a raw bar menu and a standard menu, just like the original location. The raw bar menu boasts seafood platters, half a dozen oyster options, shellfish and even caviar, while the standard menu is divided into several sections: raw bar, shareables, sushi, seafood, and steak.

Standout dishes include the Smoked Trout Dip (\$17) with Ducktrap Farms trout, watermelon radish, and saltines; the Baked Yuzu Crab Roll (\$18) with blue crab, spicy tuna, serrano peppers, and avocado; Maine Diver Scallops (\$42), either grilled or pan seared with choice of side and signature sauce; and the 32-ounce Bone-In Ribeye (\$95), which is grain-fed and aged up to 35 days to enhance flavor and tenderness.

At any given time, there are 10 to 12 specialty cocktails on the menu, all priced at \$14 and made with freshly squeezed and pressed juices, and homemade syrups and shrubs. There are also dozens of wines by the glass and bottle, beer, and a reserve list of top-tier spirits, cordials and wines from around the world. This includes a full menu of agave spirits and more than 60 types of whiskey.

Happy hour is offered Monday through Friday from 3 to 7 p.m. and on the weekend from open to 7 p.m. The happy hour menu features oysters for \$2.25 each, a menu of \$10 small plates and discounts on select beer, wine and cocktails. Brunch, which offers a mix of the raw and standard menus as well as seafood-inspired and traditional morning favorites, is offered on the weekend until 3 p.m.

Buck & Rider, 7015 E. Mayo Blvd. Phoenix; www.buckandrider.com; 602.346.0110.