



1 fork: fair
2 forks: good
3 forks: excellent
4 forks: outstanding

**FIFTY WEST RESTAURANT
(DELTA HOTEL)
50 STONE ROAD WEST
GUELPH, ON
519-780-3727**

HOURS

Monday to Friday, 6:30 a.m. - 10 p.m.
Dinner from 5 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday, 7 a.m. - 10 p.m.
Dinner from 5 p.m.

CUISINE

Fine dining

RESERVATIONS

Recommended

ATMOSPHERE

Upscale contemporary style dining room

ATTIRE

Casual, but I like to dress up for good food.

THE MENU

A menu of classic dishes with imaginative touches and in-house desserts

BEVERAGES

A vast selection of wine by the glass, carafes, and bottles

SERVICE

Outstanding, attentive and knowledgeable

THE BILL

\$125 (before tip) with two glasses of wine

IN A NUTSHELL

Fifty West should become a destination for locals, not just travelers

A FINE DINING DESTINATION

By Travis Oke, for Nightlife

Historically, inns have always served food to weary travellers to sustain them. But that changed in 1889 when the owner of the Savoy Hotel in London hired manager Cesar Ritz and renowned French chef Auguste Escoffier to create a new kind of dining experience, one worthy of a luxury hotel.

Today great hotels use the same marketing tool hiring famous chefs — Bobby Flay, Wolfgang Puck, and Emeril Lagasse, to name a few — making their hotels dining destinations. It is in this context that the Delta Hotel in Guelph has created a fine dining destination of its own called Fifty West.

We had early reservations and the contemporary styled space was immediately comfortable. We asked to be seated near the kitchen because we like kitchen sounds. After researching the menu online, we were surprised to find that the menu had just changed the day before. Chef Cameron Bryce created the new menu and has reworked and streamlined the previously eclectic and somewhat disjointed offerings.

For an appetizer the blackened scallops were served on creamy puréed parsnips with a double-smoked bacon and black-currant reduction. Garnished with micro

greens, the scallops were seared on the outside and buttery in the middle. The parsnip purée was a warm autumnal touch. So far, the parsnip is my favourite root vegetable this fall. My dining companion chose the tomato based lobster bisque which had a pronounced herbal quality to it with undertones of fennel and aromatics. The rich lobster blended well with the earthy astringency of fennel and celery. Delicious and imaginative.

One of the benefits of dining early is having the undivided attention of your server. She knew her menu and the ingredients inside-out but was not reluctant to asked the kitchen if she didn't know. When I ordered a carafe of Cotes du Rhone she asked me if I would like her to slightly chill the wine. How did she know I was a wine snob and love my red wine chilled? It's the attention to detail that makes a good server great.

My companion ordered Chef Bryce's signature tenderloin. It came topped with a crisp cipollini onion, pea sprouts and double smoked bacon served on thyme-roasted Yukon gold potatoes and carrots. The tenderloin was a superior cut of meat and a generous portion (in fact, some came home with me to provide a tasty Sunday afternoon steak sandwich). Grilled medium rare, it was very tender.

I don't usually order chicken as an entrée, but the Harriston Farms chili marinated chicken caught my imagination. Marinated with arbol chilies, garlic and lemon, the half chicken was roasted and topped with braised fennel and citrus yogurt served over olive oil smashed potatoes and corn bread. Dark meat always outperforms white meat when it comes to flavour and this was certainly the case in this dish. The arbol chilies gave a nice kick to the dark meat and the garlic, lemon and citrus yogurt married nicely.

There were four in-house desserts to choose from and we chose the pumpkin cheesecake and the banana cake in a whisky sauce with organic vanilla ice-cream. The banana cake was so warm that it was hot! The whisky sauce was even better than it sounded. The cheesecake was also very good but the banana cake stole the final stage.

This is one hotel restaurant that should not be for travellers only. I urge local diners to get out of your seats and into this local treasure.

Assessing food, atmosphere, service and prices, Dining Out restaurant reviews are based on anonymous visits to the establishments. Restaurants do not pay for any portion of the reviewer's meal. Travis Oke can be reached at oke.travis@gmail.com.