

Lori's Picks

Restaurant Reviews

Filet 7 West

611 Troy-Schenectady Road • Latham NY • 518 785-7215

Filet 7 West is a delectable tour of taste, both in cuisine and style, with appealing presentation, ample American recipes, and sharp service. Filet 7 West is in full swing as a newcomer to the upscale steakhouse venue, and has definitely made its mark in the Capital District.

Expect a sophisticated, cosmopolitan tone as soon as you step through the magnificent mahogany doors. Everything about Filet 7 West exudes indulgence, from the water spilling down over a sheet of polished glass to the rich mahogany accents and Turkish marble floors.

The entryway is flanked by a refined bar area and two dining rooms separated by a mahogany partition. The dining rooms are elegantly contemporary in muted earth tones, with a centrally located fireplace and marble-topped tables. Each detail boasts flair and finesse right down to the flatware and place settings.

Filet 7 West features the exceptional cuisine of Chef Jereme Keough. He came to Filet 7 West from the Governor's Mansion, where he served as Executive Chef. Prior to that he was Executive Chef at Panzas, and also worked under Certified Master Chef Dale Miller at Jack's Oyster House. Chef Keough is a graduate of The Culinary Institute of America.

The menu at Filet 7 West showcases Chef Keough's passion for contemporary American cuisine infused with European flavor. With steak as the main attraction, there are ample inspired dishes that complement the menu as well. Pan-roasted breast of duckling, port and cherry glazed diver scallops, Niman Ranch all natural rack of lamb, and beet and fennel infused arctic char are just a sample of the abundant dishes. The entire menu is a la carte, and truly a gourmet fare.



Our evening of fine dining began with an aromatic basket of fresh rolls baked on the premises, as are all baked goods at Filet 7 West. As an appetizer, I ordered the lobster and smoked scallop bisque, and my companion had the jumbo lump crab cocktail. The bisque was a masterpiece from the texture and taste to the abundant lumps of lobster and scallops. My companion's crab cocktail was of the highest quality crab meat, sweet and succulent. Both our salads were outstanding. I had the chop, a mixture of mixed field greens, baby romaine, heirloom tomato, cucumber, crumbled bleu cheese, apple-smoked bacon, fried onion and roasted vinaigrette. My companion's



crab tower consisted of Heirloom tomato, aged balsamic, basil, and house-made mozzarella. By-the-way, all produce is purchased within a 50-mile radius of Filet 7 West.

I decided on the 10 oz. center cut filet mignon for my main course, with béarnaise sauce on the side. My companion could not resist the all-natural Niman Ranch rack of lamb. Side dishes included crème corn brulee with pancetta, and roasted wild mushrooms and onion rings. My filet mignon was cooked to a perfect fork-tender medium and my companion still comments about how exemplary his lamb was.

The grand finale consisted of superb specialty homemade desserts. I opted for the bittersweet chocolate mousse cake, and my companion chose the white chocolate cheesecake, served with blueberry marmalade and almond brittle. Scrumptious!

Our "tour of taste" at Filet 7 West proved to be a delightful dining experience. The wine selection is second to none, and the cuisine is first class. If you have a special occasion coming up, or just want to treat yourself to an evening of fine dining in a cosmopolitan setting, treat yourself to a reservation at Filet 7 West!

Lori's Picks

Restaurant Reviews

Hattie's Restaurant

45 Phila Street • Saratoga Springs, NY • 518 584-4790 • hattie'srestaurant.com

The story of Hattie's Restaurant is as unique and wonderful as the restaurant itself. Hattie's has been a fixture in Saratoga Springs since 1938, and is still wildly popular today. It was all started by a woman from Saint Francisville, Louisiana, named Hattie Gray. Hattie moved to Chicago where she was employed as a maid, and eventually would spend her summers in Saratoga with the Saley family. Hattie was a woman with vision. She managed to save enough money to open up Hattie's Restaurant in Saratoga Springs in 1938. By all accounts, Hattie was an exceptional human being. Throughout her life, she employed many young people, giving them a chance when no one else would. Hattie even took many of them into her home. She vowed never to let anyone go hungry, and did her part to make sure no one did.

Hattie's exudes all the charm of the Deep South. From the checkered curtains and window treatments, to the lime green walls, the place is dripping with southern personality. The walls display quite an eclectic assortment of southern pictures and memorabilia, including one of Hattie's original menus. There are also photos of the old Saratoga racing scene. I love the old noisy screen door that slams shut behind you. How southern is that! We truly have a small piece of New Orleans tucked away, right in downtown Saratoga.

If you're a fan of southern comfort food, you will never want to leave Hattie's. The menu will definitely get your mouth watering. Favorites like mac and cheese, southern fried chicken, chicken and dumplings, slow cooked BBQ ribs, Creole jambalaya, farm raised catfish, jerk chicken, Louisiana style crab cakes, good 'n evil chicken wings (an ideal combination of sweet and spicy), not to mention the homemade cornbread, biscuits and desserts, are some of the awesome offerings that Hattie's is famous for.

I wanted to try everything on the menu – it all looked so good. While we were deciding, we were brought a basket of warm homemade cornbread and buttermilk biscuits. Life just does not get better than this! My companion and I started with the Louisiana style crab cakes, and also sampled the gumbo, good 'n evil chicken wings, and mac and cheese. One appetizer was better than the next. The crab

cakes were chock-full of sweet crab meat, and served with Hattie's Mississippi salsa. So tasty! The gumbo (which changes daily) was hearty and delicious, made with andouille sausage and chicken. The good 'n evil chicken wings were some of the best I have ever had. They were served with Hattie's own buttermilk pecan blue cheese, which is to die for. Everyone knows that homemade mac and cheese is an ultimate comfort food, and Hattie's is known for theirs. You can order it plain, or with andouille sausage and chicken. We had the works! The mac and cheese did not disappoint. Made with sharp cheddar and a crispy biscuit crust, it was the perfect combination of crispy and creamy.

I don't know how we ate more, but we did! For dinner, I had the fried chicken, and my companion had the combo ribs and fried chicken. We were given the option of two sides with our meal – cucumber salad, candied yams, collard greens, smashed Sheldon Farms yellow Carola potatoes, succotash, or cranberry coleslaw. I chose the cranberry coleslaw and collard greens, while my

companion had the succotash and smashed potatoes. Our meals were truly spectacular. First let me say that the portions are enormous. Not only are the portions huge, but

the food is outstanding. My southern fried chicken was perfectly fried – light and crisp – it was a real treat. My collard greens were cooked beautifully, and had a hint of sweetness. The cranberry slaw was fresh, and popping with flavor. My companion was in a state of total bliss as he ate his meal as well. It was clear just why Hattie's has gained such a fabulous reputation!

Their desserts are all homemade. I was tempted by the sweet potato pie, but I know how much my companion loves pecan pie. I compromised, and was pleased that I did. It was amazing – served warm with freshly whipped cream.

Hattie's is a phenomenal place. Chef and proprietor Jasper Alexander has done a masterful job since taking over. It is little wonder that he took down Chef Bobby Flay (food network) in

a "Throwdown." If you have never been to Hattie's, you owe it to yourself. There is also a full bar, specializing in one-of-a-kind drinks, and courtyard dining May through October. In my book, it just doesn't get better than Hattie's!

