

AS SEEN IN

the

# Parklander

SEPTEMBER 2009

## Chops Lobster Bar



By Charles Marcanetti

I was so embarrassed when we went to this incredible establishment. As you know, I go to the restaurants I am reviewing several times incognito before I select them to do the review (and I always pay my own way). Then, I let them spoil us with their finest foods and drinks so I can get a total overview of their expertise.

Reluctantly, I decided to sample ONLY four appetizers, four salads, two soups, four main courses with four sides, four desserts and several rounds of coffee. Did I mention the wine? Oh yeah, that, too!



I owe it to you to explain I literally watched this place being built. Rumor has it that it cost five million dollars for the inside, alone. I started going there to dine about a month into their season and had been there five or six times before the review night. I have never been disappointed. You will never be disappointed.

The place is gorgeous. Dark woods, tiled ceilings, an open kitchen area and a perfect layout make the internal flow seamless and casual and bring the customer into a seating area with space to spare. No elbow banging, no seatback clashing and no avoid-bumping-into-my neighbor broken field running is necessary. We were comfortable and brought to a relaxed state by the service

and grace of Andrew Clare, our waitperson for the evening, and from Christian, his assistant.

I had the delight of meeting Holger Strutt, the Executive Chef, who greeted all of us in a manner befitting his stature; confident of his menu and glad to see us having so much fun.

We started the evening with a most wonderful assemblage of cold appetizers in a dish called **Iced Shellfish Tower**, consisting of a Whole 1- pound Maine Lobster, 4 Jumbo Gulf Shrimp, 4 Oysters and Long Island Little Neck Clams. I love cold lobster and this appetizer is as close to perfect as one can get.

I also tried the **Canadian Atlantic Smoked Salmon**, over a single potato blini. I was quite impressed with the sweetness and smooth texture.

The thin cut **Onion Rings** were so light we found it hard to imagine that they were actually deep-fried. They were juicy and crunchy at the same time and while it's hard to rave about onion rings, they are a barometer of the caliber of food and service at this great eatery.

The **Tomato, Sweet Onion and Blue Cheese Salad** served with White Balsamic Vinaigrette and Extra Virgin Olive Oil and, the **Beefsteak Tomato and Mozzarella** were two mouth-watering delights well suited as openers to the main courses.

We were served a genuine **Wagyu Kobe N.Y. Strip Steak**...butter soft...seasoned perfectly and cooked exactly as ordered, medium rare. What a treat. Kobe beef is from cows raised on a Japanese-style specialized diet of grain fodder and one beer daily. The cows are also literally massaged with sake each day.

The Holland **Genuine Whole Dover Sole** served sautéed in Extra Virgin Olive Oil and Lemon, Capers, and a Medley of the Day's Vegetables was served French style (filleted and portioned at the table) and was moist and peppery enough to affect a crisp, crunchy texture. Delicious!

The **USDA Prime Colorado Rack of Lamb with Garlic and Parsley** was as tender as lamb could be and sweet behind an herb foreground, thus giving the palate a chorus of sensations.

The Chops "Signature Creation" dish of **South African Cold Water Lobster Tails** was remarkable. They are served thinly crisped and flash-fried, with Chops Honey Mustard and Drawn Butter, preserving the moisture and tenderness. While most of us have Lobster tails baked or broiled, this variation is unique and a wonderful treat.

Everything was perfect...the soups, the desserts and coffee and the great wine. This newcomer to Boca is a welcome neighbor and a soon-to-be landmark destination.