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TIMES LEADER

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Distinctive Palate

Mother's Day Edition

Sunday, May 5, 2019



Beef Bourguignon



Apple Strudel

Le Manhattan Bistro

268 S. Main St. Wilkes-Barre, PA

570-901-4040 • lemanhattanbistro.net

We were so thrilled to hear that the popular downtown Wilkes-Barre Restaurant Le Manhattan Bistro had been reopened by local hospitality expert, Rob Friedman and his talented team members of Sheila Humphrey, general manager of The Beaumont Inn; Patrick DeRojas, general manager of Manhattan Bistro; and, of course, Chef Jonathan Minor. Le Manhattan Bistro is settled on South Main Street on the corner of Main and Ross streets and includes off-street parking. The exquisite bank building is more than 100 years old and offers the charm of the old bank vault, beautiful wood features and extremely high ceilings. It's the only French restaurant in a 60-mile radius!

We knew we would be in good hands when we visited recently on a Monday evening. Friedman's restaurants are open on Monday evenings, which is wonderful news to those of us looking to dine out to help start out the week on a good note!

I want to comment first on some of the slight changes of décor that really enhance the Bistro's space. Friedman's team turned over the main dining room area with new comfortable, attractive chairs and table settings. The bright yellow walls now have been toned down a bit with a very appealing sponge paint effect. It works! They are now in process of having a local artist paint different city mural scenes on some of the larger spaces higher up toward the ceiling. It is stunning so far and can't wait to see the finished product.

General Manager Patrick greeted us right away and asked us where we'd like to sit. We chose a nice table overlooking the dining room. I will point out that right now Le Manhattan Bistro is waiting for their liquor license and should have it very soon! They encourage you to bring your own bottle of wine or other spirit of choice, and the staff will gladly help serve you with a cork fee. In general, I haven't been familiar with BYOB because I never visited one before. Silly me! It's fabulous! There is a liquor store right down the street from the restaurant so all you do is make a quick stop and you can enjoy your favorite wine with dinner. And guess what? All the other guests in the restaurant were certainly doing the same! So, until the license is ready, I will gladly go to Le Manhattan Bistro with bottle and friends in tow! On this night, I brought along a Chateau St. Michelle Riesling, one of my favorites. My dinner guest brought a Josh Cabernet.

Note: This review is written to inspire those who have not yet been a guest at this unique bistro. It's a beautifully designed restaurant but if you think it is a "fancy French restaurant," it really doesn't have that stigma. You don't have to wear a suit or sport coat or think that you need to dress up to come. You certainly can if you want to, but it's not a requirement or what you see normally. You also may think, "I'm not so sure I like French food." Don't even worry about that. The menu is so varied that even the pickiest eater (me) found plenty of choices that I adored, and yes, they are prepared with a French technique and style!

For appetizers, I chose the fresh tuna tartar with spicy avocado and cabbage kimchi with ginger extra virgin olive oil. The tuna is cut in smaller bites and sits on top of a very generous amount of avocado. Though one might be tempted to take a taste of each item separately, combining this mixture on the palate presents a very flavorful result.

If you've never had tuna tartar, this is the place to begin your journey. If you've tried it elsewhere, you'll quickly discover a taste you've been missing.

My dinner companion had to go for the escargot prepared with traditional garlic and herb butter. He said they were out of this world and would order them again. Sometimes they can be rubbery but certainly not at Le Manhattan Bistro.

Onto the entrees. So many excellent choices along with French classics!

I chose the Beef Bourguignon. I've heard about it, seen it prepared on TV, but never had it or cooked it. The dish became well known in 1961 when Julia Childs published "The Art of Mastering French Cooking." Childs had a gift for taking well-known French restaurant dishes and teaching Americans how to them at home. In my generation, the dish popped up again in the movie Julie & Julia in 2009 where a New York City woman takes time off from work to attempt to prepare all of Julia Childs recipes and blog about them. The Beef Bourguignon was tough for her to master but when she did, it was delicious, according to the movie husband. At Le Manhattan Bistro, the French classic has no guess work involved. It's simply divine. The beef is braised 4 to 5 hours and it's the tenderest meat I've ever had in my life. Wow. It is accompanied by chopped bacon, mushrooms, carrots and celery over a bed of Idaho mashed potatoes. The red wine sauce is the perfect consistency and delicious. Fresh, tasty and not over seasoned. It's just good food and as our server Jesse Schaffer said, "It was made with love." I believe that wholeheartedly. I will return for this dish. It is now one of my favorites in addition to the chicken bolognese.

