



FOODIE

Swimming In Culinary Delight At H2O

By Brian and Luann/ foodie@longislandernews.com

Arriving at H2O Seafood Grill early on a Wednesday night, one might not think to find a crowd in this restaurant that stands somewhat isolated from a downtown hub. But on a recent visit, the crowd was fluid, bustling and filled with cheer as friends gathered to have a drink, grab some premium sushi or sit down for a spectacular dinner.

We decided to do a bit of it all.

Lively and sophisticated, H2O is sleek and modern with contemporary décor, sepia tones and hardwood floors. Throughout the restaurant, a nautical theme of a young and hip Cap Cod is subtle and refreshing. Our server, Eric, handed us a stack of menus – one each for the dinner menu (with a list of sushi house specials on the reverse), the wine list, the premium drinks and the reason why so many were at H2O that night, the wine dinner menu.

The concept of the latter is fairly simple – the restaurant provides a menu of innovative dishes and pairs each course with a different glass of wine, designed to blend well with the flavors of the dish. On the night we were there, the wine dinner featured a first course of bay scallop crepes in a cognac porcini cream sauce paired with a Frascati from Italy. An Italian merlot from the same region accompanied an entrée of oven-roasted striped bass over seeded basmati rice, romaine and cockle saffron tomato sauce. And for dessert, warm almond hazelnut cake complemented by a Californian hazelnut sherry. At a reasonable \$40 for the whole dinner - \$30 if you pass on the wine - it wasn't hard to see why H2O was swimming with hungry patrons that night.

While we perused the menu, we were served a simple amuse bouche of crabmeat salad on a fresh made tortilla wedge. There was enough crab for each bite of tortilla, and the creaminess of the salad served as the perfect foil for the crispness of the wafer.

After a thorough examination of the menu and hearing some recommendations

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from Eric about chef Scott Szekretar's specialties, we placed our orders and anticipated the flow of courses.

The first was a pairing of house sushi specials Tornado #2 (\$12) and a Chipotle roll (\$10). The Tornado featured spicy tuna and scallion wrapped in fried potato, drizzled with an eel sauce and topped with a dollop of spicy horseradish mayo. The second roll was layers of crab, mayo, seaweed and rice topped with a slice of fresh mango. The fruit seemed to almost dissolve on the tongue and added a creaminess to the roll that let it melt in your mouth.

As we finished the sushi we were presented with a variation on the chef's Millennium style lobster but on a smaller level. Rather than a whole lobster, it was a single grilled shrimp dusted with angry garlic flour and served over a small bed of mashed potatoes with a lemon basil confit. The potatoes and sweetness of the confit ruled the taste buds upon the first bite, but the angry garlic flour came back at the end and hit you with a swift kick.

The next course consisted of shrimp and lobster wontons (\$11) as well as pan-seared sea scallops (\$13). The wontons were pan-seared and served plated with a mound of frisee, all of which was drizzled with a tangy hoisin sauce and mustard oil. The scallops were done to tender perfection. Served with a couple of roasted plum tomatoes, each scallop was topped with a clove of sweet roasted garlic that melted in your mouth. The dish was complemented by a light creamy garlic sauce that did not overwhelm in density or flavor.

Moving on to our main courses, we followed Eric's suggestion to the letter, choosing the hazelnut and parmesan crusted swordfish (\$29) and the pepper tuna (\$26).

The swordfish came cooked to perfection, a juicy steak with hazelnut and parmesan crusting in a subtle buttery lemongrass beurre blanc with a hint of truffle. Served over tasty toasted couscous the real kind with sun dried tomatoes, the dish's dijon mustard gave the slightest kick.

Though coated in a coarse-ground pepper, the tuna, seared to a gorgeous deep red rare, did not lose any of its flavor, nor did it stiffen from the heat. Instead, served atop a bed of wasabi mashed potatoes topped with fresh creamed spinach, the dish maintained a tenderness from bite to bite that allowed the wasabi, tuna and spinach flavors to coalesce into a delight for the palate.

To end our evening we sampled three desserts (\$7 each) why not? The homemade fried doughnuts dusted with cinnamon and sugar, served with strawberry and peanut butter sauces on the side, allows the diner to make the

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best jelly doughnut ever or one heck of an interpretation of PB&J. The signature chocolate teardrop is layered chocolate mousse, almond sponge cake, a chocolate crunch bar foundation and a dollop of chocolate ice cream on top, next to a drizzle of chocolate sauce and raspberries. The peanut butter banana split is a classic, served as a pyramid of vanilla and chocolate ice cream with fresh whipped cream edged by strips of banana with both crispy peanut pieces and peanut butter and chocolate sauces.

Chef Scotty has put together a wonderful menu that stays constant about three-fourths of the year, with some slight seasonal variation. A Mineola native who has worked in Huntington and Fire Island, Szekretar is a Culinary Institute of America grad, and it shows from the concept to the pairings to the platings. A dinner at H2O is clearly more than a meal it is an experience. We look forward to returning when the seasonal outdoor patio, providing dining beneath a Japanese-style pergola, opens.

H2O Seafood Grill

215 West Main Street

Smithtown

631-361-6464

www.h2oseafoodgrill.com

Cuisine: Seafood specialties and other far
Atmosphere: Modern take on nautical theme
Hours: Monday-Thursday 5 p.m.-10 p.m.,
Friday and Saturday 5 p.m.-11 p.m.,
Sunday 2 p.m.-9 p.m..
See web site for lounge
and sushi bar hours.

[Main Menu](#)

Invite The Foodies: Submit news and notices of upcoming events to The Foodies, c/co Long Islander Newspapers, 149 Main Street, Huntington, Ny 11743 or email foodie@longislandernews.com. To suggest a review call Peter Sloggatt at 631-427-7000