

On the Menu: More 'shabang' for your buck

Tara Steak and Lobster grade A

By TIKI TIM, Special to the Islander

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I was in the mood for steak and lobster the other day and there are many good places on Marco that have it. I've been hearing a lot of good things about Tara Steak and Lobster House lately and after all they have won many platinum plate awards for the best steak on Marco and Gulf Shore Life magazine rated them best steak in Southwest Florida.

I was sold so I thought I'd give it a try. I stopped by on Tuesday night. Jeannie Trevethan and her daughter Tara are the owners.

The night I was there I chatted with Jeannie and she explained that Tara was in Ft. Lauderdale to oversee their other restaurant. And if you have not been over there you can check it out on the web at www.tarasteakandlobsterhouse.com Jeannie explained to me that all the steaks are dry-aged and that when they serve them they cut the steak away from the bone, then put it back sliced next to the bone — kind of like a little jig saw puzzle — for a unique presentation.

I was seated in the dining room at a nice table with a view of their extensive wine rack that they have won awards from wine spectator. I had a glass of Tara signature merlot (\$12) while I browsed through the menu.

For an appetizer I ordered moms secret recipe jumbo lump crab cake that had just enough filler to hold it together but mostly lump crab that was served on a bed of baby greens drizzled with a nice vinaigrette (\$14). My friendly and attentive server Judy gave me a side of what they call "shabang" sauce to go with it. The sauce is really good but they won't tell you what's in it. Its good on just about everything they serve. And as far as I can tell it's a tomato based sweet and tangy balsamic vinegar sauce that they blend up. I was even dipping my rolls in it.

For a salad I had a large wedge of iceberg lettuce with homemade blue cheese dressing and freshly cooked chopped bacon on it (\$9).

When is the last time you had just a wedge of lettuce? It's been a while for me and it was delicious. The lettuce was so crisp and ice cold, and the dressing was just thick enough to seep down the sides with some crumbled blue cheese and those bacon bits, yummy!

All their beef is dry aged and is cut from the short loins, that's where you get the strip steaks, porter houses and tenderloins out of. I love a porterhouse steak because you get the best of both worlds, a nice fillet and a strip steak all in the same package.

I had mine medium rare (\$47) paired with a two and a half pound fresh lobster (\$57) that I had them take out of the shell for me and arrange nicely on a plate. It was served with drawn butter and a lemon that was wrapped in a lemon tie so those pesky seeds don't get in your food. That was a nice touch. Then I dipped some of it in shabang sauce.

The steak was a perfect medium rare served on a red-hot sizzling platter and cut away from the bone. It was very tender and extremely tasty; I put some of that shabang sauce on it.

For a side I had their creamed corn \$6 and some of what they call "damn good" spinach \$6 — it was just that.

I put shabang sauce on it.

There was way too much food for me to finish so I got a people bag to go, and will have a nice lunch tomorrow. I think I'll put some of that shabang sauce on it.

If you're not in the mood for a steak they also have salmon, Chilean sea bass, lobster and moms secret lump crab cakes. They also have lamb chops, veal chops, pork chops and free range chicken breast.

I was too full for desert but they have several that looked great.

They have a piano bar in the lounge on certain nights for your enjoyment and a full liquor bar. You can eat at the bar if you wish to.

But no matter where you eat there is a lot of steak at Tara's and remember shabangs, shabangs ... she moo's, she moo's, at Taras. Steak and lobster house 969 N. Collier Blvd. Marco island call 394-0212 for your reservation and the best steak in town.

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