

EPICUREAN EPISODES

Central Market Petaluma's New Restaurant

Petaluma continues to grow and is able to support new restaurants. Central Market featuring California-Mediterranean Cuisine just opened in mid-April and already has gained a loyal following. We dined on a Sunday night and the restaurant was quite busy. Chef/ Owner



Tony Najiola was the Chef at Ravenswood Winery for seven years when he decided it was time to open his own restaurant. He looked all around the North Bay trying to find a



Tony Najiola, Chef/Owner

suitable site. Petaluma was his choice, as he recognized the potential in this community of over 50,000 with its diverse yet sophisticated population.

Tony found a very "Central" location in Downtown Petaluma and worked with local interior designer Clea Austin of Acorn to create an open and inviting atmosphere.

As you enter the large open dining room, the Mugnini Wood Burning Oven is the centerpiece. One wall is exposed Brick accented by hanging pots. On the other wall are large original paintings that are very interesting and lend sophistication. The

dining room has multilevel seating, including counter and window seating to go along with the large number of tables with their interesting Antique stylish metal bases. We felt very much at home.

Appetizers Small Plates

We started our meal with some of the small plates and appetizers. Tony sent out the Chick Pea Hummus with Housemade Pita Bread and Olives which got us started out right. The Pita Bread which was made in their



wood burning Italian Mugnini Brick Oven was perfect. It was light and puffy yet crispy and had the smoky taste you only get with a brick oven. Definitely some of the best Pita bread we've ever tasted.



Amy Scott, Manager

We really loved the Organic Red Jewel Beets with Shaved Onions and Ricotta Salata Cheese. This was an amazing starter as the beets were sweet and the combination of vegetables and cheese worked well together. Next we had the Fennel and Celery Root Brandade. A dozen Sunset Beach Washington Oysters were served chilled

on the half shell with Black Pepper Mignonette was the next offering. We made quick work of these fresh tasty oysters as well. Three Salmon Crostini consisted of salmon Smoked with fresh horseradish cream, Tartar with shaved red onions and McEvoy extra virgin olive oil and the third was Seared with Wasabi dressing. All three salmon presentations were delicious but we particularly loved the Tartar. Last but not least we had The Crispy Yukon Potatoes with its special garlic and hazelnut-romesco sauce. We loved them as will any spud eater. They are surely worth trying. We took a little break enjoying our wine and Pellegrino Sparkling Mineral Water and were ready for the entrees.



Main Dishes

We really enjoyed all of our main dishes. The Braised Lamb Shank served over Polenta and Gremolata melted in your mouth. The meat fell off the large bone and the presentation was inviting. The Seafood Boudin with Remoulaude Sauce was a delicious entree that appeared to be a large sausage but tasted like



Carol & Joe Davis

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the terrific seafood combination that it was. Meat eaters will enjoy the Grilled Red Angus Hanger Steak with Sweet peppers and potato gratin. We especially loved the potatoes gratin as they were very tasty. Last but certainly not least was the Wood Roasted Organic Chicken Legs served with crispy potatoes and mixed greens. Excellent home made comfort food is the best way to describe it. Tender chicken with a smoky flavor that is hard to beat. Another short break was needed as we still needed to try the desserts.

Desserts

We were definitely out of room as the main courses were hearty but we had to persevere.

The first dessert we tried was the Mexican Vanilla-



Brown Sugar Crème Brule. This proved to be a delightful rendition of one of our favorite types of dessert. Next we had the Seasonal Fresh Fruit Crisp a la mode. This Strawberry dessert was excellent. Fresh seasonal strawberries perfectly complimented the tasty light Crisp.

Wine List

The wine list is comprised of reasonably priced wines from around the world. Chile, Italy and Spain are featured along with Napa, Sonoma and California Central Valley Wines. The Verdicchio Stephano Antonucci,

Pignocco, 2001, Italy was a crisp light white wine that paired well with the Chicken and Seafood Boudin. The Cabernet blend "Chile", Terra Rosa, Laurel Glen 2000 was a lovely tasting wine made from grapes grown at the foot of the Andes. It went well with the Lamb and Hanger Steak. Naturally for a modest corkage fee you can bring a favorite of your choosing as well.

Central Market is a welcome addition to the Petaluma Dining Scene. Tony Najiola's California-Mediterranean Style of cooking using fresh local seasonal ingredients will please even the pickiest of diners. The wait staff including Helena and Amy was attentive and knowledgeable. The popular prices of both the food and wine make it a restaurant that one can enjoy often. We really enjoyed our dinner and look forward to returning soon to try some other menu choices.



Post Notes:

Central Market

42 Petaluma Blvd.
North Petaluma
707.778.9900
Open Tuesday – Sunday
Lunch 11 AM- 3 PM
Dinner 5 PM – 9 PM
Visa & MasterCard
Ample on Street Parking
Reservations:
Recommended
Walk-ins Welcome