

Written by BY TERRY MATHEWS, News-Telegram Arts Editor
Saturday, 20 April 2013 10:51



I've had dinner at One Arts Plaza in Dallas' Arts District more than a dozen times in the past few years, yet I've missed one of its best restaurants.

Carol Allen and I had one of the worst dining experiences ever at Fedora, while, on separate occasions, Pat Lawrence and I and Sarah Smith and I had incredible meals at The Screen Door, which closed suddenly last year.



I've watched the decline of Jorge's.

Yet I missed Tei-An: Japanese Soba House, run by chef-owner Teiichi Sakurai, a James Beard Award nominee.

It's not like Tei-An screams for your attention. In fact, the only sign announcing its existence is a small decal on a window near the ground.

Upon entering the space, you are immediately transported to a quiet, peaceful garden-like dining area, complete with a sushi-styled bar. Don't look for a guy behind the counter rolling up seaweed. All the action in Tei-An takes place in the kitchen. It's as though they don't want to disturb your moment of tranquility. Even the waitstaff flutter in and out, hardly making a sound.

Being completely new to Japanese cuisine, I asked the waitress for suggestions. She asked a lot of questions and then advised me to go with the daily lunch special (\$30), which included the house speciality, white seaweed salad, a plate of light tempura (two shrimp, a mushroom, mint, potato and pepper) and my choice of sobu (buckwheat) noodles.

Although their website only has one page and no menu links, UrbanSpoon and Yelp had post after post about Tei-An's white seaweed salad. It tasted faintly of cabbage cooked in sea water, garnished with thin slices of cucumber and finished with a dressing of vinegar, ginger and pepper flakes. Heaven in a bowl. When I go back, I'm ordering it as a main course. It's one of the best things I've ever tasted. Trust me on this one.

The tempura, while lovely, loses its lightness once it cools, leaving a greasy mess behind.

I chose wagyu beef sobu noodles for the third course. I gave the staff something to talk about with my total lack of chopstick skills. The waitress took pity on me and laid a fork down, with not so much as a hint of a giggle.

I finished the meal with ice cream topped with sobu dust (I've seen this technique on the food shows and wanted to try it.) and black honey. Not so sure about the dust stuff, but I am a fan of

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black honey. It's like a cross between clover honey and molasses.



By the time I left, Tei-An's three small dining spaces were full, and not just with people headed for the opera. Japanese families, couples and folks dressed in their running gear enjoyed a serene Sunday lunch along with me.

I won't make the mistake of missing Tei-An again. Call 214-220-2828 for reservations, which are recommended.

A wonderful new place has taken the space caddy-cornered from Tei-Ann, where The Screen Door was.

Cafe des Artistes has been open for about a month, according to our enthusiastic waiter, Victor. He had been part of the team at The Screen Door, and was happy to be working again.

We ordered eggs Benedict (\$13) and they were devine. Remember Brennan's at One Main Place? Well, our food was almost that good.

The menu is extensive and included salmon benedict (\$14), short rib hash (\$17) and a crab, avocado and spinach omelette (\$14) that looked yummy. Add sides like apple wood smoked bacon and homemade beignets and you've got a winning formula.

They are also open for lunch and dinner and have an extensive wine list.

They are following a trend that features an option of small or large plates.

The small plate dinner choices include scallops a la plancha (\$14), sauteed prawns in garlic and lemon sauce (\$14), Asian BBQ pork cheeks, with kimichi and daikon salad (\$14) and torchon of foie gras (\$19).

Large plates include burgers (\$14), slow braised beef short ribs (\$25) and pan fried rainbow trout (\$20).

Cafe des Artistes offers delightful al fresco dining and live piano music playing tunes from the Great American Songbook.

It's the perfect addition to One Arts Plaza. Call 214-217-6888 or visit their website at www.cafedadallas.com.



On the night we went into see "Wicked," we decided to revisit one of our favorites, Papadeaux's on Oak Lawn. It did not disappoint. Of mention on this trip were the oysters (on special for \$5.95 per dozen), the lobster bisque and the luscious crème brûlée. Consistency is the key to survival in the food business, and the Papa family has learned their lessons well.



Seaweed, oysters and ribs, oh my! Dining out at Tei-An, Cafe des Artistes, Papadeaux's and Los Pinos

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Los Pinos, my favorite deep East Texas eatery, has upped their game with artisan pizza (\$13) made in an authentic Italian brick oven and some of the most delicious ribs (\$13) ever. The vinegar based sauce with a kick of horseradish is like nothing I've tasted. They should bottle it. I'd buy a gallon.

Located in the middle of a former cow pasture near Pittsburg, Los Pinos is now open for lunch on Fridays.

Along with delicious food and great wines, Los Pinos offers live jazz in the evenings. They do not accept reservations, so get there early.

You'll need directions. Find them at www.lospinosranchvineyards.com/