

January 2008 | Tastebuds

Sno Delicious

LA's fro-yo scene goes green with the arrival of Sno:LA.

By Lucinda Michele Knapp

Forget the Pinkberry invasion. For frozen yogurt that's really worth a 15 minute wait in line, stroll north of Wilshire on Beverly to the brand new Sno:LA, a charming little fro-yo shop that's two parts heart and soul, one part eco-chic, and 100 percent delicious.

Owner Masako Kawashima — a former concert promoter for bands like the Rolling Stones — has brought her affinity for shaking things up to the foodie world. Sno:LA's interior is chock-full of greenie goodness: countertops from recycled computer chips, wall decorations from fast-growing and sustainable eucalyptus, even soy-based paint on walls and floor. "Our yogurt cups are made from sugar cane and our verrine glasses and water glasses are made from corn," says Kawashima. Utensils are made of biodegradable potato starch and sustainable wood.

On a recent evening at Sno:LA, a trio of giggly teens orders chocolate, sour cherry and Italian tart flavors of yogurt, enthusing about the unusual toppings arrayed behind the counter: locally-farmed pomegranate seeds glitter like jewels. Organic aloe vera cubes in a light, sweet sauce soothe sore throats and taste bright and juicy, like a crisp green apple. Chocolate nibs are rich and explode with flavor. This is the delish-factor that gets upped big-time when you source your food locally and organically. "The fig and date flavor... has an unbelievably delicious and unique taste," agrees Kawashima. "I love our pomegranate flavor — it's pleasantly sour and has anti-oxidant benefits. Our Mango tastes like you're eating a frozen mango — it's the real thing!"

With the winter season in full swing, it's a little bit harder to entice shoppers and strollers along this pedestrian-heavy stretch of Beverly Drive to step inside for a frozen treat. But in balmy Los Angeles, even the chill of December lacks bite — and nothing takes the edge off of a day of heavy-duty spending (Rodeo Drive is a block east) like stepping into Sno:LA's soothing interior. The space is all softly stained woods in cherry and apricot-colored glazes and sweetie-pie aphorisms affixed to the walls like "Children are our future," and "Recycle."

Kawashima and her affable staff are happy to field questions from pleasantly-surprised customers who step into the enviro-friendly shop. "I love to see people enjoy our yogurt, and I enjoy talking to the customers and getting their comments and feedback. Some of the best moments so far have been when people like our green elements and talk about doing the same things at their home," adds Kawashima.

It's good that the green trend is spreading, not just to shops like Sno:LA but to the homes, minds and hearts of Angelenos who value sustainability. "Even though what we can do is very small, we want to think even small things eventually makes a difference," explains Kawashima. "And it would be great if we can do even just a little to inspire more people to care for the environment."



Sno:LA, 244 North Beverly Drive, Beverly Hills, snolayogurt.com, 310.274.2435