

Epicurean Episodes

Valhalla Restaurant: Sausalito's Culinary Delight



IT WAS A WARM CLEAR SUMMER NIGHT AND THE DINING DETECTIVES WERE BACK IN SAUSALITO, OUR OLD HOMETOWN. This Sunday evening we were at a favorite "legendary location" on the water that recently became The Valhalla. Occupying the site of the former Chart House, The Valhalla opened with a veteran team of local restaurant luminaries.

We'd lived in Sausalito for many years and had enjoyed dining and parties there in the past, and were glad to see it renovated and with fresh life. Ghosts of Sally Stanford, "Baby Face" Nelson, bootleggers, ladies of the night and colorful characters from the 1870s to today danced in our heads, as we entered the renovated restaurant. We didn't see the old barber chair that belonged to Sally, but her picture remained in the lobby.

The beautiful wood bar was still there and the dining room was more open with the addition of a double row of booths. The open presentation kitchen had an Italian wood burning oven.

We were warmly greeted by the hostess and were escorted to our table which afforded us a perfect panoramic bay front view of The City, The Bay and Angel Island. There has always been a certain "magic" about the view from Sausalito and particularly The Valhalla. We started off with some wines by the glass and enjoyed seeing the fog come in through the gate and cover the San Francisco skyline. Our server told us about the specials and we were about to see what The New Valhalla was all about.



Rich Jones brought our wine.

Here are some of the dishes that we highly recommend:

STARTERS

Heirloom Tomatoes, Mozzarella, Basil, Extra Virgin Olive Oil and Tomato Water

Tremendously delicious, sweet as a dessert and inspired us to find the ingredients and try it at home. Tomatoes that actually tasted like tomatoes that were to die for! Hoisin BBQ St. Louis Ribs with Peppered Pineapple Relish and Chive Oil
The meat fell off the bone and the lovely relish was a perfect compliment. We actually had this starter for lunch on a previous visit and knew we'd love them!

BENTO BOX

Tuna Tartare and Avocado with Yuzu Lime Vinaigrette, Soba Noodle Salad and Coriander Crusted Tuna with Ponzu Sauce

This was as fresh and tasty Sushi as we've ever tasted. There was no Wasabi which was a different touch that let the other flavors shine.

PIZZA

We can't wait to have this again!

Wild Mushroom, Roasted Garlic, Leeks, and Baby Arugula

Perfect to split or as a main course. The Arugula was aromatic and fresh and the crust was very light and tasty.

ENTREES

Grilled Piedmontese Beef Tenderloin with Blue Cheese Potato Puree, Frisee, Watercress and Bacon Salad Béarnaise and Red Wine Sauce

This was a fantastic beef dish that we highly recommend!

Grilled Pork Chop with Cranberry Bean and Toy Box Tomato Ragout, Gala Apple and Watercress Salad and a Pancetta Shallot Sauce
The Chop was moist and tender.

FABULOUS DESSERTS!!

Sweet endings by Pastry Chef Paul Conte.

Butterscotch Crème Brulee with Warm Sweet Beignets
Absolutely perfect flavor and consistency. The beignets were a real treat!
Lemon Cheese Cake with Plum Coulis and Apricot Sorbet

A small round portion that is delightfully lemon and just light

enough to still be rich.

Peach Tarte Tatin with Blueberry Ice Cream and Opal Basil Syrup
Beautiful!

Warm Chocolate Truffle Cake with Caramel Chocolate Crunch Ice Cream and Candied Kumquats
Chocolate fans will be very pleased with this selection.

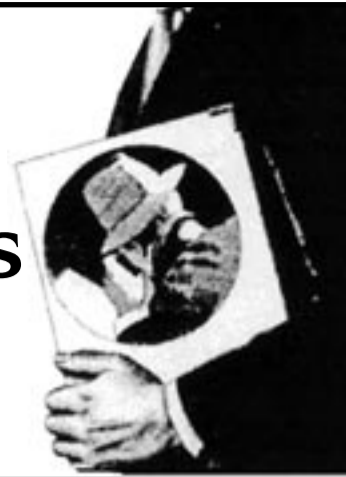
WINES

We really appreciated the depth of the wine list, especially the wines by the glass. Napa, Sonoma, Willamette Valley, Italy, France, Spain, Germany and New Zealand were all represented. Rick Jones our host who told us of his passion for wines paired wines for us with each course. We enjoyed a St. Clement Napa 1999 Chardonnay which was dry and crisp and had tropical aromas, Maison Ferrande 2001 Bordeaux, Sauvignon Blanc which had a really nice zing and a great finish Knowledge makes all the difference as we would have never considered the Reisling Kabinet, "Astor," 2001 Monchof Germany with the ribs or the Ribera del Duero (Conde de Siruela) Spain 1996 with the pork chop. Each complimented and added to the appreciation of the cuisine. Ask your server for suggestions and you'll be glad you did.

The Valhalla has a rich and bawdy history which began in 1870. Through the years each group of owners has contributed to the legendary restaurant and the current team of Rick Jones, Nunzio Alioto, Jeffrey Freburg, Joanne Alioto, and Paul Conte are making their mark in a positive way. The bistro atmosphere, fresh local seasonal ingredients featuring organic and sustainable products, adds to the "one of a kind view" to make this a great destination. We're glad The Valhalla is once again open and you'll enjoy the view, the food, the history and the hospitality. We'll also be back soon.

THE DINING DETECTIVES

By CAROL & JOE DAVIS
www.finediningdetectives.com



Heirloom Tomato Starter—Tremendously delicious, sweet as a



Grilled Pork Chop with Cranberry Bean and Toy Box Tomato Ra-



Butterscotch Crème Brulee with Warm Sweet Beignets: Absolutely perfect flavor and consistency. The beignets were a real treat!

VALHALLA RESTAURANT

201 Bridgeway, Sausalito, California 94965
PHONE: 415-331-9463 • FAX: 415-331-4010

LUNCH Wed-Sat 11:30 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

BRUNCH Sunday 10:30 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

DINNER Tuesday-Sunday 5:00 p.m. On

- Reservations Recommended
- Walk-Ins Welcome
- Free Valet Parking
- Major Credit Cards Accepted
- Banquet Room Available
- Full Bar