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# Santa Monica Daily Press

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THE COUNTDOWN TO 2012 ISSUE

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## Barney's offers a break from the shopping mayhem

By Michael Ryan

Holiday crunch time on the Third Street Promenade certainly brings elevated levels of shopping mayhem. All of the congestion, large crowds and seasonal cheesiness does indeed bring out the Grinch in me.

Therefore, I try to stay as far away from the insanity as possible. But alas, I found myself getting sucked into the epicenter like a helpless vessel in the clutches of the Death Star's tractor beam. Fortunately, I did find solace in not one, but five bowls of chili at Barney's Beanery.

Word on the street was that The Beanery did a little overhaul to their menu, so a closer look was warranted. The menu was infamous for being about the size of a newspaper. They decided to make it more manageable by taking off many of the things people were not ordering. Fear not, if one of your favorites did not make the cut, chances are it is still available, it is just off-menu.

It is almost comical to think eight, item-crammed pages is scaled down. The reality is you can still belly up and order a burrito, chicken parmesan, French toast, a bottle of Dom Perignon, a slab of ribs, and a serious side of indigestion. And while quantity usually does not translate into quality, Barney's does a serviceable job when it comes to their food across the board. However, there are some offerings on the menu that Barney's is known for, most notably their chili.

It was at the original Route 66 roadhouse in West Hollywood where their chili gained its fame. Nine decades later Barney's has five locations and five varieties of chili as

photo by Michael Ryan



wrong with the classic all meat, as 90 years of history will tell you. But my favorite was an award winner, the fireman's chili. Earlier in the year, Barney's West Hollywood held a firefighter's chili cook-off fundraiser. L.A. County Fire Station 7 and their tri-tip black bean chili won the honor of being on Barney's menu. Slow-cooked cuts of tri-tip, black beans and spices simmered to perfection was a winner in my book as well.

With the winter months ahead and temperatures plummeting into the low 60s, Barney's Beanery is a great place to warm up with a hearty bowl of chili, or one of the other 9,000 offerings that they have on their menu.

Michael can be seen riding around town on his bike burning calories so he can eat more food,

or on CityTV hosting his own show, "Tour de Feast." To reach him visit his website at [tourdefeast.net](http://tourdefeast.net) or follow him on Twitter @TourDeFeastSM.

If you go

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well. Ordering the chili sampler certainly was the way to go to get a taste of them all. The sampler came with their classic all meat chili, Texas chili, vegetarian chili, turkey chili, and the latest, fireman's chili. Each offering comes in a manageable bowl, accompanied with all your chili accouterments, and served on a pizza tray. It is quite a display.

Sizing the chilis up against each other is a great way to distinguish which ones make the grade, and which ones fall flat. For me, the vegetarian chili lacked flavor and depth. Perhaps it could have used some spices, or some greasy meat. The Texas chili was very good, but I was expecting it to be as hot as advertised. You certainly cannot go