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Threeview

Devon Seafood Grill

By Lacey Muszynski

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Devon Seafood Grill at the Bayshore Town Center is proof that "chain" doesn't have to mean predictable food and uninspired service.

Devon, one of eight corporate-owned restaurants around the country, offers a respite from the busy holiday shopping rush going on outside. It's modern and clean, with dark woods, raw stone and various types of seating. The kitchen is behind large glass windows, allowing diners to see their meals being prepared.

Fresh fish is flown in daily to a number of Devon's suppliers, said general manager Scott Jordan, and a new menu is printed each day to reflect the latest catch.

Some dishes are almost always on the menu, accompanied by three or more daily specials. Appetizers include classics such as oysters Rockefeller (\$7.50), topped with creamed spinach, bacon and Parmesan. Entrees range from classic combos such as the center-cut filet of beef and crab cake (\$32.95), to something more modern American, like the chipotle grilled shrimp enchiladas (\$18.95), with jicama slaw and pico de gallo.

During happy hour on weeknights, Devon offers a number of specials in its large, comfortable bar. The most popular is the one-pound lobster at cost, offered Tuesdays and Wednesdays between 4 and 7 p.m. It averages about \$12 each, Jordan said. Also offered every night is a three-course prix fixe menu for \$28.

Kevin Q. Ewing, 27, Milwaukee

What I ordered Appetizer sampler, \$28.50, with crab cakes, fried calamari, shrimp scampi and three sauces. Prix Fixe, \$28: clam chowder, almond-crust tilapia with wild rice pilaf and strawberries, and chocolate velvet cake.

Taste/presentation Each item on the sampler was prepared exceptionally well, and the sauces (Creole remoulade, tartar, and sweet and sour) made it stand apart. The clam chowder is so far the best I've ever had. The almond crust and the strawberries along with the tilapia was a genius idea. The chocolate velvet cake was a little slice of heaven. Definitely a happy feast.

Service/atmosphere Swanky! The feel is modern, but fancy without being stuffy. Our waitress could not have been more welcoming. The service was impeccable!

Good if you want. . . . to impress someone. From entertaining a business client to having an "I'm sorry" dinner with your wife, this is a great restaurant choice when having to be charming is on the line.

Will Pelfrey, 35, Whitefish Bay

What I ordered Prix fixe, \$28: Creole gumbo, grilled Alaskan halibut with roasted sweet potatoes and vegetables and chocolate velvet cake.

Taste/presentation The calamari on the sampler (shared) was outstanding - perfectly seasoned and fried. The crab cakes were almost entirely lump crab. The halibut was perfect - moist and tender and imbued with mesquite flavor from the grill. All our dishes were well-crafted, dramatically plated and flavored with smart sensibility - that is, the seafood was the star, but it was enhanced by the sauces/seasoning.

Service/atmosphere High-end looks with dramatic lighting, many seating options (booths, tables, private rooms) and a big bar. Our waitress was knowledgeable about both the food and the wine.

Good if you want . . . excellent seafood in a classy setting. Although not cheap, you get a good value for your money with quality food, a beautiful setting and well-informed staff. I'll definitely be back.

Emma Smith, 22, Milwaukee

What I ordered Mixed seafood grill, \$21.95, shrimp, scallops, salmon and a crab cake with garlic mashed potatoes and spinach. Chocolate lava cake, \$6.

Taste/presentation From the fresh-from-the-oven sweet rolls to the warm lava cake oozing chocolate, everything was delectable. My seafood grill was perfectly marinated and complemented by excellent sauces. All the flavors of my food worked with each other to create amazing flavor and texture.

Service/atmosphere Our server was friendly, accommodating and knowledgeable. Very nice lighting, and a decor that's modern but not cold.

Good if you want . . . an excellent meal and impressive setting. Ideal for a business dinner or impressing guests. I highly recommend this place.