

food & wine

Harvest on Fort Pond – Family Style With A View

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➤ Taking advantage of the nice weather, we took a drive out to Montauk to try another one of their well-known waterfront restaurants. Nestled across the water from our last culinary visit to Montauk, Harvest on Fort Pond is just off the hustle and bustle of Montauk Highway. The overflowing parking lot and street parking out front hinted that this was a well-loved local gem as we pulled up.

Cozy country décor with a touch of Tuscan influence filled every nook of the restaurant as we entered. The lounge near the front provides intimate cocktail tables for two as well as charming garden and water views. Inside the dining room, the panoramic water view provided a beautiful backdrop for a serene dinner. From the looks of it, we weren't the only ones with this in mind.

Taking our seats, our waiter presented the menus with an explanation of the family style serving sizes. 'One dish per person' seems to be the rule of thumb, as an appetizer and a main dish would be more than plenty for a romantic dinner for two, and the menu gives enough choices to feed the whole family for a reasonable price, as the many families dining that night could probably attest.

Glad we brought our appetites, we decided on a Lieb Cellars Pinot Blanc and a good old Gin and Tonic as we looked over the choices and munched on the crusty table bread served with fresh cheese and oil. For the spice lovers, Habanero oil is also available. Mixed with the parmesan and soft bread, we had no problem polishing off several pieces. The Pinot Blanc was pleasantly woody with a hint of a fruit taste, perfect for pairing without overwhelming dinner.

To start the meal, we ordered the Pan Seared Rare Tuna with Green Tomato and Grilled Corn Tapas. Its hard not to visit a waterfront restaurant and not try at least a little of the seafood on the menu, and we were not disappointed. The tuna was perfectly seared on the outside leaving a hearty piece tender fish that melted in our mouths. Served over a tomato salsa, the unique combination was a welcome change from the staple wasabi and soy combination. Our only problem seemed to be how to best fit the maximum amount of salsa on the fork to enjoy with the tuna, as it was too good to leave any behind. The Grilled Corn Tapas paired with the tuna fit the bill perfectly. Small finger sized morsels, they looked a bit like miniature trapezoidal burritos, and the inside wasn't far off. The warm corn and vegetable mixture with a touch of spice helped warm us back up after the tuna and salsa.



Next we tried the ample Spinach, Mushroom, Artichoke, and Mozzarella grilled pizza. The grown

up version of the family friendly staple is far from its pepperoni-laden cousins, but still a crowd pleaser. The crisp thin crust was brimming with hearty pieces of artichoke and mushroom, as well as a generous helping of spinach, topped with thick melted mozzarella. Each piece is deceptively filling, and the grilling helped bring out each of the vegetable flavors without turning the pizza to mush as a traditional oven might.

Rounding out the entrees, we tried the Pork Tenderloin with Apricot Apple Chutney and a Watercress Pine Nut Salad and Spanish Prosciutto. The pork tenderloin was long and slender, which one might worry about being overdone. But Chef John Weston prepares it to succulent perfection. Each slice was mouth watering as we sopped up the juice off the platter. The chutney helped round out the flavor on the platter as well as paired nicely with our Pinot Blanc, while the watercress salad offered enough greenery to keep the tenderloin from overwhelming the plate. The pine nuts gave a smooth nutty taste while the Prosciutto lent just enough flavor to leave the salt and pepper shakers in their place for the meal.

To give a sweet ending to the evening, even the desserts are family sized. While the crème puffs sounded delightful, the estimate of serving at least 4 people was a bit generous after our ample entrees. Sitting back to relax and enjoy the now twilight water view, we finally chose the Tiramisu from the plentiful dessert choices. Perfectly sized for two, the layered confection proved to be a good choice. The moist ladyfinger and coffee base served as the perfect support for the light and airy custard. Tiramisu translates as "pick me up" and this delicate morsel did just that. We quickly cleared the plate without feeling overstuffed, especially after the plentiful meal and take-home bags already packed to go.

At the end of the evening, we left Harvest on Fort Pond very full and very happy, with a hefty take-home bag of goodies. This local gem is perfect for family and friend get togethers, and the large servings are ample enough to keep anyone from leaving hungry. Reservations are recommended, especially if you want a good view for the panoramic sunsets. The Tuscan inspired menu has several tasty choices paired with the more traditional that could please even the pickiest of eaters.

Harvest on Fort Pond is located at 11 S Emery Street in Montauk. Contact them at 631-668-5574 for reservations or more information.