

AS SEEN IN
the **Parklander**

AUGUST 2009

Le Rivage

RESTAURANT

By Charles Marcanetti

I've written about my travels many times before. Since this is a review of a wonderful French restaurant, let me state once again...I've lived in France. I love France and I love the French people (their biggest problem, it seems to me, is that they speak French... *c'est la vie*).

I learned many things living among the sophisticated, yet down-to-earth people in France. One of these great teachings is about the two types of eaters...gourmets and gourmands. The former enjoy fine, delicate and accomplished food creations. They enjoy the subtleties and nuances of the ingredients and the gentle play of the ambiance combined with the service. In other words "the whole package IS the meal." Then, there are gourmands. I'm one of those. We enjoy FOOD...massive quantities of palatable food. If it doesn't kill us, it's just fine.

Le Rivage reaches out to both groups with portions generous enough even for me and perfectly made, presented and displayed so the gourmets can say, *c'est magnifique!*

The owner/chef, Paul Collange, epitomizes French culinary excellence. He is exceptionally pleasant, modest and enormously talented. His ability to blend sauces that are sweet and tangy, full bodied and light, reflects the truest in French culinary perfection. There are no accolades he doesn't deserve and no awards or compliments this hidden treasure doesn't merit. I say hidden treasure because the location is not obvious from any road. It is set off of Federal Highway in Boca, across from the Fifth Avenue Shoppes. Get good directions and please make reservations (561-620-0033, Email: chefpaul@restaurantlervivage.com Website: www.restaurantlervivage.com). You will not want to be shut out of an incredible dining experience.

Located at 450 NE 20th Street in a non-descript strip mall (Shore Centre) and having no "in your face" signage, it's easy to miss. What a loss it would be if you did miss this masterpiece. I'm sure you get the picture; I'm raving about this place, the staff, the management and the owner. Go to Le Rivage for very special occasions or, like me, become a regular and make every meal a special occasion.

I am absolutely not going to evaluate each of the wonderful dishes we had on our visit. I am asking you to trust me when I say they were all perfect.

If I had to pick the most standard fare on the menu, I'd say it was the **Chilled Vichyssoise**. When made correctly it should not stand out. It should not

overpower the coming course.

It should awaken your palate and encourage the food that follows. It did.

We had **French Onion Soup** and followed it with the Chopped Salad consisting of Mixed Lettuce, Gorgonzola Cheese, Red Pepper, Artichoke Hearts, Walnuts and Granny Smith Apple. The salad was a French version of our Waldorf salad, only this was lighter and joyfully crisp. I would also recommend the **Sea Scallops** (that's the big ones) with **Shiitake Mushrooms**. Consider sharing it, as it is large and you won't want to fill-up before the next dishes.

I felt morally obligated to have the **Escargot in Ceramic Dish**. To me, escargot (snail) is merely a garlic delivery system. And, so be it. These little rascals were soft and crunchy and sweet and carried the garlic as if it were offering a tender delicacy to a Queen.

You'll love the **Smoked Salmon with Mixed Greens** and the **Smoked Trout with Celeriac and Sliced Tomatoes**. I did not have either the Pate or the Fois Gras, but I won't force my ethics on anyone. This is also true of the Veal dishes (though I sampled them). Just remember, we are trying to encourage all purveyors of veal to find and buy free-roaming veal or ethically raised veal.

In France, there are two dishes always ordered on birthdays, holidays, anniversaries, etc. They are Ray (as in sting-ray), which is not on Le Rivage's menu, and **Dover Sole Meuneire**, which is (and we're so happy about that). We also had the fabulous **Yellow Tail Snapper with Chardonnay Sauce**, the **Medallions of Veal with Mushroom Au Jus**, the **Veal Osso Bucco - Tomato Braised**, the **Rack of Lamb Au Jus** and the **Roast Half Duck with Cherries**.

I am going to go out on a limb. If Chef Collange decided to give up all meals and serve only dessert, he'd make a fine living and have customers lined up outside of the place waiting to get in. His desserts are comparable to the finest bakeries in France, even beating most of them. Save room for dessert and be prepared to order extra to take home.

We had Chocolate Mousse, Pear Belle Helen, Crème Brulee and Warm Apple Tart with Vanilla Ice Cream. It was a perfect ending to a perfect evening. I am sure you'll feel the same.

