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At Bourne golf club, Sunset Grille is a winner

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Dine Out
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A friend at work pointed me toward the Sunset Grille, and boy, am I glad he did.

We arrived around 5:50 p.m., when there was still a faint blush along the western horizon under the blue velvet mantle of night. The Sunset Grille is aptly named, as it is set high on a hill above Phinneys Harbor and the western approach to the Cape Cod Canal, with the red warning lights of the Buzzards Bay Railroad Bridge off to the north.

The grille, set in a shingle-style clubhouse for the public championship golf course, is appropriately "clubby" and warm, decked in mellow wood and grass cloth. There are comfy chairs on wheels, a flickering gas fireplace, and paintings of golf links, including the venerable St. Andrews. Jazzy vocals and instrumentals wafted in on the sound system, adding to the pleasant ambience. We were only sorry that we weren't discovering the Sunset Grille in summertime, when the terrace and its lovely views accommodates diners.

One of the specialty cocktails, The White Spider, a concoction of Tanqueray 10 gin, Cointreau and sour mix, tempted Loring, but he went instead with the pomegranate martini (\$6), blended from vodka and pomegranate liqueur. I sipped a delightful Sunset Cosmopolitan (\$7.75), with rocks on the side. Both were very generous and well-balanced.

A server dispensed warm crusty rolls along with a plate of seasoned olive oil for dipping. But I didn't get carried away with the bread, because I was waiting for my Asian Trio (\$8.50). This was an unusual and appealing mini pu pu platter of two tiny spring rolls, two pot stickers, and three crab Rangoons, pleated neatly like those supple embossed leather coin purses, and arranged with a handful of mesclun. A spicy orange chili sauce for dipping complemented the crisp nibbles.

Loring began his dinner with an evening special, a half-dozen mushroom caps stuffed with sweet Italian sausage and Parmesan cheese, accented with a port wine syrup. It was a straightforward and delicious preparation. Eight dollars was perhaps a bit steep.

He followed the mushrooms with the Brookside Salad (\$6), an ample heap of mesclun garnished lavishly with grape tomatoes, pine nuts and crumbled, mild goat cheese. The kitchen showed restraint with the white balsamic vinaigrette. Diners can make this salad into a meal with the addition of grilled chicken (\$9).

I was lured by the Memphis-rubbed roast pork loin (\$15), but decided instead on the roasted boneless chicken breasts sandwiched with prosciutto, roasted red pepper, and fresh mozzarella (\$15). Mushroom marsala sauce complemented the browned but moist and tender meat. The dish was attractively garnished with fresh rosemary sprigs and shards of crisp Parmesan tuile. My only quibble is that though the mashed potatoes were suave, I would have preferred pasta to complete this entree.

Loring was all set to order the seafood casserole (shrimp, scallops and other fruits de mer in Parmesan cream with a sherry-crumbed crust, \$15), but when he heard the evening specials, he changed his mind. Pasta fiore — penne with a half-dozen sauteed scallops, three shrimp, and spinach in a tomato Parmesan sauce — was his choice (\$22). He said it was delectable, and savored every bite.

The South African chenin blanc we first requested was not available, so we chose Mezza Corona pinot grigio instead (\$7). It was a good match for both dishes, and was poured generously in pleasantly thin wineglasses.

Our server, Amy, provided polished and professional service, but not without a dash of humor, throughout.

However, when we asked for time to finish our wine before dessert, another server brought it quickly anyway — for which Amy apologized.

Pecan pie, served slightly warm, with a scoop of vanilla ice cream (\$6), was perfection to Loring. I savored a hearty wedge of homestyle carrot cake with a restrained amount of cream cheese frosting (\$5). Both plates were prettily garnished with fresh strawberries and a swirl of raspberry and grapefruit sauces. Other options among the desserts, all made in house, were liquid chocolate cake, a brownie sundae, and pumpkin cheesecake.

To finish our dinner, we both had cups of freshly brewed decaf (\$2).

Not counting drinks and tip, our tab totaled \$78.23, a fair price for a fine dinner.

The Sunset Grille's entree list isn't lengthy, but every diner will surely find something to please them. Among the choices are angel hair pasta with tomatoes, asparagus and baby portabellos tossed with olive oil, garlic and fresh basil (\$14), a perfect dish for a vegetarian, that can be made heartier with the addition of chicken, scallops or shrimp. Pan-roasted salmon comes with sauteed spinach and roasted garlic and tomato beurre blanc over rice pilaf (\$16). For a luxurious entree, try grilled Black Angus tenderloin with gorgonzola butter, grilled asparagus and mashed potato (\$28).

Those with lighter appetites can create an entree salad, or choose from the Brookside burger (\$8.50), a steak sandwich with gorgonzola (\$11), or a grilled chicken panini (\$8.50).

At 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, the Brookside Club will offer the Kendall Jackson Vintners and Grand Reserve Wine Dinner on the theme "California Dreaming on Such a Winter's Day." The charge for the five courses, each partnered with a wine, is \$55 per person, including tax and tip. Reservations are required.

It's easy to find Sunset Grille. Cross the Bourne Bridge and travel 1.4 miles. You'll see a sign for the Brookside Club on the right, just by the Toyoto dealership. Follow the road to the clubhouse at the top of the hill.

We hope to return for another pleasant dinner before warm weather brings flocks of visitors thronging to the Cape.

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