

EPICUREAN EPISODES

Carol & Joe Davis

**FINE DINING
DETECTIVES**

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Wolf House Restaurant Fine Dining in Glen Ellen

Happy Holidays! It is hard to believe that we have been writing for the Post for five years now! Our style of review is a positive view of food that we really like and that you would enjoy. We are able to do this successfully because we represent the "target diner" the restaurant is looking to attract and please. We bring dining assistants with us so there are four perspectives of the food and we are able to taste a number of appetizers, entrees and desserts. We only write about what we like and can recommend thus leaving the difficult role of restaurant critic to Michael Bauer and The Chronicle. You can think of us as the "Good News"



behind Sonoma Valley Place Names, which we picked up at the local Sullivan Birney Winery tasting room. Of course, Jack London was the most famous resident and The Jack London Lodge, Jack London Saloon and Wolf House Restaurant are

anticipated. As we entered, we could see that the renovations had created an elegant open atmosphere. The rich wood floor and beamed ceiling with beautiful lighting created an elegant comfortable setting. The tables were spaced perfectly to provide privacy and the seating was also quite stunning with high-back nail head upholstered chairs. We enjoyed the addition of light jazz in the background which added to the sophisticated mood.

We were escorted to our table by Amanda, the smiling friendly hostess. We sat near the rustic brick fireplace. They also offer outdoor creek-side dining but we felt that since this was our first visit, we should dine inside to get the full effect of the Dining Room. Calvin, our server, was soon at our table offering us S. Pellegrino Sparkling Min-

eral Water as well as the Menu and Wine List. He alerted us to the specials, we ordered some wines by the glass and we were about to begin our journey through Sonoma Valley Cuisine on the banks of the Sonoma Creek.

We were impressed by the beautiful presentation of all the cuisine and here are the dishes that we enjoyed and can highly recommend. The Starters included a fabulous Soup of the Day. It was a Red Curry Squash with lentils, coriander, tarragon and scallions on top. This was a great way to begin our meal and with its unique taste we knew we were in the right place. Next we had the Appetizers where we found even more delicious choices. The Sparkling Wine Battered Prawns with Upland Cress Salad was a crowd pleaser. The prawns were moist and juicy and the

accompanying salad accented it well. Wolf House "Grilled Cheese" which consisted of a Rosemary Skewered Mozzarella and Focaccia with roasted garlic brown butter was so unique and we loved it! The Torchon of Sonoma Foie Gras with pickled British Columbia Crab apples in a balsamic reduction sauce was different than the normal sautéed or grilled Foie Gras and served cold was an interesting, more pate like presentation. For the Salad Course we opted for the Baby Beet Salad with Laura Chenel Crostin Goat Cheese, Mache, and apple balsamic vinaigrette. The beets were sweet and goat cheese lovers know that Laura Chenel is the best around. The Sonoma Green Salad with Point Reyes Blue Cheese, local apples, spiced walnuts, in shallot vinaigrette is an excellent alternative for those who are not goat cheese enthusiasts. Either way a salad is a worthwhile course. We were pleasantly surprised as we were treated to a palate cleansing intermezzo of Passion Fruit Sorbet. It was rather refreshing and gave us a chance to relax between courses.

Entrees are the feature of the meal and we have some nice recommendations. Here at the Wolf House Restaurant we were pleased with all of our choices. The Pan Roasted Skate Wing served with Crème Fraiche Smashed Potatoes, Truffle braised endive in a brown butter sauce was terrific. It was light and tasty and perfect for fish lovers. As we enjoy duck we were also found the Grilled Maple Leaf Duck Breast served with Puy lentils, roasted Delacata Squash and a cranberry demi glace to be delicious. It was lean and not at all greasy as



Classic Lemon Tart

about local restaurants.

We were lucky because it was another beautiful fall day with wonderful warm temperatures and the Dining Detectives were out for a ride through the Napa and Sonoma Wine Country. The grapes were already harvested and the Crush was in full swing. The Vineyards though mostly bare were as beautiful as the leaves on the trees that were changing colors. What a glorious day to be heading to our destination of Glen Ellen and our choice for dinner, the Wolf House Restaurant.

Glen Ellen has some interesting history which we researched in Arthur Dawson's book *The Stories*

representative of his ongoing memory and celebrity. One might not know that Glen Ellen was named for Mary Ellen who was the wife of Colonel Charles Stuart. His ranch and the vineyard that he started in the mid 1850's is where Glen Ellen is today. After the Colonel's death, Mary Ellen went on to become one of a handful of Lady Winemakers who were successful in the 1880's.