My dinner companion chose the "La Bouillabaisse" which is a Southern French Classic Seafood Stew with lobster and saffron broth, rouille and croutons. It originated in the French port city of Marseille. Add to the traditional lobster scallops, shrimp, mussels and crab and it becomes a seafood wonderland. The exquisite taste of the broth accompanied provides you with a taste that makes this dish a true favorite. If you're concerned about a "skippy" portion, this dish is the complete opposite. In fact, you may want to offer a taste to others at the table.... or not.

For dessert I chose the apple strudel which just happened to be a specialty baked item that day. It was served with French vanilla ice cream and raspberry sauce and some powdered sugar. Delicious without being overdone with too much sugar and cinnamon. Again, this was fresh and flavorful and natural tasting. My dinner companion had a chocolate torte. The chocolate was like fudge accompanied by vanilla ice cream and the necessary raspberry sauce. Even when there's no room, there's still room for this outrageously delicious treat.

Special thanks to Patrick and Jesse for making our dinner a true French experience. The meals were absolutely the best and I know our readers will be visiting soon to check it out for themselves. Don't forget to make your Mother's Day reservations. "LMB" is the perfect choice to bring Mom! She'll love it and so will the whole family. They will be seating from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday, May 12.



TIMES LEADER MEDIA GROUP
2018 LEGACY BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

Kevin's Bar & Restaurant

Step into Kevin's Bar & Restaurant after a long workday and it's truly what you've been hoping. It's filled with friendly staff, impressive food features, and masterfully mixed cocktails. A night at Kevin's never disappoints. Whether you sit near the bar, the dining room or on the new outdoor patio, you're sure to enjoy.

Chef Profile

Education: High School (graduated from Dallas High School 2011) and "self taught" by incredible chefs before me.

What inspired you early on to want to cook: The camaraderie of the professional kitchen. The love for flavor, ingredients and passion inspired me and still does.

Did you have any professional influences that helped create your style: I try to take pieces of every chef and professional restaurant worker I have ever worked with to help develop my own style. The amazing work of renowned

chefs and authors like Anthony Bourdain and David Chang had a huge influence on how I see the culinary world.

Specialty Dish: I hope to never be defined solely by one dish, although I do make a great chili.

The best thing about your restaurant: The best thing about Kevin's is the ambiance for one. The building and dining area provide something most restaurants do not: a casual, yet intimate atmosphere. The food is always unique and I promise as a chef, it is truly eclectic.

Matthew Gilber

Manager Profile

Team Atmosphere: I could not ask for a better team here at Kevin's. The front of the house and back of the house staff all work together to ensure only the best service for our customers. Communication is the key to building our team, and each of us knows that the other employees have our backs. Having such a positive team atmosphere makes for a pleasant workplace where we can all do our jobs efficiently to ensure high quality customer service.

Customer Experiences: In the restaurant business, customer experience is of utmost importance and all of us do our best to ensure that each person who walks through our door leaves wanting to return not only for the food, but also the service and atmosphere during their dining experience. Dining out is more than just having a nice dinner with your guests, it should also be an experience from when you enter the restaurant, to when you leave.

How important is it to have special features on the menu: Features are essential in keeping the menu new and exciting for our customers. A majority of

our featured items allow our chefs to delve further into their culinary creation and showcase their skills in the kitchen by coming up with unique menu items to keep customers interested. A large majority of our features also include the use of locally sourced food, like meats from Murazzi Provisions and various produce from local farms, which helps us support other small businesses within in our community.

Any advice on keeping customers satisfied: The best advice I can provide for keeping customers satisfied is building a relationship with each and every one of them from the second they walk into your restaurant, to the second they leave. I love being able to greet each person who enters Kevin's, check in with them during the course of their meal and personally thank them for dining with us. Taking just a few minutes to get to know the people sitting at your tables lets them know that you genuinely care about their experience, and would like them to return. To me, there is nothing better than knowing your customers enjoyed their evening out at your restaurant and left completely satisfied with their dining experience.

