

Todd A. Price  
OffBeat Magazine (7/07)  
Review: St. James Cheese Company



## DINING OUT

### St. James Cheese Company

Sandwiches are the second-class citizens of the food world. They're what you toss in a brown bag when you can't eat a real meal. Those few, truly worthy sandwiches don't go by the common name. They prefer to be addressed by a more proper title, like club, Reuben or po-boy.

When built with the right ingredients, though, the humble sandwich can rival the most intricately crafted dishes for taste. If you doubt it, head over to St. James Cheese Company, one of the best additions to the New Orleans food scene in years. They start with the best ingredients possible, and then make sure that nothing gets in the way of those pure flavors.

One day, I ordered a Spanish-style open-faced sandwich. The grilled baguette was topped with plump, vinegary white anchovies and cherry tomatoes as red as a polished sports car. On the side, there was a slice of salty manchego cheese. A film of olive oil coated the sandwich, which looked good enough for a food magazine's cover and tasted even better. Another time, I sampled a Cajun spin on the Cubano—a warm sandwich on grilled ciabatta bread stuffed with raclette cheese, tart cornichons and smoky pork from Cochon restaurant. Even something as traditional as turkey with Grafton cheese, a cheddar, left an impression for the burst of brightness from the fresh basil leaves.

St. James, not surprisingly, starts with the cheese when creating a sandwich. Perhaps that's their secret. They begin with an ingredient as complex and complicated as wine and then choose the other items to complement it.

The small menu also includes excellent salads, plates of charcuterie and the ploughman's lunch, an English pub staple with three cheeses, a bit of meat and a green salad. The shop doesn't serve alcohol, but the Wine Seller is next door and St. James will happily provide a glass.

Is it a betrayal to eat a sandwich when you could have a po-boy? If you're bothered by such dilemmas, remember that St. James' sandwiches are light enough that you could eat one for lunch and still have room for a po-boy at dinner. 5004 Prytania St., 899-4737, Mon.-Wed. 11 a.m. - 7 p.m., Thr.-Sat. 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

—Todd A. Price