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The Weekly Entree - 90 Main

By Jim Clark

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Rating: ★★★★★

With all the reports on beef recalls and issues with livestock being mistreated, it is refreshing to find a restaurant menu dedicated to natural food. At 90 Main, only grass-fed beef, free-range chicken and wild-caught seafood is served.

Not only is this a humane approach to putting food on the table, it also results in healthier food. Meat here is leaner than the meat raised by more traditional methods. It's mistakenly viewed that the beef will be less marbled, and the chicken drier, resulting in less flavor. Even Chef Chris Beall thought, at first, that this meat would be a major challenge to creating tasty dishes. He soon discovered it was an advantage.

The beef is very tender and the chicken extremely juicy with pure flavors. Another feature of the meat: it's locally raised. The beef comes from Sunnyslope Farm, Upper Makefield, and the poultry from Eberly Poultry, Lancaster County.

The present owners opened 90 Main about four years ago, converting a sports bar into a big-city-style lounge. Small tables throughout the multilevel floor plan are very conducive to the lounge atmosphere. This gives the impression that it is a lounge first, with food an afterthought. It is really a shame because Beall has put together a very diverse menu that will please the most discerning palate.

The lounge is very dark because of low, indirect lighting, dark wood on the lower portion of the walls and bright, glossy, red-painted upper walls. Compounding this feel of a lounge is music a little too loud to be considered background music for dining. These features portray the sense that dinner is not to be savored over a long period, but eaten quickly. This vibe conflicts with the scratch cooking done by Beall that takes some time to prepare.

Our meal was extremely good, but would have been more enjoyable in calmer, more peaceful surroundings. We began with Spicy Tuna Tacos — a blend of tuna tartare and jalapeno lemon oil — and Char-Grilled Beef — a grass-fed, dry aged steak, sliced, with a teriyaki dressing. The taco was four tortilla chips, each topped with the tuna. The heat of the jalapeno lemon oil gradually built in the back of our mouths. The beef was very tender and flavorful, with a light drizzle of the teriyaki sauce. The amount of sauce was perfect to make a statement without an exclamation point.

My spouse relished in her Linguine Pescatore — a lovely fresh seafood marinara over whole-wheat, organic pasta. She especially was pleased that the seafood was removed from the shells, eliminating the messy fight she normally experienced.

For me, it was something I cannot remember ordering in a restaurant in at least the last 40 years: slow roasted chicken. I view roasted chicken as something I'd have at home, but our server and Beall said this was a very popular item, so I figured I'd give it a try. This turned out to be very fortuitous. It was so flavorful and moist, with the juices adding flavor to the roasted potatoes beneath it.

With desserts also being made on the premises and from scratch, we felt we couldn't go wrong. My spouse's Chocolate Mousse was declared to be "the best one you'd ever have." As a very good friend of ours is a chef in Belgium and makes phenomenal mousse with Belgian chocolate, this was going to have to be some mousse. Well, it may run a close second. And, the homemade coconut ice cream had plenty of fresh shaved coconut throughout.

The stark surroundings and non-handicap restrooms detracted from the great food resulting in a rating of AHHH and one-half (3.5) out of 5AHS.

Jim Clark can be reached at weeklyentree@verizon.net.

90 Main

Location: 90 S. Main St., New Hope

Phone Number: 215-862-3030

Web site: www.90mainlounge.com

Cuisine: Global Fusion

Ambience: Metropolitan

Hours: Tuesday through Friday from 5 p.m. to 2 a.m.; Saturday and Sunday from 1 p.m. to 2 a.m.; Closed Monday

Reservations: Recommended

Smoking/Non: Non-smoking

Alcoholic Beverages: Full-service bar

Dinner Prices: Entrées \$19 to \$30

Credit Cards: All major credit cards



Handicap accessible: Yes, except restrooms

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