Melissa Roberts

KEVIN'S
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247 Wyoming Ave, Kingston • 570-285-3071
www.kevinsrestaurant.us

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Cork Bar & Restaurant

The atmosphere at Cork Bar & Restaurant truly embodies its motto: the good life uncorked. Nestled in Wilkes-Barre's North End, the popular bar and eatery – known for its wine classes and selection – has been an area favorite for more than a decade. Regularly voted for being the best spot for a first date in the Times Leader, Cork is also popular for families out celebrating milestones, friends looking to catch up with one another, and couples looking for a relaxing night at the bar. With Mother's Day upon us, this might be the spot to take the favorite lady in your life.

Chef Profile

Rawn Henderson

Education: US Army Culinary Center, Fort Lee, Va.; Norville College of Culinary Arts

What inspired you early on to want to cook: The 3 bears: bare foot, bare back and a bare pocket. Also, my grandmother and mother were great cooks making me want to cook and present great food to customers. I enjoy it and always want to prepare the best food held to the highest standards.

Did you have any professional influences that helped create your style: I worked with a lot of chefs in my day, but the biggest influence is definitely Frank Stitt, an Alabama chef. I also enjoy reading anything and everything about food to keep up with current trends and cuisines. I draw inspiration reading about other's creative cuisines. I have also worked in various restaurants in the area and draw from those experiences.

Specialty Dish: It's hard to pinpoint one specialty dish. I like to bring my Southern influence into my dishes, but I also enjoy preparing local favorites such as our braised beef short ribs. I also add a somewhat Asian flare to our menu.

The best thing about your restaurant: Our staff is down to earth, and we like to work together to reach a common goal. Teamwork is a necessary element in the food service industry and I like to think we accomplish that here.



Manager Profile

Carolyn Saporito

Team atmosphere: The restaurant's atmosphere sets the stage, food takes the spotlight and guests become its audience. The greatest lesson learned in my career has been to treat others as you would want to be treated and confide in your team. I also believe that the greatest successes have come from learning and growing with my team. I have been at Cork for 12 years and can honestly say I love my job. Chef Rawn and I have been together for 7+ years along with some servers who have been here since day one. Don't forget where you came from. I was once the 16-year-old bus girl who had great leaders that taught me how hard work and dedication pays off. Planting roots establishes good roots.

Customer experience: At Cork we strive for each guest to have a memorable experience. I consider Cork to be a casual to fine-dining restaurant. Several of our customers are weekly regulars. We also are known as a special-occasion restaurant. Therefore, people come to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, and to come back to the place they had their first date. Then there's graduations, class reunions and our out-of-town guests whose children go to local colleges, so they now consider Cork their "go to" or "local favorite restaurant."

How important is it to have special features on the menu: Having special features gives the chef an opportunity to express his unique talent. Every chef is different in their own unique way. Special features allows him to try new cuisines and try new items for future menu planning. It also gives the guest something new and exciting to try.

Any advice on keeping customers satisfied: It is my goal that guests feel special, comfortable and well taken care of. Great customer service is the key in creating a loyal customer base, as well as being the manager I am also the baker and bartender. We take great pride in serving homemade desserts and handcrafted cocktails. I consider our customers friends and family.

















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The Beaumont Inn

An exquisite atmosphere. A majestic venue. An idyllic indoor and outdoor experience. All the aforementioned have been used to describe The Beaumont Inn in Dallas – one of the places where a Mother's Day outing is sure to be outstanding. With its long history, there have been many memories made throughout The Inn, the restaurant and the gardens. And this Mother's Day, it'll be the picturesque setting to take your mom, grandma, favorite aunt – or any other lucky lady. A trip to The Beaumont is always a welcomed reprieve from daily life. Go somewhere where your treated with the highest-class service and can enjoy the freshest garden herbs, fruits and vegetables locally.

Chef Profile

Jeff Huntzinger

Education: West Side Vo-Tech Culinary, Pennsylvania Institute of Culinary Arts in Pittsburgh

What inspired you early on to want to cook: a love for food and watching family cooking for the holidays.

