

Entertainment & Life

Dining review: David Burke Prime delivers razzle-dazzle at Foxwoods

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Posted Apr 9, 2017 at 12:01 AM

Updated Apr 9, 2017 at 3:17 AM

From the outrageous candied bacon appetizer to the dry-aged steaks to the Drunken Donuts for dessert, this ultra-luxe restaurant gives high rollers one heck of a show.

MASHANTUCKET, Conn. — Everything feels bigger at a casino. Perhaps that's why the dining feels so luxe at David Burke Prime at Foxwoods Resort Casino.

From the outrageous bacon appetizer to the tableside cocktail to the warm Drunken Donuts, the whole experience is a show. A very, very good show.

They serve popovers to each guest at the beginning of the meal and cotton candy with the check.

It's posh. And huge. The restaurant is 13,000 square feet and seats 280 with a 28-seat bar. Its wine tower holds 6,000 bottles.

All cuts of meat served at the restaurant are dry-aged in house. That happens amid bricks of pink Himalayan salt in the dry-aging room where meats sit for 28, 40, 55 or 76 days.

The restaurant has a special menu featuring a flight of the aged meat. I was invited to a tasting of the flight and the new tableside cocktail program. It was my first visit to the restaurant, and I was impressed not just by the food but by the ease of driving up, valet parking and being at the restaurant.

I also liked that even though this is a modern restaurant in a modern space, the visit started with a hot popover. It's a throwback to the days of Pier 4 in Boston and The Cocks and Kettle in Uxbridge, Massachusetts. And it made me smile.

But it wasn't the last of the nostalgic touches. The Caesar salad (\$16 à la carte) is made tableside. Not only does it include nice banter with the salad maker, the freshness of the Caesar comes through with each bite.

The salad is one of the starter choices available for guests who pre-book the \$100 steak-flight menu. Yes, that's not a price tag for everyone, but for those looking for a very different experience, it will be in demand.

The other choice of a starter is an outrageous order of maple bacon (\$19 à la carte) with the slices hanging off what looks like a mini clothesline. It's dramatic and delicious if you like bacon.

Executive chef Pedro Avila slowly bakes thick-cut bacon, bastes it with maple syrup, and slides each strip onto a skewer. Cooked to maximize caramelization, it's like candied pork belly. It has black pepper to give it a little heat. (The recipe is on the restaurant website, and I've included it.)

As for the steak flight, it's a pretty amazing plate with slices of three different cuts of meat. They include the 30-day bone-in ribeye, 60-day sirloin, and 75-day ribeye. The slices were wonderful pieces of meat. It was interesting to taste how each piece was different from the other, with tenderness and flavor ramping up as the aging time was extended.

Side dishes to go with the entrée are à la carte (\$12) and include a Roasted Mushrooms and Caramelized Onion dish that is as meaty as the main course.

For dessert, I reveled in the Warm Drunken Donuts. These sugar doughnut holes are served warm and with three tubes of do-it-yourself fillings: chocolate Kahlúa, strawberry rum and cinnamon cream, I was so ready for a light, sweet bite, and this was the perfect ending. I preferred them naked (\$12 à la carte).

Like all steakhouses, there are seafood options, including a seafood tower (\$89) with lobster, shrimp, littleneck clams, oysters on the half shell, mussels, Alaska King crab legs and lump crab meat. The variety of sauces that came with it made each bite different.

For this spectacular meal, the tableside cocktail was the perfect cherry on the top. I had a Smoked Rosemary Manhattan. The rosemary was smoked right there and that created a lovely aroma. The drink was served with one huge ice cube. It was divine in both taste and execution.

Right now the tableside cocktail is a Fire-Toasted Silver-Spresso, with Kahlúa, Baileys, Frangelico and espresso, topped with whipped cream, silver glitter, silver chocolate, and toasted marshmallow.

The price is \$35 per drink, but it includes all top-shelf liquors, and a show, accent on the show.

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DETAILS

David Burke Prime, Grand Pequot Tower, Foxwoods Resort Casino. 350
Trolley Line Blvd., Mashantucket, Connecticut, (860) 312-8753,
davidburkeprime.com. Valet parking. Reservations. Open for lunch and dinner,
seven days a week. Chef Pedro Avila's Steak Flight menu comes with a starter
course including a choice between the double-cut maple bacon or the tableside
Caesar salad, a dessert course, currently featuring a cheesecake pop tree, and a
sampling of the 30-day bone-in ribeye, 60-day sirloin, and 75-day ribeye,
available for \$100 per person. Contact steakflight@craveablehg.com to book the
menu.

David Burke Prime's Candied Bacon Lollipops

3 cups 100 percent maple syrup

Juice of half a lemon

2 tablespoons coarsely ground black pepper

1 teaspoon mustard powder

½ tablespoon Dijon mustard

1 pound slab bacon

Combine all ingredients except the bacon in a pot. Cook over low heat until reduced by 20 percent.

Preheat the oven to 300 degrees, and set up a sheet pan with a wire drain rack on top.

Slice bacon by hand into approximately 5/8-inch-thick pieces.

Lay bacon in a single layer on wire racks, with ½-inch space in between each slice.

Cook bacon for 8 minutes. Remove from oven and pour off all rendered fat. Brush bacon with glaze in an even layer. Return to oven for 10 minutes.

Pull out of oven, flip over each slice and glaze again. Return to oven for 10 minutes. Repeat this process 4 times, every 10 minutes.

Reduce heat to 250 degrees and repeat glazing process two more times. Bacon should be just cooked, not dark in color or crispy, but nicely glazed. Cool at room temperature.

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