

*Carol & Joe Davis***FINE DINING
DETECTIVES**

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**EPICUREAN EPISODES****William Tell House of Tomales**

R to L: Chef Lyn Baumgold, Proprietors Richard Kass and Jennifer Puccioni, and Dining Room Manager Liz Kass



Shrimp Cocktail



Slow Roasted Prime Rib



Brownie Sandwich

It is hard to believe that it has been four years since we reviewed the William Tell House Restaurant. How time flies! The William Tell House is the oldest Restaurant-Saloon in West Marin County. It was established in 1877 in an historic building that is part of Tomales' signature frontier Victorian architecture. The new Proprietors are Richard Kass and Jennifer Puccioni. They have local ties and a wealth of restaurant and bar experience. The new Executive Chef, Lyn Baumgold, has updated the menu but kept it attractive to locals and tourists alike. Liz Kass is the new dining room manager, making the William Tell House a family affair.

We enjoyed our 20-minute ride down Tomales-Petaluma Rd. The hillsides were lush and green and neither the rain nor the snow -- that's right, snow -- on the Sonoma Mountains deterred us from our task. We met our Dining Assistants, Penny and Gary, a few doors down the street at The Continental Inn. The Continental Inn is a lovely hotel that has offered lodging since 1866 as a refuge for the weary traveler. Later, we would spend the night. The Continental was previously the U.S. Hotel. That burned down in the 1920's and was rebuilt in the 80's to resemble the original. The rooms have all been renovated and are large, attractive and comfortable. The Inn is quaint and charming, with loads of Victorian and English charm.

We sauntered a few doors down to the William Tell House, met Liz, and were seated in a charming dining room with a country casual atmosphere. We quickly ordered a variety of wines by the glass and were ready to see what the new menu had to offer.

First we sampled some very tasty Appetizers. The Shrimp Cocktail was our favorite and is as pleasing to the palate as it is to the eye. We also enjoyed the Deep Fried Coconut Shrimp, perfectly crispy and accompanied by a tasty mango sweet chili sauce. The Dungeness Crab Cakes were also top notch. They were accompanied by a delicious Remoulade sauce and were full of crab.

All the entrees are served with soup and house salad. We loved the Clam Chowder and opted to have the Iceberg Wedge with Exceptional Point Reyes Crumbled Blue Cheese instead of the house salad.

Our favorite Entrée is only served on weekends. It's the Slow Roasted Prime Rib, a huge rancher portion 16-ounce tender prime rib cut, cooked to order with creamed horseradish sauce and au jus. We ordered it rare and were very happy with the result. Bring a hearty appetite or be prepared to take some home.

For those who are even hungrier, we highly recommend the Full Rack of Chef's Own Baby Back Ribs. These falling-off-the-bone tender baby back ribs with house-made barbeque sauce were a real treat -- and the vegetables and garlic mashed potatoes were perfect complements. We also really enjoyed the Fresh Local Fish Special. The night we were there, it was Pan Seared Sea Bass on a bed of spinach. Delicious. It came with carrots, green beans and French fries that were also terrific.

As usual, we couldn't resist the desserts. We loved both the Brownie Sandwich and the Bread Pudding. The brownie was chewy and the bread pudding was ultra light, nicely spiced and nutty. Coffees and a Cockburn Special Reserve Imported Port provided an excellent finish.

The Wine List at the

William Tell House has something for everyone. We enjoyed the 2003 Buena Vista Sauvignon Blanc, Lake County, which paired well with the sea bass. The 2004 Clos Du Bois Chardonnay Sonoma County, Alexander, Dry Creek and Russian River Valleys was great with the shrimp. The 2004 Kunde Chardonnay Sonoma Valley went well with the crab cakes. A hearty red, the 2003 Ravenswood Zinfandel Vintner's Blend -- Sonoma County Winemaker Joel Peterson's Personal Blend -- was great with the prime rib, and the 2003 Coli Chianti Classico Sangiovese with Canaioli Matri Vinai del 1926 paired well with the ribs.

The William Tell House is reviving its rich history of serving great food in rancher portions. The service was very friendly and efficient, the cuisine was fresh and tasty and the atmosphere was warm and comfortable. Reservations are recommended for this year's Easter Sunday Brunch Buffet which includes all you want to eat and continuously flowing champagne. Take a short ride for a great meal or make a night of it and stay at the Continental Inn, thecontinentalinn.com. You'll be glad you did.

Post Notes

William Tell House
26955 Highway One
Tomales, Ca.94971
707.878.2403
Thursday 5 PM- 9 PM
Friday & Saturday
5:30 PM -9:30 PM
Sunday 4 PM- 9 PM
BAR OPEN DAILY
Major Credit Cards
Take Out and Catering
Available
Private room for banquets
Children's Menu
(12 and under)
Sandwiches Available
Weekend Breakfast & Lunch
Starts in May