

The Times

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By Joan Belknap

Staff Writer

We went "totus porkus" - an old Princeton man's way of saying "whole hog" - over the appetizers in our early week dinner review at Main Street Euro-American Bistro and Bar in Princeton.

Associate tasters Jack and Bob were totally blown away by the imaginative menu offerings. I was, too.

We just could not decide among them, so we each ordered two. Icy cold gazpacho soup, \$5.50; Prince Edward Island oysters on the half-shell, \$12.50, with traditional cocktail sauce and a tasty shallot red wine vinaigrette for dipping; a fresh fig salad, \$8.95; an Asian spring roll with greens, \$7.95; a gigantic antipasto Milano for two, \$12.95; plus a Bistro bread basket, with pepper herb olive oil, \$3.50. (Country bread comes free with the meal if requested.)

The table was groaning.

The gazpacho was truly icy cold and had wonderful, fresh summer flavors with a hint of diablo.

The oysters were delicious and also ice cold.

The antipasto Milano arrived on a dish crammed with roasted red peppers, marinated fresh green beans, grilled eggplant, dry-cured salami slices, mozzarella and asiago cheeses and grilled bruschetta. It was heavenly - and could make an entire luncheon. Then, there is the not-to-be-missed fresh fig salad with caramelized mission figs, mustard greens, sheets of prosciutto and parmesan in a balsamic vinaigrette.

Who needed more? We did. Bob ordered oven-roasted snapper, \$19.95, with a black bean and tomato salsa and a corn-pudding timbale, a real tribute to Jersey corn. He was happy with his choice, although he didn't scarf up all the salsa.

Jack liked his Maryland crab cakes, \$21.95, but wasn't thrilled with the price.

I ordered the baby back ribs, \$17.95, served with jalapeno corn pudding and apple slaw. The corn pudding was fantastic, as was the slaw, alive with cabbage, apple, golden raisins and almond slivers.

We finished with coffee with cream, \$1.95, a very good single espresso, \$2.75, a Courvoisier VS, \$7, and two dynamite desserts, plus delicious biscotti, \$3.25, for a cinnamon, a plain and a chocolate. I encouraged Bob to dip the chocolate one into his Courvoisier.

My lemon roulade was a spectacular sponge cake rolled around lemony pudding with a blueberry compote, \$6.50.

Bob's Dessert Con Queso, \$6.50, has to be seen to be believed. Layers of lime custard, mango mousse, kiwi-strawberry salsa topped by shaved white chocolate were stacked and plated with crisp sweet chips. What a dream concoction. We were overwhelmed. Even if you skip the entrees, you will come away impressed.

By the way, they also serve fabulous burgers at lunch, \$6.95.