

Dan's Papers



Issue #22- August 20, 2010

RESTAURANT REVIEW: **The Old Mill Inn**

By David Lion Rattiner

Hidden away on the Mattituck Inlet is a restaurant that embodies everything that is wonderful about the North Fork. The Old Mill Inn sits right on the water, in a gorgeous setting, overlooking sailboats that have a quiet magic, much like the restaurant itself.

The restaurant is authentic, charming and gracious, with a professional staff who all have smiles on their faces, a lovely, old world wood bar, a peaceful interior dining room and a gorgeous outdoor deck area for quiet dining that is romantic and fabulous. Needless to say, I really liked it here.

I felt as comfortable as I do in my own home at this restaurant, and it has an elegance and a class that is in its own league. What is so great about The Old Mill Inn is its authenticity to the area. The building was constructed around 1820 and it hasn't changed much, and you can feel the history within its walls. I felt like I discovered this big secret while dining there.

Owned by Bia Lowe, Elaine Lafferty and Barbara Pepe, The Old Mill Inn is exactly as it should be and I hope they never change it. Barbara is a naturally hospitable woman, who treats the restaurant, the people that work there and the guests who dine there as if it were her personal family.

We were seated in the outdoor area, which I highly, highly recommend you take advantage of while dining here. It is romantically lit and is quiet, and provides a sense of peace while you sit. The richness of the land and water around you reminds you why you love to spend your time on this wonderful part of Long Island.

I was so charmed by this restaurant and its positive vibe. Our waiter, a true professional, took our drink order which was of course a glass of local white wine.

We tried the Beef Carpaccio, which uses grass fed beef, that was an absolute sensation. The dish comes with marinated mushrooms, toasted pine nuts, shaved parmesan and truffle emulsion that was so good, my guest ordered another as her entrée. I really can't say enough good things about this dish. We also had the "Angry Mussels" which are cooked with garlic, shallots, chili, vermouth, tomato and basil and bread to dip into the broth. If you like spicy food, you have to go for this dish, I've never eaten mussels that taste like this in all of my years reviewing restaurants. We also tried the red and golden beet salad which comes with frisee, green beans, Danish blue cheese, hazelnuts and a balsamic dressing as well as the fresh, local tomatoes that are grown right on farms within throwing distance.

The entrée menu ranges from \$14 for a burger to \$30 for a nice piece of fish. For my dinner, I tried the sword fish, which was simply epic. The sword fish is served grilled, and it comes served over a succotash of summer corn, pancetta and fava beans, and a sun-dried tomato basil pesto. The sweetness of the corn comes through off the sun-dried tomato basil pesto. I can't imagine anyone saying they are anything else but completely impressed by this dish. I highly recommend it, as did our waiter who I personally thanked for recommending as we left the restaurant.

It was such a satisfying meal and the setting was so pleasant that we found ourselves talking the night away with the stillness of the water around us and the dark summer sky lit up with stars over our heads. This is what a restaurant should feel like, I remember thinking, and I also found myself sort of sad that so many of these fine gems of establishments on both the North and South Fork have been replaced with a trendy vibe that can sometimes feel unauthentic and quite frankly, kind of annoying.

The chef knows how to cook at the The Old Mill Inn and the people running it all really care about their piece of the American dream that they all genuinely take their roles in the restaurant seriously, from the bus girl, to the waiters, to the head chef and owners.

For dessert, we shared an outstanding dish, that you very rarely see on menus in other restaurants, that was a plate of deep fried cake dough fritters sprinkled with sugar and cinnamon that could be dipped in vanilla, chocolate and strawberry sauces. Pure, wonderful decadence for a dessert to top off a wonderful evening on the North Fork that I won't soon forget.

I highly, highly recommend this restaurant to anyone, whether you are with your wife for a nice romantic evening, a group celebrating a birthday or closing a deal. It's a comfortable, elegant and a genuine place with fantastic food. It's a place I will go to again and again. 5775 West Mill Road, Mattituck. 631-298-8080