

Carol & Joe Davis

FINE DINING DETECTIVES

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EPICUREAN EPISODES

Dining Around The Bay

By Carol & Joe Davis

Toast

A new Marin County restaurant in Novato's Hamilton Marketplace called Toast serves breakfast, lunch and dinner from a contemporary menu, created by Chef Michael Garcia and restaurateur Shahram Bijan. The fare is American food with something for everyone.

Our first appetizer was the Open Roasted Whole Artichoke with balsamic, olive oil and delicious basil aioli. Next, we had a Crispy Fried Nori wrapped Ahi Tuna with Asian Slaw flavored with a wasabi vinaigrette. We loved the Chicken Watermelon Salad with marinated grilled chicken, watermelon, daikon, bean sprouts, crispy wontons, chopped lettuce and a light peanut vinaigrette. We found the Chilled Curried Carrot and Coconut Soup with poached prawns and basil crème fraiche, luscious! Our favorite entrée was the huge serving of prepared-to-order, rare grilled, marinated lamb chops with roasted garlic mashed potatoes, grilled vegetables, lamb jus and fried onions. The Sorelle Bronca Prosecco di Valdobbiadene and the 2007 Haraszky Solus Sto Amador County Zinfandel paired well with the lamb. For dessert the Banana Cream Pie with caramel sauce hit the spot.

Local Kitchen & Wine Merchant

One of our favorite new restaurants in San Francisco is Local Kitchen with its inviting, urban-chic décor, lively bistro/bar atmosphere and terrific cuisine for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

The Flight of European Rieslings served in Riedel wine glasses offered a great sampler of a dry 2006 French Pierre Sparr, a sweet 2005 German Toni Jost and a semi-sweet 2007 Austrian Loimer

Kamptal.

We began the meal with a delicious salad that mixed caramelized Bosc pears and Point Reyes Blue Cheese with black pepper Gastrique. The homemade bread sticks were a great compliment.

Next we had the mussels and an order of truffle-parmesan fries. The mussels were tender and the white wine chili and tomato sauce was so fabulous that we asked for a spoon to savor every spicy drop. We also ate the Roasted Sonoma Shitake Mushroom Pizza topped with green olives, mozzarella, roasted garlic and arugula.

For the main course we chose the organic rotisserie chicken served with arugula fennel salad and lemon vinaigrette. A side of brussel sprouts sautéed with bacon and lemon completed the meal.

Our dinner wines included a bold Gerhard Blanc De Noirs, Troken, from Rheingau, Germany, and a Granfort, 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon-Syrah, VIN de Pays d'Oc France. For dessert we lingered over a vanilla Panna Cotta. What's not to love about this new addition to San Francisco dining? The cuisine by Executive Chef Ola Fendert is excellent, and the service is crisp and friendly. Have the mussels and you'll be happy as a clam!

Moss Beach Distillery

Take the short drive on the coast to The Moss Beach Distillery, just north of Half Moon Bay off of Highway One. Slathered in historic folklore, this 1920's restaurant was supposedly a speakeasy and is rumored to be haunted. The cuisine is contemporary American and there is multi-level dining both indoors and out, including a dog-friendly outdoor patio. The spectacular view of the Pacific Ocean makes it a great destination.

On this trip we opted to dine upstairs right off the bar in the casual, serve yourself Fitzgerald Room, with the fantastic ocean views.

Peter, the bartender got us started a signature cocktail named the Blue Lady Martini, for one of the resident "spirits," and made with Absolut Vodka, triple sec, fresh lemon, and a splash of Blue Curacao.

For our first course, we loved the Crab and Avocado Quesadilla made with Dungeness crab, melted jack cheese and avocado topped with sour cream, chipotle mayo and pico de gallo. Next, we enjoyed the Coast Sliders, a tasty trio of mini seafood sandwiches including crab cake with gingered cabbage, grilled salmon with watercress and bacon, and sesame yellow fin tuna with pickled ginger.

The Distillery Steamers were tasty, fresh clams steamed with chardonnay, garlic, tomatoes, sweet butter and cilantro, served with toasted ciabatta. The Distillery Clam Chowder is a classic New England-style chowder with manila clams, potatoes and brandy.

For our second course, we had sweet, tender natural pork ribs with a pineapple molasses barbecue sauce (named Adam's Ribs) and honey-ginger slaw. An additional must were the Tempura Green Beans with smoked chili sauce and wasabi aioli. The light, refreshing Kenwood Sauvignon Blanc was the perfect accompaniment. For dessert, the Affogato Sundae, vanilla and espresso gelato drowned in warm chocolate sauce topped with whipped cream or warmed brownie with espresso gelato, hot fudge, and whipped cream. Thanks to the new Executive Chef Brian Barisione for tweaking the menu and refining the food.



Toast Restaurant/Service with a Smile by



Local Kitchen & Wine Merchant/Panna Cotta



Local Kitchen & Wine Merchant/Pear and Cheese Salad



Moss Beach Distillery/Coast Sliders

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