



# Beach Club Bistro an oasis on cold northern shore

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You might think that going to the beach in November wouldn't be such a good idea. Well, if heading out to the beach means a trip to the Beach Club Bistro in downtown Euclid, think again.

On a recent Wednesday night, my husband and I drove down Lake Shore Boulevard to enjoy dinner at the Beach Club Bistro. We'd both had busy days but decided to carve out time for a fast dinner and then hurry back to our already overcrowded routine.

Well, at least that was our plan. Once we walked through the doors, we could feel the excitement of the restaurant and noticed only one empty table.

On a Wednesday night in Euclid? What was up with that?

After being seated at the only empty table, we began to soak up the ambiance. Hunter green and spiced pumpkin painted walls, two TVs going above the bar, seashells on the window fabric panels and urban loft-style pendant lighting accented the laughing, talking and camaraderie that only a neighborhood restaurant can have.

We looked at each other and decided this beach break was worth taking and that there was no way we were going to hurry the experience. Our packed routine would just have to wait.

As we looked over the menu and the extensive wine list, we were amazed at everything offered. The wine list boasts more than 40 white and about 50 red wines. Almost all the wines are sold by the half-bottle or bottle (\$13.99 to \$89.99, with the exception of \$139.99 for the Far Niente '02 Oakville) with a median price of \$30 to \$40.

The Beach Club Bistro also offers an extensive list of beers, everything from domestic to seasonal draft, micro brews and imports.

Very few wines are offered by the glass, but I was lucky to find the Helix Aspersa (\$6.95), a Washington State wine blend of 75 percent chardonnay and 25 percent pinot gris. It was delightful and perfect for sipping before dinner. My husband had a glass of red wine, the Fieldstone cabernet (\$6.95), and said it was rich and full-bodied.

We decided to start the evening with a couple of appetizers and asked our server, Jennifer, what were the most popular. She said the sausage and cheese sampler (\$11.95), the crab-stuffed mushrooms (\$8.95) and the Shorehaven gratinee (\$9) were at the top of the list. Even though there are seven other appetizers on the menu, including a homemade soup du jour (\$4.50), we both went with Jennifer's suggestions. I chose the gratinee, while my dining partner ordered the sampler.

A huge ramekin of shrimp, crab and garlic in an Alfredo sauce with its gratineed top arrived with a dozen parmesan toast points. The plating was beautiful, and the portion was

large enough for two. We did bring half of it home and enjoyed it as an appetizer the following evening.

Same thing with the sampler — there was more than enough for two people. The chef's choice of artisan cheeses with specialty cured meats and sausage was a wonderful way to start our meal. The baby brie was to die for, and the grainy mustard and Chianti jelly were nice surprises to accent the flavors on the plate.

The menu at the Beach Club Bistro is the same for lunch as dinner; salads, sandwiches, entrees and pizzas are the main players. There is even a create-your-own Pad Thai bowl (\$12 to \$18.50), which allows you to pick your noodle (soba, udon, or linguine) and your main selection (vegetable, chicken, shrimp or grilled tilapia) to be combined with stir-fried bok choy, carrots, peppers, mushrooms napa cabbage and peanuts all tossed in a sweet chili glaze.

The salads (\$4 to \$8.75) are primarily vegetarian, but grilled chicken or tuna can be added. Sandwiches run the gamut from pulled pork to smoked brisket to grilled Portobello (\$8.95 to \$9.95), and all are served with a side of fresh cut or sweet potato fries.

I finally decided on the grilled rib-eye (\$21) medium rare. It arrived at our table perfectly prepared and with a side of rosemary-infused mashed cauliflower, julienned winter vegetables and sautéed portabellas. It was delightful, tasty and beautifully presented.

My husband ordered the 9-inch Margherite pizza (\$11.50) with its garlic white sauce, roasted roma tomatoes, julienned basil and fresh mozzarella. It arrived at our table hot and with the most wonderful aroma of basil. A 12-inch is also available (\$17.75).

There are 11 other specialty pizzas available for the same price, all named for local landmarks — the Noble Beach Club, the VASJ Viking, the Henn Mansion and the Edgecliff Club to name just a few.

But at the Beach Club you can also design your own pizza with your choice of six sauces and 28 toppings.

Although the dessert menu offers cannoli, chocolate lava cake, gelatos and made-from-scratch bread puddings (\$6 to \$7.50), my husband quickly heard "Tonight our cheesecake flavor is crème brulee," and he handed Jennifer back the menu and ordered it (\$5.50). I ordered the tiramisu (\$7.50). Both were phenomenal and worth every penny (and calorie).

Everything about our Wednesday night at the Beach Club Bistro was a delight, and we are glad we decided to just take our time and enjoy the special atmosphere of a great local restaurant.

Thinking of going to the beach in November? We'll join you as long as it is the Beach Club Bistro in Euclid.

Beach Club Bistro

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