

Creative Cooking

Creativity is delicious at Caffè Regatta

Almost eight years old, the charming Caffè Regatta in Pelham is still pleasing its guests with innovative offerings of seafood and meat. Anthony Labriola, the chef and owner, is a hard-working, talented chef, who is constantly updating his delightful menu of contemporary dishes.

After graduating from Culinary Institute of America, he worked with the Four Seasons Hotel Group, before opening Caffè Lure in Greenwich Village. He then decided to share his culinary talent with the nearby northern suburbs and thus, Caffè Regatta was born.

Labriola has learned, in his words, to "stick with what people know and to keep it simple and not too fussy and mainly, please your guests." He claims that the secret to his success is: "Be open minded and be capable of making changes."

Dinner starts with a breadbasket highlighted by rustic nut rolls, salt sticks and olive butter. Labriola's creativity is apparent in the interesting appetizers, including sticks and stones, a delicious pairing of flat iron steak and shrimp sauté with a soy sauce Thai style glaze. Lobster quesadillas followed. Corn tortillas, black bean and corn succotash and cheese added interest to the chunks of lobster. Also available are sweet potato lobster soup, lobster, crab and shrimp spring rolls with a carrot sesame soy ginger sauce, and blue fin tuna tartare with avocado puree and citrus soy dressing. For a lighter beginning try a California spinach salad with goat cheese and roasted pears or arugula salad with Gorgonzola and pecans.

With the name Caffè Regatta, one expects various chilled seafood samplers. These pristinely fresh offerings include oysters of many varieties, clams, crab, shrimp and lobsters, singly or as part of a sampler, castle or chateau, something to please any size group.

A short list of pastas is carefully chosen, from beef short rib lasagna to orecchiette with shrimp and arugula. I sampled black tagliatelle with chorizo, mushrooms and calamari. A topping of Parmesan completed this glorious preparation.

On to the seafood entrées. Broiled herb and bacon crusted day boat cod was cooked to perfection and served with a beautiful butternut squash and porcini mushroom risotto. Frizzled looks added to the presentation. Pan roasted halibut is a dish to remember. Served with artichoke hearts, cranberry beans and an outstanding grapefruit brown butter sauce, this dish was divine. Other fish offerings are crispy skin salmon with mustard butter sauce, soy honey glazed ahi tuna and broiled or grilled lobster in the size of your choice.

Labriola hasn't neglected the carnivore. Try lamb T-bone, black Angus sirloin, marinated hanger steak, braised short ribs or roasted veal chop. Many



Caffè Regatta in Pelham

SCARSDALE BOURNEMOUTH WOLLEN

fish and meat selections can be simply grilled, as well.

Desserts, homemade, include apple tart with caramel gelato, crème brûlée in various flavors, bourbon pecan tart, chocolate dream with layers of flourless chocolate cake and chocolate mousse. We enjoyed a classic cheesecake with vanilla whipped cream and an excellent warm blueberry crumb tart with dulce de leche gelato.

An extensive Sunday brunch menu has something for everyone. Appetizers include Point Judith fried calamari, lobster, crab and shrimp spring rolls and shrimp cocktail. Breakfast choices include a variety of omelets, smoked salmon Benedict and breakfast burritos, each served with a salad and breakfast potatoes. On the sweet side, try brioche French toast, banana-chocolate crepes, blueberry pancakes or as I did hearty pumpkin pancakes with real Vermont maple syrup and lightly whipped cinnamon whipped cream. This huge portion of thick pancakes,

rich with pumpkin and sprinkled with confectioners' sugar, was accompanied by fresh berries.

Lunch fare and brunch recipes include salmon burger, chicken panini, chicken Caesar wrap, and lobster crab ravioli. I chose a crab cake BLT, a nice twist on a classic. The crab cake crisp and crabby was served on a sesame roll with bacon, salad and spicy remoulade and by request, Labriola's breakfast potatoes, his rendition of hash browns with several types of potatoes and asparagus. Many entrée salads are offered as well. Add a bellini, mimosa, prosecco, fresh orange juice or hot chocolate and your Sunday is off to a good start.

Haas off to chef-owner Labriola for presenting this varied and creative menu to his guests.

Caffè Regatta
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