

Carol & Joe Davis

FINE DINING DETECTIVES

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EPICUREAN EPISODES

Go 3 Blocks Off For Sophisticated Dining



Chef De Cuisine Ryan Schroeder



Figs and Cambozola with Grilled Ciabatta



Prosciutto and Sweet Melon Martini and Chilled Pink Gulf Prawn Antipasto Fresco



Brined Pork Chop

The weather was great on the Sunday evening we headed three blocks off of Petaluma Boulevard to a new restaurant called 3 Blocks Off, located on the corner of Western Avenue and Liberty Street. 3bo's proprietors, Linda Tennyson and Gary Tennyson, have created a modern yet warm atmosphere with tasteful use of leather, metal and a splash of color. There is an entry area with stylish leather chairs, a modern bar with high chairs for drinks or dining, and an intimate, inviting dining room with nicely spaced tables and white tablecloths. There was light jazz playing in the background, adding to the elegant atmosphere.

We were seated by Amanda Copenhaver, who also handles 3bo's marketing. We ordered some Voss bottled water and wines by the glass from Jeremiah, our waiter, who answered our questions about some of the interesting choices on the menu. The presentations of the starters were especially inviting. They all looked terrific and the flavors were truly exceptional. We particularly enjoyed the Figs and Cambozola with Grilled Ciabatta. It was sweet and mild and the two flavors blended perfectly. The Chilled Pink Gulf Prawn Antipasto Fresco had fabulous prawns along with pickled green beans, mozzarella cheese and tiny cherry tomatoes. The Local Dungeness Crab Cake with Maryland Mustard Sauce was another tasty treat. We also adored the Prosciutto and Sweet Melon "Martini", diced melon and thinly sliced prosciutto with a lovely minty flavor.

Soup and salads came next. The Endive with Pecans, Soft Dried Bing Cherries, Soft Gorgonzola Dolce, and

Cherry Cider Vinaigrette salad was unique and very refreshing. We also enjoyed the Sweet Red Pears -- julienne cut with shaft blue cheese, crisp local romaine and walnuts. We had to taste the 3 Bean Soup. It was a wonderfully rich puree of pinto beans, red beans and cannellini beans. One could easily make a fabulous meal out of a soup, a salad and a glass of wine.

But we didn't. We decided to have a pasta course before our entrées and were glad we did. The Sweet English Pea Ravioli with Truffled Gulf Prawns in Local Sheep's Milk Silk Cream was outstanding. It had a delicately sweet, almost lemony flavor and was truly a gourmet delight.

The entrees are called "Big Plates" for good reason. They are huge portions with impressive presentation. Our favorite was the Brined Pork Chop with Polenta-Stuffed Baked Apple and Ginger Ale Carrots, Port Demi-Sec. You won't find better pork or preparation anywhere. The Braised Local Lamb Shank with Red Wine and Pearl Onion, Roasted Potato and Natural Pan Jus was another showstopper. Steak lovers will be quite pleased if they have the Bone-In Rib Steak with Spanish Potato Tort with Virgin Oil, Roasted Chard and Gorgonzola Butter. You'd better be hungry or plan to take some home.

As always, we had to have dessert. The Butterscotch Brioche Bread Pudding topped with White Chocolate Lavender Gelato was fabulous. It was lighter than most and got high marks even from those who don't normally like bread pudding. The Meyer Lemon Custard Cake with Brown Sugar Hard Sauce was served warm and just melted in our mouths. It had a sweet lemon taste -- not tart at all.

3bo's wine list is well thought out and easy to read, with just enough choices for every taste. You may choose a bottle or pick from the many wines by the glass, which are quite reasonably priced. Ask your server for suggestions on pairing with courses, as we did, and you will be pleased. The 2004 Roshambo Winery, Dry Creek Syrah-Rose was nicely balanced, sweet and smoky. It paired perfectly with the lamb shank. The 2001 Beringer, Knights Valley Cabernet Sauvignon paired well with the steak.

We were pleased to meet the new Chef De Cuisine, Ryan Schroeder, and we told him how impressed we were with our meal. We thanked him for one of the most memorable feasts we had ever had. At 3 Blocks Off the service was helpful, knowledgeable and friendly. The atmosphere was trendy, yet comfortable. The cuisine was fresh and delicious and the hearty portions allowed us to have lunch for the following day.

3 Blocks Off is a destination restaurant worth the drive from anywhere in the Bay Area.

3 Blocks off Restaurant (3bo)

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3blocksoff.com
Wine and Beer
Dinner
Mon-Wed-Thurs-
Sunday
5 PM-9 PM
Fri-Sat
5 PM -10:00 PM
Happy Hour
4-6 PM
Closed Tuesday