Did you have any professional influences that helped create your style: I was fortunate enough to work for and alongside some of our area's finest chefs and for that I'm forever thankful. Through their guidance and hard work, I became the chef I am today. My style comes from a love of gardening and that truly became my focus at the last two restaurants I have been lucky enough to be a part of. One was The French Manor where the Logan and Reese family started an on-premise garden to showcase beautiful heirloom vegetables and The Beaumont Inn where Rob Friedman has our kitchen staff in charge of the care and maintenance of our 1/2 acre organic heirloom garden full of 100+ varieties of heirloom fruits and vegetables.

Specialty Dish: that's hard to say. I love being able to get creative with our bounty of fresh produce picked daily from our garden. It gives us a nice challenge to come up with features that complement the freshness of the harvest. I also am an avid hunter and fisherman so I enjoy using wild game meats. We usually do 6 to 8 five-course wild game dinners every year and they always sell out.

The best thing about your restaurant: Our Staff! From our chefs, prep cooks and dishwashers in the back of the house to our bartenders, servers and back servers in the front of the house to our director of operations Sheila Humphrey leading the team. It's the best work family I could ever ask for.



Manager Profile

Sheila Humphrey

Team Atmosphere: I stay true to my mission to create a culture that is supportive and I strive to be a great leader and positive mentor to my staff. I encourage everyone to be their best and give them the tools to achieve great success.

Customer Experiences: I was cultivated from a customer service aspect that the customer is always right. With many years of experience behind me, and as I grow as a person and a manager, my approach has slightly taken a different direction. I believe that if you nurture and grow a happy team, incredible customer service comes naturally. I believe this is a true statement for us at The Beaumont Inn.

How important is it to have special features on the menu: It allows our chefs to create something that day which has inspired them. It's not planned days before; in fact sometimes I don't get our nightly features until 3 p.m. It is also very important to keep our customers excited about what may be happening in our garden or to offer just something truly off the beaten path of what they might expect.

Any advice on keeping customers satisfied: Always remember it's a new day with new people and new things to learn. Be your best, do your best and be happy that you are in the hospitality business.



B

The Beaumont Inn



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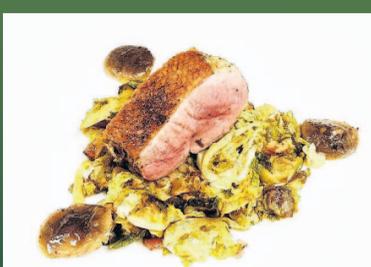
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Grico's

1074 Wyoming Ave. Exeter, PA

570-654-9120 • gricosrestaurant.com

Grico's Restaurant- A Unique Dining Experience, so close!

I haven't been to Grico's for many years due to living a little outside the Wyoming Valley cities. On a recent Monday night, my friend and I took the short 10-minute drive from downtown Wilkes-Barre to enjoy the unique dining experience that Grico's offers.

Grico's is situated in a beautiful older home on Wyoming Avenue, Exeter. It's been a restaurant for more than 80 years, originally owned by the Grico family. Rob Friedman bought the business in 2016 and is the current owner.

The beautiful barroom area, is home to a vintage 1930s bar salvaged from Brooklyn, NY. The woodwork is exquisite. The bar room boasts a lot of bar seating and tables as well. We were surprised to find quite the regular crowd on a Monday evening! It was certainly a pleasure to see so many local friends enjoying their drinks, meals and talking with the friendly staff!

Grico's also has a full dining area in the restaurant as well as private dining booths towards the back which are perfect for a special date night, occasion or even a business meeting. These booths can seat anywhere from 2-8 people. Just call ahead to reserve one so you are not disappointed if one is not available on short notice.

We found ourselves lucky to be able to sit in one of the private booths. The table was set beautifully, complete with wine glasses, water glasses and candles. The booth also included a buzzer to alert staff, but in our case, it was certainly not necessary. AJ, Olivia and Bruce who waited on us constantly throughout the evening were on top of their game making sure our experience was a pleasant one; and it was!

Of course, on a Monday after a "typical work Monday," my friend and I wanted to enjoy a cocktail. Grico's offered a great variety of martinis, Dessert martinis, specialty cocktails, and a great selection of wines and beers. I chose a St. Michele Riesling and my friend chose a Paso Creek Cabernet. Both wines hit the spot.

