

City Bistro: Pleasing to every palate

Written by BY TERRY MATHEWS, News-Telegram Arts Editor
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“Something for everyone” is the motto for Greenville’s City Bistro, located inside Landon’s Winery in the former Kress building in historic downtown Greenville. On the day I visited the restaurant with the Bright Star Literary Society, the bistro’s motto was flying high.

Bright Star book club delights in diversity, reading everything from Danielle Steele to Christopher Hitchens. Last Tuesday, we flew our own independence flags as we placed our lunch orders.



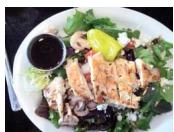
We selected hand rolled spinach and meat lasagna (\$9.99), grilled salmon salad over spring mix (\$12.99), Greek salad with grilled chicken, complemented by a lovely balsamic vinaigrette (\$8.99), a turkey croissant stack (\$6.99) and Philadelphia cheese steak sub (\$6.99).

Since City Bistro is located inside the winery, of course we decided to sample the adult refreshment. We settled on a bottle of one of the winery’s best sellers, Yellow Rose (\$12.99) a “refreshing and wonderful white wine with a hint of sweetness and moderate alcohol, displaying orchard flavors of apple and peach.”

As our attentive, but not oppressive server, Ryan, put each plate in front of us, you could hear a chorus of “oooohs” and “aaahhhs.” As Julia Child said, “We eat with our eyes first.”

I understand why the bistro goes through 15 pans of lasagna a day. It was superb. Tender pasta rolled around perfectly seasoned spinach and meat mixture, topped with a delicate sauce makes for deliciousness in every bite. The lunch order comes with two stuffed pasta shells, more than enough to satisfy even the heartiest appetite.

The salmon was perfectly cooked to a light flakiness and was brushed with a sweet, tangy marinade.



I don’t know if the greens on the Greek salad came from a bag, but they had been properly washed and prepared and were crisp, not wilted. The grilled chicken breast didn’t have to rely on the lovely vinaigrette for its flavor. The meat was seasoned just right.

The bread on the turkey croissant stack and cheese steak sub was light, flaky and full of flavor. Ryan said the bread was baked off premises, but was one of the reasons the Bistro’s sandwiches have become so popular.

“This is one of the best cheese steak sandwiches I’ve had since I left the east coast,” said member Carol Allen, who grew up in New Jersey and knows from good steak sandwiches.

A bistro’s specialty – Parmesan potato chips – came with the sandwiches. Everyone at the table tried them and proclaimed them yummy.

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Between the 10 of us, we shared tiramisu, cannolis (\$4.99 each) and chocolate tuxedo cake (\$5.49) for dessert. Although the tiramisu I sampled was a bit frozen in the middle, and my cannoli was a little stale, there was nothing wrong with the taste, and the coffee was hot, fresh and strong.



Monday through Thursday, City Bistro offers a Two For \$20 menu that includes one appetizer to share, two side salads and two entrées for \$20. The appetizer choices include tomato basil bruschetta, grilled asparagus or parmesan chips. Entrée selections include spaghetti marinara, meat sauce or meat balls, spaghetti a la fresco, fettuccini Alfredo, eggplant parmigiana, eggplant Florentine and the fabulous lasagna.

I'd like to go back in the evening and try a steak or one of the many bistro specialties. Ryan says the pecan crusted tilapia (\$14.99) and cedar plank salmon (\$17.99) are house favorites. They also offer grilled quail (\$12.99) and bistro sizzling skillet (\$12.99 for chicken or beef, \$13.99 for shrimp or combo) that feature grilled chicken, beef or shrimp over sautéed vegetables, served with rosemary mashed potatoes.

They also have some interesting appetizers, including golden pickles (\$6.99), calamari fritti (\$7.99), crab meat stuffed mushrooms (\$7.99), steamed mussels and clams (\$8.99) and a Greek platter with hummus, tzatziki, feta cheese, olives and pita bread (\$12.99)

If you're a pizza lover, you're in luck. City Bistro offers a variety of artisan pizzas and strombolis from \$6.99 to \$11.49.

The City Bistro is open seven days a week from 11 a.m. until 9 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, and from 11 a.m. until 10 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. They are located at 2508 Lee Street in downtown Greenville.

There is a huge private party room in the back with views of the oak casks from the winery. The powder room is worth the trip and there's a meeting room upstairs.

Ryan was smart to place us in a private room up front. We enjoyed being able to chat and laugh, hopefully without disrupting the other guests.

Contact City Bistro at 903-454-4500 or visit them online at citybistrogreenville.com. Reservations for large parties are suggested.