

SAN DIEGO HOME/GARDEN LIFESTYLES

Breakfast Republic



A seating ensemble resembling cracked eggs sets a whimsical tone for Breakfast Republic in Encinitas.

If you can imagine anyplace where molded-plastic seats resembling cracked eggs look at home, you must be thinking of Breakfast Republic. As in his three other venues under the same name, Rise & Shine Restaurant Group founder and owner Johan Engman has imbued the Encinitas eatery — opened in November — with quirky décor. Johan placed a half-dozen egg chairs with yolk cushions and a pair of matching tables near the entrance. “Everybody loves them, but they also serve a purpose,” he says, referring to the area where patrons can wait for an open table. As at the chain’s locations in North Park, Liberty Station, East Village and Ocean Beach (a Carmel Valley location is expected to open next month), Johan has brought a playful scramble of rooster jokes, industrial modern finishes and cheery colors to the restaurant scene.

Among his growing breakfast empire, the Encinitas location provides Johan with the most space for tables. And with 3,500 square feet, including a 700-square-foot patio, he had ample opportunity to show off the iconography that has become integral to Breakfast Republic. Signature pieces include sunshine-yellow farmhouse chairs, Tolix-style stools and kitchen tools repurposed as décor elements. The design and branding at Breakfast Republic are essential to the customer experience.

“If I think back to some of the most memorable dining experiences I’ve had, I don’t remember them as, ‘That was the greatest steak I’ve ever had.’ I remember the vibe,” he says. Johan conceived the design concepts for the restaurant and called on restaurant construction and custom-furniture creator A2 Design Innovation to implement his ideas. He considers Breakfast Republic his way of reinvention in a staid breakfast marketplace. “I’ve looked at the breakfast scene as a whole. It was all the same kind of diners. They all have the same boring booths and the same syrup and ketchup on the table. I could go into 10 different breakfast places and feel like I am in the same place,” Johan says. “I wanted to really set myself apart. The goal is to offer the best breakfast in town, but have the branding go hand in hand.” Johan tries to put his stamp on every item the customer touches, from the egg-shaped ceramic salt and pepper shakers to custom Cluckin’ Good Hot Sauce bottles and coffee mugs printed with clever expressions. Every Breakfast Republic has a merchandise wall of branded apparel, cups and glasses, plates and more.