On to the appetizer menu. Grico's offers a unique assortment of choices and we ordered two recommended favorites; eggplant fritti and the fresh clams. The eggplant fritti was delicious and a surprise delight! It had 2 larger pieces of crispy panko-crusted eggplant piled high with mozzarella and tomatoes. I had to take some home because I wanted to also enjoy my entrée! The dozen little neck clams were done to perfection, served with plenty of white wine and garlic sauce.



The Prince, 16-oz. Boneless Delmonico Steak

Not only were they tasty, but they almost melted in your mouth. Far from the usual fare where you spend more time chewing rather than enjoying.

The entrée menu boasted a lot of special choices. From pastas, fabulous grill items to special sautés and seasonal dishes, we certainly had a hard time deciding. We chose the blackened filet of salmon with lime raspberry sauce and The Prince, a 16-oz. boneless Delmonico steak.

Important to note, we were served very nicely made salads with a delicious homemade parmesan peppercorn dressing that was a perfect mild blend. So many restaurants offer a very bold flavor dressing that is unappealing upon first taste. Not at Grico's.

The entrees arrived and we were taken aback by the amount of food and the wonderful presentation. The salmon was cooked perfectly. It came apart with the slightest touch of the fork. The lime raspberry sauce was sweet but not overpowering. My friend waved his fork and said "excellent."

The Prince Delmonico was served covering the plate with a Pepe sauce made of mushrooms, brandy and cream. I was delighted because I don't believe I have had a similar sauce anywhere locally, or if I did, do not remember. It was a perfect complement to the large steak, which by the way, was prepared to my perfect temperature of medium well. It was tender, with a black pepper crust and simply a joy to eat.

Although Grico's offered a variety of decadent desserts, my friend and I both chose the apple crisp with caramel, cinnamon and vanilla ice cream. We typically do not order dessert at dinner, but this apple treat was certainly a great ending to the special meal we had. It was superb and I keep thinking about it.

Thank you Grico's for a special evening. Your courteous, attentive staff were warm and inviting. Your signature dishes were outstanding, atmosphere- unbeatable. We will see you again soon!



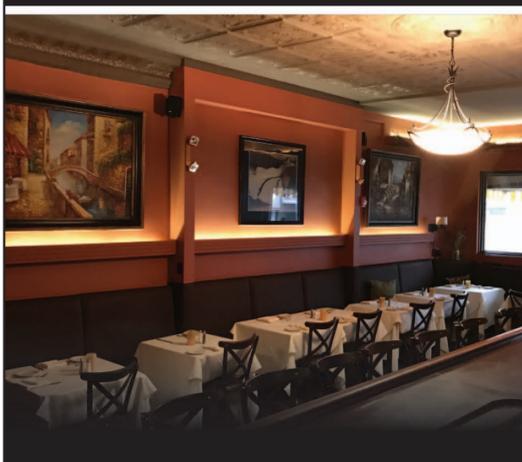
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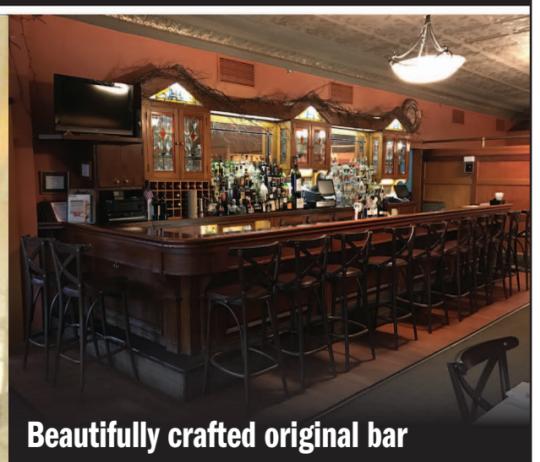
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Le Manhattan Bistro



Chef Jonathan (left) and Manager Patrick (far right)

If you've been a fan of the classical French cuisine and historic atmosphere you've come to expect at Le Manhattan Bistro, have no fear: despite some staffing changes and the recent change in ownership, the restaurant is operating in top form with Chef Jon Minor preparing exceptional dishes each day.

Open for dinner daily (except Tuesdays), the restaurant also offers a popular Sunday brunch weekly (we know you're always hunting for the next best brunch spot in town).

