

A REAL WINNER IN ORCHARD PARK



4247 North Buffalo Rd. Orchard Park (662-4247)
Hours: Sun-Thurs, 5-10pm; Fri & Sat, 5-11pm

Cowboy Steak (front): grilled bone-in ribeye steak with roasted garlic, poblano butter and french fried onions, served with smashed redskin potatoes, seasonal vegetables and broiled tomato. **Fried Eggplant Napoleon** (back left): buffalo mozzarella, marinated red and yellow toma toes and fresh basil in a tomato reduction. **David Eddy Salad** (back right): chopped romaine lettuce, tomatoes, egg, cucumber, red onion, bacon and sharp cheddar tossed in a house creamy Parmesan dressing and topped with terra sticks. **Photos by Rose Mattrey**

being overwhelming. My starter, fried eggplant Napoleon (\$11), was delicious and had visual appeal. Two slices of fried eggplant with a light breading were served stacked with buffalo mozzarella cheese, slices of marinated red and yellow tomatoes, and fresh basil and was served with a tomato reduction.

Other appetizers on the menu include tempura shrimp with raspberry soy sauce and mustard sauce (\$12), pan fried lobster/crab cakes with rémoulade sauce and sweet chili sauce (\$13) and steak quesadilla with toasted red pepper, caramelized onions, Monterey jack cheese, bleu cheese crumbles and watercress with a red-and-yellow tomato salsa (\$9).

We both made excellent choices when it came to salads. The guest gave a high grade to a very large salad made with Boston Bibb lettuce, chopped pear and apple, Roquefort bleu cheese crumbles, caramelized walnuts and dried cranberries served with a maple vinaigrette (\$8). My excellent David Eddy salad (\$7) featured chopped ingredients of romaine lettuce, tomatoes, egg, cucumber, red onion, bacon and sharp cheese tossed with the house creamy Parmesan dressing.

We stayed with the regular menu for our entrées, although the evening's special—grilled marinated tiger shrimp on a bed of fettuccini pasta tossed with artichoke hearts, roma tomatoes, white wine, olive oil and fresh herbs (\$28)—was enticing.

The wife of one colleague had raved about the lobster pasta (\$21) and I had made up my mind to taste it before I even entered the restaurant. A great choice it was, with a generous serving of fresh lobster meat, asparagus and mushrooms tossed in linguine with a brandy cream sauce.

The guest was very pleased with his "cowboy steak" (\$32)—a grilled bone-in ribeye steak topped with a roasted garlic and poblano-chile pepper butter and French-fried onions and served with smashed redskin potatoes; a broiled tomato and an impressive vegetable medley of green beans, baby zucchini and pattypan squash.

Other entrées on the menu include Atlantic salmon with citrus vinaigrette and fresh fruit salsa served over dressed greens (\$20), grilled French cut pork chops with a dried berry demi-glace, smashed redskin potatoes, seasonal vegetables and a broiled tomato (\$20) and chicken Devere (\$16), described on the menu as "seasoned chicken breast atop linguine tossed in olive oil and fresh herbs and nestled in a red sauce with capers, olive oil, sun-dried tomatoes, garlic and white wine."

The menu also has two sandwiches, one with filet and portobello mushroom (\$13) and the other marinated grilled chicken (\$9) topped with pesto mayonnaise, roasted red peppers, wilted spinach and Asiago cheese. Both come with shoestring fries.

For dessert we enjoyed a serving of delicious chocolate lava cake with raspberry sauce, white chocolate sauce and whipped cream, and a white chocolate mousse cake pyramid topped with raspberries. Next visit we may sample the fried banana egg roll with crème anglaise and fudge sauce. All desserts are \$6.

While David's Grille has gotten its act together with décor and menu, we experienced laid-back service that should improve with time. The friendly wait staff needs to pay more attention to details customers expect in a sophisticated restaurant; correct drinks should be delivered to those who ordered them and silverware removed after appetizers should be replaced automatically.

The drive from Buffalo and the northern 'burbs to David's Grille is not long if you take Route 219, exiting at Route 20A. Turn right onto Quaker Road at the exit. The building housing David's Grille is on the northeast corner of the intersection of Quaker and North Buffalo roads.

While their town measured up favorably with area municipalities on other quality-of-life factors, Orchard Park residents in recent years have realized it came up short in the category "fine-dining opportunities."

The near-legendary Shore's Orchard Downs closed its doors years ago, and "OP" residents seeking high-end eats have had to head for Buffalo or other suburbs.

It was welcome news when two colleagues—both Orchard Park residents—reported having great meals at a new Orchard Park restaurant housed in commercial space on the site where Shore's once stood. Within days, the guest and I hit the road, headed for David's Grille at 4247 North Buffalo Road in Orchard Park.

In a town where "colonial" seems to be the operative word when it comes to commercial décor, we found a dazzling restaurant with food that ranks with the best we've enjoyed in the Buffalo area. Open since July 29, it is co-owned by Patrick Brady, David Hart and Peter Krog.

David's Grille boasts a restaurant interior more cosmopolitan than any I've seen in Western New York, thanks to architect Lydia Idziur of Silvestri Architects.

The large two-story space has been divided into two "rooms" — a brick-walled bar on the lower level, and a handsome dining space a couple of steps up on the upper level. Curves ranging from cornices over the bar, to a sweeping wall/art installation that separates the dining area from the walkway to the kitchen, to the meandering hallway to the restrooms soften a boxy commercial space. There are curves in the wrought iron railing dividing the two rooms and if you look closely at the ceiling of the dining area, the curved soffit looks like a giant bird in flight. Walls are painted in warm brown tones. While suspended globes and soft ceiling lighting added to the mood, the dim lighting made it difficult to read the menu once the sun set.

Credit for the excellent food at David's Grille goes to executive chef Rick Pohlman, a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America who previously owned and operated an Indianapolis restaurant.

My guest began his meal with an appetizer special, fried ravioli with a mushroom and bleu cheese filling served with a roasted red pepper sauce (\$9). The three large ravioli, crisp around the edges, were very good; the bleu cheese filling complemented the mushrooms without