The Wolf House in Glen Ellen has only been open for about six months but has already received excellent reviews and we couldn't wait to see if the dining experience was as good as we had



Sparkling Wine Battered Prawns

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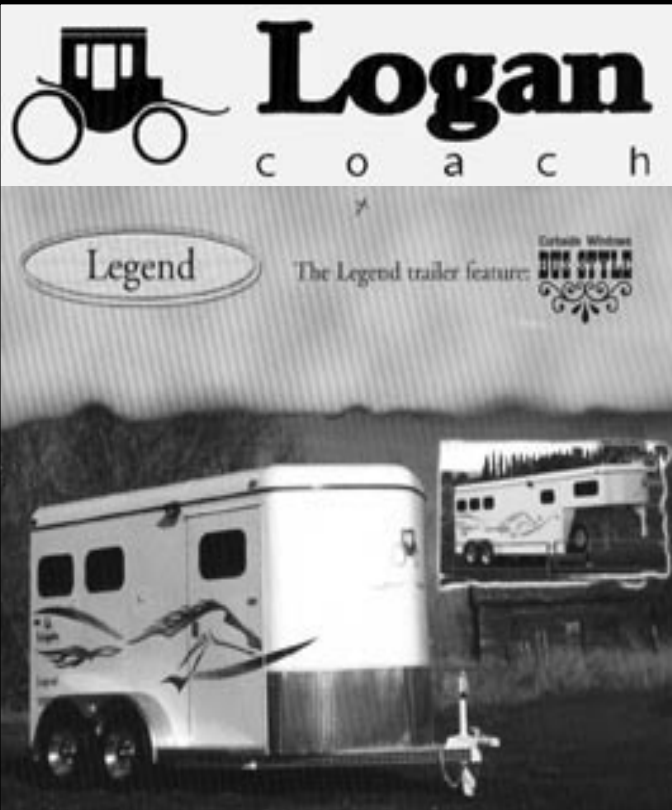
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EPICUREAN EPISODES

Authentic Spanish/Portuguese Restaurant "Zangria" Opens in Petaluma

On November 4, 2003, partners Edward Pizzuti and Carlos Valdés opened the doors for business of their new restaurant "Zangria". The regular lunch/dinner menu emphasizes traditional

Spanish/Portuguese cuisine, from tapas (Spanish appetizers), to paellas and sangria. In addition to their regular menu there is a special "Bull Run" lunch selection of soups, salads and sandwiches that are

designed for more rapid "take-out" and table service.

Located at 1370 Redwood Way, this makes it especially valuable to the surrounding business park employees in Petaluma's No. McDowell end of town.

Carlos says "This is a friendly place to dine and socialize; where customers can get away from all the daily pressures and enjoy really good food in a comfortable place. I'm from a long line of restaurateurs — I guess you could say I have cooking in my blood. It's fun to offer customers small dishes that let them discover the savory tastes of Spanish cuisine."

Edward Pizzuti, owner of Caffé Giostra, Vino Premium Wines and owner/chef of Zangria, enthusiastically envisions the blossoming of the restaurant's full potential. "In the very near future" Edward says, "our stage will be exploding with fiery flamenco dancers such as "La Fibi" and Spanish guitarists, bringing a whole new dimension to Petaluma's dining experience." No stranger to the tapas bar concept, Edward owned "Bolero" in Marin several years ago, long before this type of cuisine was so popular in the United States. His experienced skills in the "Spanish" kitchen can be tasted Tuesdays through Thursdays from 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., Fridays from 11:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 5:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. (Closed Sunday and Monday)

Petaluma can now look to Zangria for a new, upbeat experience in ethnic Spanish and Portuguese food, atmosphere and lively entertainment. Located just 2 blocks east of Highway 101 off Old Redwood Highway, look for the "big yellow awning" at 1370 Redwood Way.

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is the case with some duck dishes. The Lavender Braised Lamb Shank with white bean and Feta ragout and a Zinfandel reduction got rave reviews from the lamb fans. The meat fell off the bone and the hearty sauce was perfect. All of the vegetables served with the entrees were delicious, fresh and flavorful.

Amazingly even after the hearty Entrees we still had room for Dessert. We ordered coffee and awaited the final course. The presentation and Chef's "Special Touch" made our dessert course a real treat. The Frozen Espresso Parfait with Candied Walnuts and Caramel sauce looked lovely and tasted delicious. The layering of the parfait made it look as good as it tasted.

The other three choices were equally delicious but more special because of the Happy Birthday wishes to both Carol and David written in chocolate on the plates. We had seen this before but only in the most upscale restaurants. Each dessert including the Scharffenberger Chocolate Mint Torte with Mint syrup and Crème Anglaise, Classic Lemon Tart with sweetened Bellweather Farm crème fraiche and Honey Roasted Figs with sweetened Redwood Hill Chevre and Black Truffle Caramel had their supporters. The Classic Lemon Tart was the overall favorite and was the first to be devoured!

The Wine list consists of a good selection of Sonoma Valley and Napa Valley favorites. Our choices of wines by the glass were perfect for our

tastes and paired well with each course. We particularly enjoyed the Kunde Sauvignon Blanc.

Chef / Partner Jean – Claude Balek has created a very special fine dining destination in Glen Ellen. He was well trained at the San Francisco California Culinary Academy and honed his craft under the tutelage of legends Jeremiah Towers and Gary Danko. The pleasing presentation, and the fact that we were not stuffed even after many courses, attests to the quality of the cuisine and the pacing of our meal. We look forward to new and seasonal selections on future visits featuring the best Sonoma County have to offer.

The Wolf House Restaurant is a cut above and definitely lived up to the early reviews as a worthwhile destination for a Fine Dining!

Post Notes

*Wolf House Restaurant
At*

*The Jack London Lodge
13740 Arnold Drive
Glen Ellen, Ca 95442
707-996-4401
707-996-0850 fax*

Open:

Lunch Mon-Fri 11:30 AM- 3:00 PM

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