



CUISINE UNDERCOVER

INDEPENDENT REVIEWS FROM DOCKLANDS' PHANTOM DINER

The Steakhouse

When you choose to dine at an establishment called "The Steakhouse" you expect the steaks to be of a high standard. And Steakhouse at Docklands has been correctly named.

When my companion and I walked into The Steakhouse, noticing the welcoming decor and two glass doors (one automatic door to keep out our Docklands wind and the other "push-style" door which gives you the feeling of arriving), our concierge was on the phone.

But a passing waiter who had a full tray of drinks as well as a full smile said "Hi! Table for two?". The concierge finished his call without rushing the booking and gave us another genuine "hi". A double greeting always puts me in a good mood to dine.

And we were there to dine!

So we were off to a great start and were ready to start planning our meal as soon as we sat down, from entree, main, sides to dessert ...

if only they would give us a menu and some water to start the juices flowing.

Instead we got a wine menu to share. But what food do we match it with? OK, that's fine, sometimes it gets busy. I was still overjoyed with my double "hi". Sorry to go on about this, but you don't get that often these days - even in fine dining restaurants.

Our entrees came out quickly, though we were forced to use our bread and butter plates to share after our request for entrée plates was ignored - half a dozen overcooked oysters Kilpatrick, though very tasty, and a calamari salad to share. It looked almost too good to eat. I said almost!

I cut into the calamari. It had just the right amount of seasoned batter and was cooked to perfection (that's right get used to that word, I'll use it a bit in this review). Perfect calamari to me is when it hasn't been cooked so long that it's chewy or too little when you can still smell the sea in it. There was also just the right amount of cucumber, rocket, lettuce, tomato, radish and a sauce I could not place. All I could think was, "they got this so right". Nothing was left on our plates.

After sitting without water for a good 20 minutes, the waiter finally offered to bring us sparkling, to which we declined and said we would prefer normal - big mistake. We

should have specified tap, because without giving us the option that came to the table with an opened \$4 bottle of water and proceeded to pour.

Mains were more of a dilemma than entrée. Should we just order steak? Or really test them and order something else? Our friendly waiter helped us and suggested they were just as good with their seafood. As it turned out, this was not particularly good advice. I ordered the T-bone steak and my companion went for the seafood spaghetti.

T-bone by definition is in a T-shaped bone with the larger side being porterhouse and the smaller being tenderloin. It is little pricier because of the fact that it contains meat from two of the most prized cuts of beef.

When it was presented to our table I could see both the tables next to us eyeing my plate complete with collective nods to each other. The meat was a perfectly seared on the outside and when I cut into the small side it had the right amount of pink - a perfect medium-rare steak. It was a melt in your mouth piece of meat.

On the other side of the T, again perfect. I wondered how they did it. But look up, and you can see the meat being cooked on a TV screen. Turnaround, and you can see a camera facing the grill. Now that's reality TV!

The meat was so good, I didn't need the Danish blue cheese sauce I had ordered nor extra salt or pepper. But the sauce did come in handy for the side of chips. It was perfectly smooth, creamy and not too rich or overpowering, which was surprising for a blue cheese sauce. The potato gratin which came with the steak was, however, too dry and I hardly ate any of this.

The seafood spaghetti left a lot to be desired. It might as well have been called garlic pasta with a pinch of seafood. The pasta was al dente and the flavour magnificent with just the right amount of garlic, chilli and olive oil as the basis of this main meal.

The small amount of seafood in the dish was, however, mostly cooked to perfection but it was placed on top and none appeared to be mixed through the spaghetti.

The moral of this story? Be adventurous when trying a new place but, for the mains, stick to what is advertised in the name even if they do claim to be good at something else.

Overall rating ★★★★★

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