

EPICUREAN EPISODES

Carol & Joe Davis

**FINE DINING
DETECTIVES**

www.finediningdetectives.com



Ledson Hotel & Harmony Club World Class Cuisine in a Sophisticated Atmosphere

The Dining Detectives headed for Sonoma where the air was cool and clean after the winter rain. The green rolling green hillsides of Sonoma County created a beautiful backdrop for our scenic ride. Sonoma Square has always been one of our favorite local destinations for dining and shopping and we were excited that there was a new stylish restaurant with a sophisticated menu. Ledson opened their Harmony Club Restaurant and Hotel about a year ago and they have received excellent reviews from the beginning. Ledson is known for their Winery in Kenwood, which is housed in a Gothic Castle and has been producing small lots of hand-crafted wines under the supervision of Steve Noble Ledson, the Winemaker.

We first discovered Ledson on an Indian Summer afternoon when we were strolling around Sonoma Square shopping. We were literally drawn in by their beautiful décor and sidewalk outdoor dining. We met Michele Ledson, restaurateur, and spoke to Darren Robey who is the Co-Executive Chef along with Mark Sandoval. Darren shared his enthusiasm about what they had accomplished over the past year and their upcoming First Anniversary.

Our mission was to see how dinner compared to the great lunch we enjoyed previously. We were greeted



Seared Foie Gras

by Michele and escorted to our table near a charming fireplace. There is nothing like dining by the glow of a fire to add warmth and mood to your evening. You may wonder why it is called Ledson Harmony Club. The name is well deserved because they have live music every night featuring jazz, classical or blues. Behind us was a baby grand piano with Jennifer Lee playing and singing jazzy tunes which really added to our experience. Across the room was the massive bar where there were a number of guests tasting a variety of Ledson Wines. The Brazilian Granite tables and floors, bold dark Crown Molding, as well as the exquisite large chandeliers added to the sophisticated elegant setting.

Ryan, our server, was soon at our table offering us a choice of sparkling or still water. All the servers were very professionally dressed with black shirts and ties. Ryan was especially helpful because he shared our passion for superior cuisine, wine

and the elegant interior. We ordered sparkling water and some Ledson wines by the glass to get started and settled in for what we were sure would be an excellent dining experience.

We ordered some starters including their fabulous soup of the day. It was a Cream of Artichoke made with puree of Jerusalem Sun Choke topped with chive oil. It was simply superior!

We next enjoyed some fresh Hog Island Oysters on the half shell, which came with a delicious Cucumber-Verjus Mignonette. The oysters were truly fresh and tasted terrific.

We had to try the Seared Foie Gras with a Mulled Wine Apple Napoleon and Pear Sorbet. It just melted in your mouth and had a distinctively delicious consistency and delicate taste and aroma. The Warm Butternut Squash Salad with dandelion greens, prosciutto and honey-cinnamon dressing is a delicate, unique salad and a must!

The main courses consisted of choices that would please the most discerning diner. Our favorite was the Fennel Crusted Salmon with sautéed escarole, celeriac ravioli and apple tarragon broth. It was pan fried after being wrapped in fennel and had a moist center in a marvelous crust. The sliced Fuji apples made this a world class entrée. The Petit Filet Mignon with Lobster Griddle Cake, creamy spinach and lemon tarragon butter was our second favorite. The delicate lobster came through and worked to add to the perfectly prepared Filet. For those who like duck, the Pan Seared Miso Duck Breast with baby bok choy and scallion crepes will not disappoint. The duck was prepared pink as ordered and was tender and juicy. Bok choy is an excellent choice as a vegetable.

We really enjoyed the side dishes, as well. The Butternut Squash Gratin was sweet and had an earthy texture. The Pommes Frites were more than we needed but we loved their extra salty crisp taste.

The Desserts were all beautiful and you could see that considerable effort went into their presentation. Our favorite was Michele's Peanut Butter Waffle Cup with Chocolate Ganache & Banana Gelato. This was unique with excellent texture. The Trio of Custards was also delicious. Cranberry Crème Brulee was the best. Dessert Wines were hard to pass up, so we enjoyed the 2000 Madera Port and the 2003 Orange Muscat.

The wines of Ledson Vineyards are sold only at the Winery and are featured here at The Harmony Club and Hotel as well. Only a very few varietals that are not produced by Ledson are on the list. We enjoyed Ledson 2001 Reserve Russian River Chardonnay and the Ledson 2003 Russian

River Chardonnay with our Oysters and the Seared Foie Gras. Their 2001 Russian River Ancient Old Vine Zinfandel paired perfectly with the Petit Filet Mignon.

Ledson has truly enhanced Sonoma Square. The décor is sophisticated and the cuisine features a high level of creativity with exceptional flavors and presentation. They offer outdoor dining facing the Square with heaters overhead for chillier days. Locals and tourists can feel free to dine in either casual or elegant attire. It is said that here Food and Wine come together to create a harmonious experience for your senses. We concur and can't wait to return to see what our next lunch or dinner has to offer!



Peanut Butter Waffle Cup Dessert



Pianist Jennifer Lee



Restaurateur Michele Ledson



Ryan with Pommes Frites

Post Notes:

Ledson Hotel & Harmony Club

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www.ledsonhotel.com
Open Daily
11:30 AM – 10:00 PM
Lunch Menu
until 5:00 PM
Dinner Menu
starts at 5:00 PM
Brunch Menu
on Sunday
Wine Tasting
11:00 AM- 5:00 PM
Closed Tuesday in Winter
Ample Parking on Street
Reservations not Required
Credit Cards Accepted
Hotel Rooms Available