

Epicurean Episodes



William Tell House Casual Country Fare In An Historic Restaurant

IT WAS A SUNNY WINTER SATURDAY AFTERNOON and The Dining Detectives were out on an adventure to see a bit of history in Marin County and eventually to dine at the historic William Tell House in Tomales. We started out in San Anselmo and drove out through Olema and north on Highway One. The rolling hills were green due to the large amount of winter rain and the sheep and cattle appeared to be enjoying the fresh grass. Our new BMW X5 hugged the winding roads as we passed farms, farm houses, and Queen Anne cottages. After passing Tomales Bay with its oyster beds evening approached and we arrived in the little hamlet of Tomales.

Tomales which still has the look of a Victorian frontier settlement town is steeped in California history. It was once a stop on the North Pacific Railroad and also a

Hammond.

We took a tour of the hotel, which was lovely and promised to come back to stay soon. We invited Penny to join us a few doors down at our destination restaurant this evening, The William Tell House. Opened in Tomales in 1877 to quench the thirsts of the early residents this establishment is said to be the oldest saloon/restaurant in northern Marin County. We were greeted by the owners Kirk and Paula Furlong. They have owned the William Tell House for over 2 years but the Furlong family has been in the area for over 150 years. I guess you'd have to call them locals.

We came in through the bar which boasted a friendly local crowd enjoying themselves. We entered the dining room through swinging doors and as we were seated at our table in this casual

“The William Tell House, which in 1877 opened in Tomales to quench the thirsts of the early residents and is said to be the oldest saloon/restaurant in northern Marin County.”

busy port where ships brought goods in and then loaded cargo, including dairy, beef and sheep products. But mostly potatoes, thus the early name for the area, Potato Country. The inlet is now filled in but the stories from those early years of commerce remain.

Our first stop, just before town was The Tomales Gallery. Clark Mitchell showed us the gallery and we found some local artist's works that we had to have. From there we went into Tomales where we made a stop at The Continental Inn which originally opened in 1866 and was previously known as The U.S. Hotel. It was recently purchased and is currently being updated by our friend, the new innkeeper Penny

restaurant we thought about all the history, of the people who had dined and drank here over the last 125 years and our heads were spinning. Tara our waitress was soon at our table with warm locally baked bread and told us about the specials which included Prime Rib. We ordered wine to get us started. Here are some of the dishes we highly recommend.

APPETIZERS:

Potato Skins with Cheddar Cheese and Bacon
This was a delicious way to start our meal and was perfect to share.
Fried Mozzarella Sticks served with Marinara Sauce
We enjoyed dipping them in a savory Marinara and sharing them

as well.

SOUPS:

New England Clam Chowder
We liked this flavorful white chowder which was filled with clams and potatoes especially because it was not too rich.
Tomato Vegetable Soup
This was very hearty and great on this chilly evening.

ENTREES: (Each Entrée came with soup or salad and choice of potato)

Slow Roast Prime Rib of Beef (Served Friday-Sunday only.)
This was the best Entrée we had this evening. It was perfectly prepared and served rare just as we had ordered, with a Baked Potato on the side. If you dine on the weekend it is a must. As we perused the room quite a few of the other diners look very happy eating this tasty Prime Rib.

House Roasted Baby Back Pork Ribs with BBQ sauce
This was a very hearty serving of ribs which was served with a tasty sauce and garlic mashed potatoes. It's another fine choice.

DESSERTS:

Ice Cream—Vanilla, Chocolate and Spumoni
After this hearty meal we opted to have just a little ice cream which was rich and flavorful. There were homemade desserts but we were too full.

WINES:

Kenwood Sauvignon Blanc
A light white wine that was perfect with the salads and soup.
Charles Krug Cabernet Sauvignon
This was a big and bold red wine that paired well with the Prime Rib.

A ride to Tomales and dinner at The William Tell House is a journey back in time where one dreams of the ranchers, dairymen and farmers like the Furlongs and other Irish, Swiss and Italian families who settled and worked the land of northern Marin County. Chef Tim Riley has added to this history by giving us updated versions of standard Country American Fare. The food was hearty, the service was well paced and the wine list reflected the local vintner's best. We look forward to learning more about Tomales and another casual dinner at the William Tell House and a stay at The Continental Inn.



Kirk and Paula Furlong, proud owners of the William Tell House.

THE DINING DETECTIVES

By CAROL & JOE DAVIS
www.finediningdetectives.com



House Roasted Baby Back Pork Ribs with BBQ sauce.



WILLIAM TELL HOUSE
26955 Highway One, Tomales, CA 94971
PHONE: 707-878-2403
OPEN FOR DINNER
Wednesday-Saturday 5 p.m.-9 p.m. Sunday 4 p.m.-9 p.m.
BAR OPEN DAILY
• Pub Grub • Kids Menu
• Private Room • Major Credit Cards
• Banquets Catered • Private Parties