The menu features an assortment of starters, traditional fare and French cuisine consisting of favorites such as Duck Confit, Beef Bourguignon, La Bouillabaisse and Coq Au Vin.

See - and sample - for yourself the next time you're looking for a special dining experience.

Or, do yourself a favor and take Mom there for Mother's Day brunch, where there will be quiche, crepes, specialty eggs, a featured appetizer, soup and a featured sandwich from which to choose.

Chef Profile

Jonathan Minor

Education: 22 Years in the Kitchen, 15 years experience cooking French food

create your style: All the chefs I have worked with have inspired me.

What inspired you early on to want to cook: It makes me happy to see people enjoy the food I cook.

Specialty Dish: The French classics on our menu.

Did you have any professional influences that helped

The best thing about your restaurant: I have passion for cooking classical French food in a beautiful downtown Wilkes Barre historic building for the wonderful people of Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Manager Profile

Patrick DeRojas

What makes you a unique manager: I provide the restaurant with produce from my family's farm. It is a satisfying feeling to see Chef Jon transform my homegrown produce into a delicious and nutritious meal that customers enjoy.

Education/Experience: Penn State University. 10+ years in the service industry.

Any advice on keeping customers satisfied: Treat them the way you would want to be treated as a customer.



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Giuseppe's

14 N. Market St. Nanticoke, PA

570-735-2682 • giuseppe-restaurant.com

On a recent evening, a friend and I agreed to meet for dinner. My friend who is always aware of great places suggested Giuseppe's in Nanticoke. She has been hearing wonderful things about it and has noticed the parking lot full, particularly on weekends. Knowing she always has a great place in mind, I agreed to meet her there.

Upon entering, we were impressed with the beautiful interior. The hostess greeted us immediately and showed us to a lovely table in the center of a gorgeous modern side room lit with candles on every table. We noticed that this room would also lend itself well for private parties.

We were quickly met by our server Colleen who was friendly and very knowledgeable. She suggested a few of their specialty cocktails to start. My friend chose a homemade mango Sangria from a list featuring several options. I chose a Limoncello margarita, with a salted rim. Both drinks were spectacular. We were very pleased. As we sipped our cocktails, we reviewed the extensive menu and decided to start the evening by sharing the gnocchi Bolognese appetizer. It was an outstanding choice! Delicate homemade ricotta gnocchi seasoned perfectly and tossed in Giuseppe's secret Bolognese sauce was the best way to start our dining experience.

The next course consisted of a beautiful fresh salad in a delicious balsamic vinaigrette for my friend, and I ordered the classic Italian Wedding Soup, which was perfectly balanced and did not disappoint.

Colleen was kind to suggest and review the evening's specials as well as answer any of our questions. After considering many enticing options on the menu, my friend chose one of their house favorites, seafood fra diablo. In keeping with the lemon theme, I chose chicken piccata and a side of homemade creamy mashed potatoes.

We were both very happy with our choices. The generous Seafood Fra Diablo consisted of fresh lobster, shrimp, clams, calamari and scallops simmered in a spicy red sauce and served over linguine. It was so beautifully presented as well!

The chicken piccata consisted of two thinly pressed chicken breasts sauteed with fresh lemon, white wine and butter, creating a delightful medley of flavors.

As we enjoyed our evening, we were visited at our table by the owner and executive chef Joe Ginther. Joe could not have been more friendly or charming as he chatted about his secret Bolognese sauce and laughed at our suggestion to start selling it by the jar.

As we finished our entrees, we noticed how crowded the restaurant



Seafood Fra Diablo

had become, with several larger parties seated at the tables throughout the beautifully decorated restaurant. We commented how great it was to see locally owned restaurants being supported by the community and so busy on a weekday evening.

As our meal was drawing to a close, Colleen appeared with a decadent dessert tray, and we could not refuse indulging. My friend chose a moist five-layer chocolate cake, which did not disappoint. I chose another classic, the cannoli. The combination of the sweet ricotta filling and crisp outer shell was the perfect way to end this incredible dining experience.

Giuseppe's in Nanticoke was such a wonderful evening. The chef, manager and staff were completely focused on creating an enjoyable experience for their patrons. Every course was delicious and well prepared, and the service was top notch. You won't be disappointed!



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12-5pm

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